

# First Nations Land Use Planning

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# Protecting Indigenous Cultural Heritage: Municipal Roles in a Changing Landscape

Stewardship, collaboration, and respect:  
Honouring past, present, and future generations

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# Why Cultural Heritage Matters

## **Living Legacies of Sacred Sites**

Sacred sites and burial grounds are vital to First Nations' identity, spirituality, and ongoing cultural continuity.

## **Protection Under Law**

Indigenous rights to sacred places are protected by Canada's Constitution and UNDRIP, reinforcing their importance and legal standing.

## **Need for Meaningful Consultation**

Consultation and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent are essential for respecting Indigenous rights and heritage.

## **Balancing Development and Heritage**

Municipalities must carefully balance development needs with the responsibility to protect cultural heritage and uphold rights.





# Bill 5: Economic Zones Impact

**Special Economic Zones Established:** The bill creates Special Economic Zones, accelerating development and relaxing heritage and archaeological assessments for projects within these areas.

**Reduced Heritage Protections:** Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act decrease municipal authority, limiting local influence over heritage protection decisions.

**Economic and Cultural Impacts:** The legislative changes present growth opportunities but also bring significant challenges for the preservation of cultural heritage.

**Concerns from First Nations:** First Nations highlight inadequate consultation, risks to burials and sacred sites, and limited legal options for addressing violations.





# Municipalities as Heritage Stewards

- Municipalities can - and must - advocate for Indigenous engagement and protection, even with changing legislation.
- Emphasize *early and proactive consultation* with First Nations communities at the very start of land use and archaeological projects.
- *Key Practice*: Treat Indigenous monitoring and engagement as standard, not optional or after-the-fact. Advocate for First Nations inclusion in planning.

# Best Practices in Archaeological Assessments

## **Inclusive Indigenous Collaboration**

Indigenous representatives should be involved in all fieldwork and reporting stages to support genuine, respectful collaboration in archaeology.

## **Early Engagement and Partnerships**

Early partnership with First Nations is essential for artifact care, effective site mitigation, and long-term cultural preservation.

## **Strengthening Registers and Training**

Archaeological registers should include and protect Indigenous cultural landscapes, comply with regulations, and offer training on Indigenous rights and UNDRIP.





# Effective Indigenous Engagement

## **Building Trust and Dialogue**

Municipal leaders should prioritize trust, transparency, and regular dialogue with Indigenous communities for effective engagement.

## **Inclusive Decision-Making**

It is essential to involve Elders and youth in decisions and set clear engagement protocols to reflect shared stewardship values.

## **Respect for Sacred Sites**

If sacred sites are discovered, stop all work, notify the First Nation, and ensure their involvement throughout the process.





# Honoring First Nations Heritage

## Sacred Meaning of Indigenous Lands

Indigenous lands are deeply significant, holding ancestral presence and meaning, even if sacred sites are not physically visible.

## Municipal Leadership in Reconciliation

Municipalities can promote reconciliation by engaging First Nations early and advocating for cultural heritage protection.

## Embedding Indigenous Values

Including Indigenous values in official plans ensures heritage and rights are respected for sustainable development.

“We support prosperity, but not at the cost of our heritage or environment.” - Regional Chief Benedict





# Preserving Heritage Together



## **Importance of Indigenous Heritage**

Protecting Indigenous heritage is essential for the well-being and identity of Ontario's communities, both now and for the future.



## **Collaborative Municipal Efforts**

Municipalities work together with First Nations to honor responsibilities to past, present, and future generations by protecting cultural sites.



## **Fostering Stewardship and Respect**

Collaboration builds respect, understanding, and stewardship, helping safeguard cultural legacies for future generations.



# AMO Presentation

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Deputy Grand Council Chief Christopher Plain

Anishinabek Nation



# Background

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- Nine Terms Chief of Aamjiwnaang First Nation
- 3 terms Band Council
- First Nation located next to Sarnia
- Jointly Presented AMO with the City of Sarnia
- I've presented last year, as well at the ROMA Conference
- Spent a year in contract as an Indigenous Relations Specialist
- First Term Deputy Grand Council Chief



# Relationship Building

- Invited to conduct the Swearing in for the local City Council
- CIPP partners
- Joint funding for new Waterman project
- Municipal Service Agreements





# Dedicated Police Officer





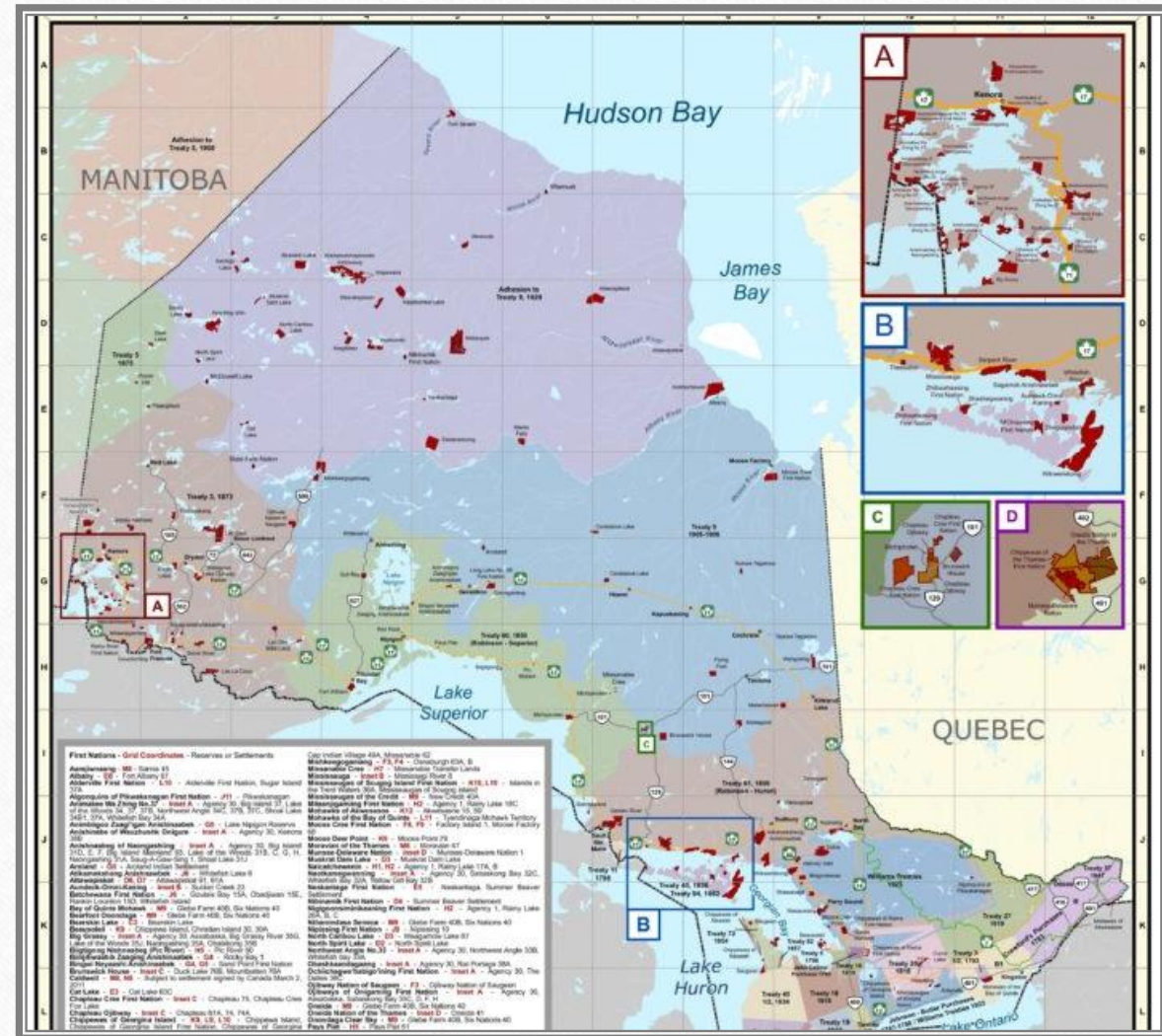
# Anishinabek Nation



- Advocacy for 39 First Nations in 4 Regions
- Representing 75,000 Anishinabek Citizens
- Oldest PTO in Ontario
- Guided by a Constitution and led by Nation Councils
- Represented by. Grand Chief, Deputy, and Four Regional Chiefs.
- Initiated Anishinabek Police Service
- Anishinabek Education Institute

# Treaties

- 134 First Nations in Ontario
- Several are Unceded
- Some Settlements, Land Grants, Overlap
- Ontario has the highest population of Status Indians
- No Metis communities in Ontario





# Bill 5

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Opposition

Opportunities

Anishinabek Nation Strategy