



FLOOD MITIGATION 2026
**Indigenous
Engagement
Plan**

April 28th, 2026

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Land Acknowledgement

The Nicola Valley is the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Scw'εmx People (Nlε?kεpmx and Sylix Nations), including the Shackan, Nooaitch, Lower Nicola, Coldwater, Cook's Ferry, and Upper Nicola Bands. The City of Merritt acknowledges the Nlε?kεpmx and Sylix Nations and their connection to this land, and aims to incorporate their collective knowledge, values and traditions regarding environmental management and stewardship practices.

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“When the City of Merritt went down, we lost a second home. We felt displaced, again. As a Chief, I support the City of Merritt.”

– Former Chief Arnold Lampreau, Shackan Indian Band

2.0 Introduction & Context

This Indigenous Engagement Plan outlines opportunities and methods for meaningful engagement and active participation between the City of Merritt and neighbouring Bands and Indigenous organizations, pertaining to the City of Merritt Flood Mitigation Plan (FMP).

This introductory section aims to present relevant frameworks, policies, legislation and other documents that influence how the Flood Mitigation Department, City of Merritt will develop, implement and continuously improve on this Indigenous Engagement Plan (IEP).

To support the broader IEP, the City will listen to and consider each Indigenous community's priorities and preferences for engagement.

2.1 Duty to Consult

Section 35 of Canada's *Constitution Act*, 1982 states that the Crown has a legal Duty to Consult Aboriginal Peoples when any action or decision may impact their Aboriginal or Treaty rights, rights to land, or their ability to exercise their way of life. The term Crown includes federal, provincial and territorial governments, but not municipal governments. Crown agencies and departments are required to identify their impacts on Aboriginal Peoples and ensure that meaningful consultation is achieved when the legal Duty to Consult applies, and the Crown provides resources for federal or provincial officials to support in fulfilling the legal Duty to Consult. As a municipality, the City of Merritt does not have a legal Duty to Consult but has a desire to meaningfully engage with Indigenous groups to enhance relationships, improve understanding and decision making and complete projects in a collaborative manner.

2.2 Consultation vs. Engagement

Engagement and consultation are often used when collaborating with Indigenous Peoples; however, they are distinct. In this document, consultation is used in the legal context as it relates to the Duty to Consult (discussed above). The Flood Mitigation Department, City of Merritt recognizes that engagement is the voluntary formal or informal process by which Indigenous Peoples, government and industry share information and stay connected on issues of mutual interest. Engagement also addresses local Indigenous community values, priorities and concerns toward the goal of building a mutually beneficial relationship.

2.3 UNDRIP/DRIPA

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) is a global document that affirms the rights and freedoms of Indigenous Peoples. In 2021, *An Act Respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* came into effect in Canada after receiving Royal Assent. It affirms and upholds the rights of Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples as recognized by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act* (above) and UNDRIP. In 2019, the British Columbia provincial government passed the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA), making it the first province in Canada to implement UNDRIP into its legislation. The City of Merritt recognizes this legislation.

2.4 Calls to Action

The City of Merritt is working towards reconciliation and would like to meaningfully advance many of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, including those specific to municipal government. The flood mitigation projects provide the City with an opportunity to address the following Calls to Action:

43. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
47. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.
57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

3.0 Engagement Participants

The southern British Columbia interior and Nicola Valley are home to Nleʔkepmx and Syilx Nations and the City of Merritt resides within their traditional, ancestral and unceded territories. The City is committed to engaging with all interested Indian Bands and Indigenous Organizations, formally and informally, in the development of this engagement plan and in developing and delivering flood mitigation plans and projects.

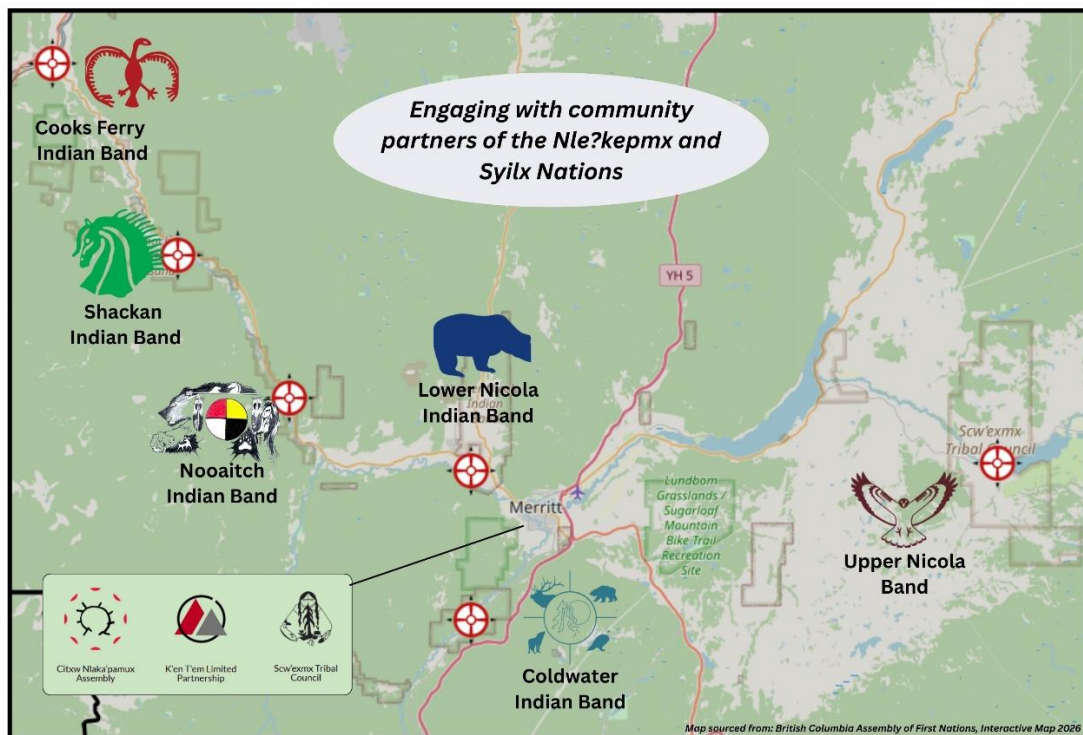
The Flood Mitigation Department, City of Merritt specifically interacts with six (6) Indian Bands (referred to as the Bands) and three (3) Indigenous Organizations on a more frequent basis, whose citizens may live in, work in or travel to the City of Merritt for a variety of amenities, services or other reasons. These Bands and Organizations are listed below and shown on a map, from here on throughout the document will be referenced as “Indigenous Community”. These are the primary communities that the Flood Mitigation Department intends to engage with related to the Flood Mitigation Plan.

- Coldwater Indian Band
- Cook’s Ferry Indian Band
- Lower Nicola Indian Band
- Nooaitch Indian Band
- Shackan Indian Band
- Upper Nicola Band

Indigenous Organizations

- Citxw Nlaka’pamux Assembly
- Scw’emx Tribal Council
- K’en T’em Limited Partnership

Locations of Indigenous Communities



4.0 Engagement Objectives

4.1 Intent

The City of Merritt, Flood Mitigation Department is committed to engaging early, often and transparently with the Indigenous communities of the region. By engaging with Indigenous communities and individuals in a meaningful way, the Flood Mitigation Department aspires to the following:

- To build lasting relationships with the six Bands and three Indigenous Organizations within the Nicola Valley.
- To have an open dialogue between the City of Merritt and Indigenous communities.
- To work collaboratively with members of local Indigenous communities.
- To develop relationships and collaborative opportunities.
- To strengthen the City of Merritt's understanding and respect for Indigenous cultures, knowledge, and perspectives through ongoing, meaningful learning.
- To work towards being a leader in Call-To Action reconciliation.

It is important to reiterate The City prioritizes early and meaningful engagement that goes beyond baseline consultation requirements. The Flood Mitigation Department will engage early so that the Bands are informed of projects **first**, ahead of provincial consultation requirements. This approach supports stronger relationships with Indigenous communities, shared understanding, and collaborative decision-making throughout the project process.

The Flood Mitigation Department prepared this Indigenous Engagement Plan in relation to flood mitigation, however the City of Merritt intends to continue developing and expanding the plan to support ongoing collaboration and relationship building.

A visual of the activities and discussions that are anticipated through engagement between the City of Merritt and the Indigenous Communities during current and future flood mitigation efforts. Contributing to continual learning, improvement and relationship building, as shown.

Flood Mitigation Engagment Activities and Diiscussions



4.2 Objectives

As the Flood Mitigation Plan (FMP) is implemented, the Flood Mitigation Department will work to ensure the Bands and Indigenous Organizations are well-informed and have the opportunity to provide full input. This input could look like Traditional Knowledge, culture, customs, decision making processes, delivery considerations, and more. The City intends to engage at key points in project delivery, listening to the Bands and Indigenous Organizations of the valley, considering input in a meaningful way, and incorporating knowledge and guidance received into planning and implementation.

The specific objectives for Indigenous engagement related to flood mitigation are as follows:

- To engage with the Bands and Indigenous Organizations regarding Traditional Knowledge, including awareness of potential impacts on the environment (direct, indirect, cumulative, residual, and incidental), and culture and customs that could be considered in the project decision-making processes.
- To understand the historical and Heritage/Cultural context of the valley and various project sites as it relates to the Indigenous communities.
- To explore opportunities and/or partnerships through the design and delivery of flood mitigation projects.
- To follow any requirements of Crown consultation on the potential impacts of the project on the exercise of Aboriginal title and rights.



4.3 Engagement Identifiers

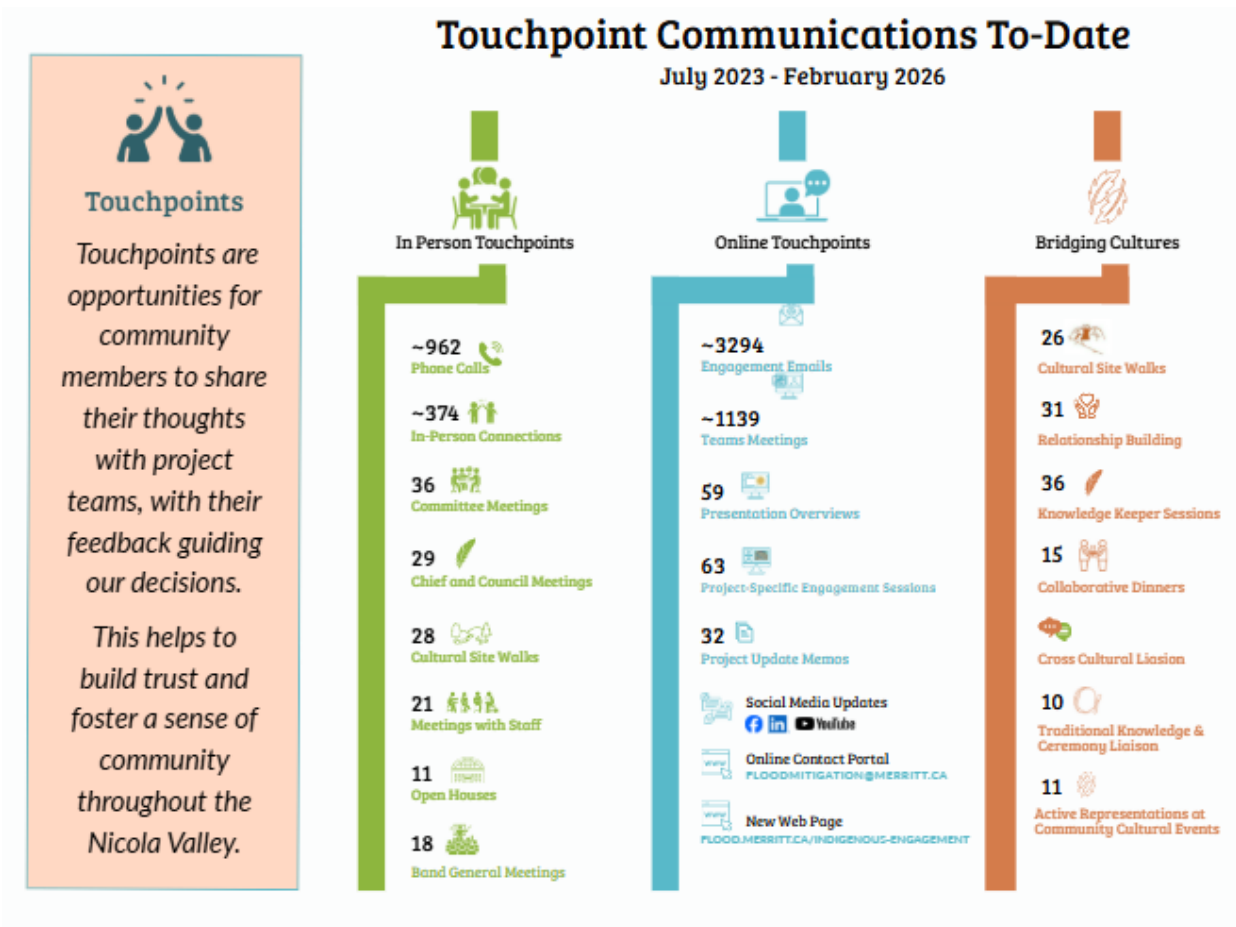
As engagement activities continue and the Flood Mitigation Department works with the Bands and Indigenous Organizations throughout the IEP implementation for the FMP, the City wishes to consider the following questions:

1. What does successful engagement look like?
2. How do we know we're building good relationships?
3. How can we continue to improve?
4. The willingness of Bands to engage with the Flood Mitigation Department.

In order to respond to these questions, assess its engagement activities and continuously improve, the Flood Mitigation Department will track touchpoints:

- Indigenous organizations are informed of potential or upcoming projects by the City of Merritt at the earliest opportunity.

- The presence of consistent, respectful, and two-way communication between the Flood Mitigation Department and Indigenous communities.
- The timely sharing of information through project memos at key project milestones.
- Invitations to, and participation in, in-person presentations or discussions with Band Chiefs, Councils, and community members at General Meetings or other community forums.
- The meaningful acknowledgement, consideration, and incorporation of guidance, feedback, and recommendations received from Bands and Indigenous organizations, with appropriate follow-up.
- The willingness of Indigenous communities to provide letters of project support, or to share feedback explaining concerns or barriers where support is not provided.
- Mutual invitations and participation between the Flood Mitigation Department, Bands, and Indigenous organizations in each other's organizational and community activities.



Engagment Identifiers

The Flood Mitigation Department, City of Merritt acknowledges the right of each group to form its own opinions and responses and welcomes all input and feedback, positive or negative. It is envisioned that these touchpoints will help to promote open and honest dialogue between the City and the engagement participants about how the engagement is going, and help in revealing gaps, resolutions and opportunities. If it is clear that meaningful engagement and communication is not happening, the City and the engagement parties will need to step back and reassess the process.

5.0 Project Description

5.1 Background

In November 2021, water levels in the Coldwater River rose 2.5 times higher than previously established flood levels, in just a matter of hours, due to an unprecedented atmospheric river event. The extreme water flows caused extensive flooding and destruction, destroying flood warning systems, overcoming the existing dike infrastructure, and flooding much of the lower-lying areas of the City. Homes, parks, roads, bridges, municipal water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and electrical and gas infrastructure were severely damaged. Due to the severity of damage and failures of critical infrastructure, the entire City had to be evacuated.

The Nicola River, which receives the water from the Coldwater River at the confluence at the east end of the City, was not significantly impacted upstream of the confluence during the atmospheric river event but has a history of flooding due to freshet events (most recently in 2017 and 2018). The City therefore worked to prepare a comprehensive Flood Mitigation Plan that considers flooding of both rivers.

5.2 City of Merritt Flood Mitigation Plan

The City of Merritt retained consultants to prepare a Flood Mitigation Plan which would provide conceptual options for comprehensive flood mitigation that would protect the City from river flooding and identify a single preferred option to be used to secure funding for implementation (e.g., design, permitting, construction, etc.). The plan would need to consider climate change impacts, environmental and contaminated site assessment findings, archaeological assessment findings, and community and Indigenous engagement input and feedback, and regulatory framework.

Options were to be evaluated using the following categories of criteria, developed through discussions with the City, the public, Bands and technical experts: economic, recreational and Heritage/Cultural, environmental and technical. Class D cost estimates were also prepared. In addition, a workshop was held to choose the preferred flood mitigation strategies in 7 “critical areas,” using the evaluation criteria above.

Using this analysis, an option was developed that included modified combination diking (setback, narrow and waterside), also including sheetpile walls, road raising, bank protection and bridge replacements. This plan put forward a constructable project that aimed to protect the town while leaving more riparian and in-stream space for the Coldwater River.

Subsequently, this conceptual Flood Mitigation Plan was sent to various levels of senior government, through various grant programs, requesting funding of the overall plan. Funding for the entire Flood Mitigation Plan was denied by senior government.

5.3 Flood Recovery and Mitigation Projects

Merritt City Council adopted this Flood Mitigation Plan in 2022, and then directed the Flood Mitigation Department to further refine this plan, continue to look for funding, and to split it into smaller projects so that it could be completed in stages.

As funding was not forthcoming for the original \$167 million listed as the “Opinion of Probable Cost” for the Flood Mitigation Plan, the City is implementing projects as funding can be secured.

The Indigenous Engagement Plan was made to reflect this phased nature of these projects, with the IEP framework dealing with each individual project as funding is secured.

6.0 Input and Feedback to Date

6.1 Pre-Planning Engagement

A first phase of engagement with Merritt residents and the neighbouring Bands was completed as part of the creation of the Flood Mitigation Plan (referred to as pre-planning engagement). The City of Merritt's pre-planning engagement activities consisted of phone conversations with each Chief, participation from Chiefs, Band staff and Indigenous Service Organizations during bi-weekly recovery meetings with Indigenous groups, and two presentations to the Nicola Watershed Governance Partnership team.



The City of Merritt specifically acknowledges that none of these activities were aimed at satisfying any potential consultation requirements. However, the input and feedback received through pre-planning engagement has been incorporated into the Flood Mitigation Plan and then expanded in the Indigenous Engagement Plan.

Community has identified that they would like to be consistently updated on Heritage/Cultural monitoring findings, workflow, site photos, and any environmental or Heritage/Cultural observations identified on site.

Through these early engagement activities, the Bands have provided the City of Merritt with the following guidance, which has been aggregated and paraphrased:

1. Any work that the City of Merritt does must protect and potentially enhance environmental factors, especially fish values. There is a collective desire to see the floodplain, or at least portions of the floodplain, return to a more natural state. This was highlighted in nearly every engagement conversation.

"The flood mitigation work done in the City of Merritt will impact the Coldwater Band. In addition to high flow scenarios, any design for flood mitigation must also consider the regularly occurring summer drought conditions on the Coldwater River. Fish need deeper pools and cooler water to survive. We support flood mitigation in Merritt, so long as there is an emphasis on the protection of the environment, and particularly, fish values."

- **Chief Lee Spahan, Coldwater Indian Band**

"Respect. Respect the water, that flows in the river, where the water gives life for man and animals. Also the water in the river can also take life away."

- **Paul Joe, Traditional Knowledge Keeper**

2. The issues facing both the Coldwater and Nicola Watersheds are diverse and a wholistic approach to the watershed must be taken. As a result, engagement for this project cannot just be token. The Bands must be part of the process of developing solutions. - Representatives from the Nicola Watershed Governance Partnership raised this issue, as well as Former Chief Marcel Shackelly (Nooaitch Indian Band) and Chief Lee Spahan (Coldwater Indian Band).

"I think one of the values I look at through the work with the city is the ability to incorporate our communities' input to help build a system that is not just designed for protecting people, but it also allows for ecosystems to exist where it should exist."

- **Chief Lindsay Tighe, Shackan Indian Band**

3. Flood protection along the Nicola River through Merritt reduces flood risk for the Upper Nicola Band at Nicola Lake.

"If the City of Merritt is capable of receiving higher flows through the Nicola Lake dam, the lake levels won't rise as high and the Province won't need to balance flooding in Merritt against flooding in Upper Nicola during freshet season."

- **Former Chief Harvey McLeod, Upper Nicola Indian Band**

"Downstream effects must be mitigated as part of this project. In particular, the project must not increase the velocity of the river as it leaves the City."

- **Former Chief Stuart Jackson, Lower Nicola Indian Band**

4. City of Merritt is a regional hub for the Bands, especially during emergencies, so seeing it protected is important.

"When the City of Merritt went down, we lost a second home. We felt displaced, again. As a Chief, I support the City of Merritt."

- **Former Chief Arnold Lampreau, Shackan Indian Band**

5. There is a desire for the City of Merritt to explore options regarding the possibility of re-locating the Merritt's Wastewater Treatment Plant. As a result of initial damage to the City of Merritt's rapid infiltration basins (now repaired).

6.2 Letters of Support

Engagement Process



Letter of Support Engagement and Information Sharing

- Facilitated presentations, distributed briefing notes and draft of project deliverables to each Indigenous Community.
- Distributed a briefing note to Coldwater Indian Band, Shackan Indian Band, Nooaitch Indian Band, Upper Nicola Band, Cook's Ferry Indian Band and Lower Nicola Indian Band. This briefing note included information about the Coldwater River Flood Mitigation Plan and the City of Merritt's intent to attain a letter of support.
- Followed up with emails, phone calls and texts to each First Nation communities to confirm their availability for a virtual presentation. In-person, in-community information sessions were also offered to each community. The City Of Merritt Flood Mitigation Department also prepared a draft letter of support that was shared with each First Nation community for their consideration.
- The City Of Merritt Flood Mitigation Department hosted a virtual information session for Coldwater Indian Band, Shackan Indian Band, Nooaitch Indian Band, Upper Nicola Band, and Lower Nicola Indian Band to share an update on the Coldwater River Mitigation Plan and to seek a letter expressing their support.
- Hosted a virtual information session for Cook's Ferry Indian Band to share an update on the Coldwater River Mitigation Plan and seek support. Conceptual support was received.

Letters of Support Drafting and Follow Up

The City Of Merritt Flood Mitigation Department team regularly followed up with Coldwater Indian Band, Shackan Indian Band, Nooaitch Indian Band, Upper Nicola Band, Cook's Ferry Indian Band and Lower Nicola Indian Band through phone, email, and text to check-in on how the emailed materials and information presentation landed.

- Lower Nicola Indian Band provided a written letter of support
- Cook's Ferry Indian Band provided a written letter of support
- Shackan Indian Band provided a written letter of support
- Nooaitch Indian Band provided a written letter of support - Requested an additional in-person information presentation to Chief and Council. Charlene Joe (City Of Merritt Flood Mitigation Department) and Kayla Pepper (Colliers) spent two hours in community.
- Coldwater Indian Band requested additional information and put forward a motion for support. Decision on this motion has not been provided, and the City Of Merritt Flood Mitigation Department will continue dialogue with the community.
- Upper Nicola Band did not respond to follow-up requests.
- Mayor Goetz also sent separate letters to each Chief thanking them for their support, or requesting a letter of support for this project, in addition to strengthening their government-to-government relationship.

Final Funding Request to the Province

The City of Merritt Flood Mitigation Department took steps to reach out to all six Nicola-area First Nations using multiple methods including: briefing notes, virtual presentations, phone calls, emails, and in-community visits. Over 300 touchpoints took place between the engagement team and communities over the eight week process. Communication occurred at both the operational levels and from elected officials, with Mayor Goetz sending a letter to each Chief. Letters of support were received from Lower Nicola Indian Band, Shackan Indian Band, and Cook's Ferry Indian Band, and Nooaitch Indian Band, with open dialogue ongoing with Coldwater Indian Band and Upper Nicola choosing not to participate in this engagement effort. The Flood Mitigation Department is committed to ongoing, productive dialogue and engagement with each First Nation community throughout the Flood Mitigation Plan implementation.

Strengths

This work took place in the context of the broader Flood Mitigation Plan and Indigenous Engagement Plan which formed a solid foundation for this engagement process.

Relationships and trust established in the past by the City Of Merritt Flood Mitigation Department and Colliers allowed us to engage at many levels within each community.

Technical support for the options were shared so that all parties could understand why the City Of Merritt Flood Mitigation Department asked for support, how it reflected previous feedback, and why it is the best option for the river.

Challenges

Understanding that the project was on the basis of a strict Provincial timeline, it was difficult to coordinate and ensure respectful and Heritage/Culturally safe engagement activities.

6.3 Letters Of Support Summary Feedback

Protection of Heritage/Cultural Sites: Preserving sites and items of Heritage/Cultural and spiritual significance along the Coldwater River through archaeological monitoring and meaningful engagement with First Nations.

Protection of the Environment: Allowing the river to flow more naturally while reducing flood risks; enhancing fish habitats and riparian zones critical to the health of the ecosystem; improving river velocity control and promoting long-term ecological stability; and maintaining public access to the river for heritage/cultural, recreational, and traditional use

Integration of Ceremony: Weaving traditional ceremony into future flood mitigation projects to honour Nle?kepmx culture and strengthen community connections to the land.

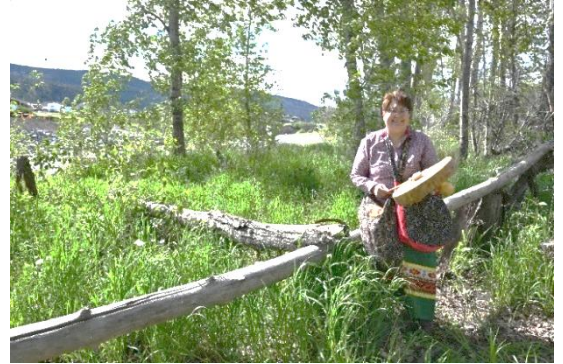
Economic Opportunities: Creating pathways for First Nations community members and businesses to contribute to and benefit from the planning, construction, and maintenance phases of the Merritt Flood Mitigation Project (FMP), where possible.

Meaningful Engagement: Ensuring First Nations participation in all future project phases, fostering collaboration and free, prior, and informed consent throughout the process.

Broader Relationship Building: Strengthening the partnership between First Nations and the City of Merritt, including revisiting processes such as the Official Community Plan to ensure that First Nations voices are meaningfully included in discussions that impact their lands and people.

6.4 Additional Engagement

Additional engagement activities have been ongoing between the City of Merritt and the local Indigenous Communities. This input and feedback have also been incorporated into this Indigenous Engagement Plan and help to form the basis of the proposed engagement approach.



- The Bands would like to see any artifacts found during recovery work. Any items should be brought forward to the Bands to decide what they wish to do with them.
- Any artifacts found should be addressed in keeping with applicable artifact Chance-Find policies and ceremony.
- For some projects a Heritage Discovery will be implemented. This process is overseen by the Indigenous Engagement Manager, and it will gather traditional uses and Indigenous areas of significance in project areas.
- Heritage/Cultural Monitors should be present on site as project work is being done in or near the water.
- Environmental Monitors should be present on site as project work is being done in the water.
- There is an expectation to see more from the City of Merritt in terms of Truth and Reconciliation, Indian Residential Schools and the implementation of UNDRIP and DRIPA.
- Project collaboration and commitments recognize the legitimate rights of Indigenous Community and engagement roles of all parties are tracked, defined and documented. Descriptions of accomplishments and goals on each project are also included.

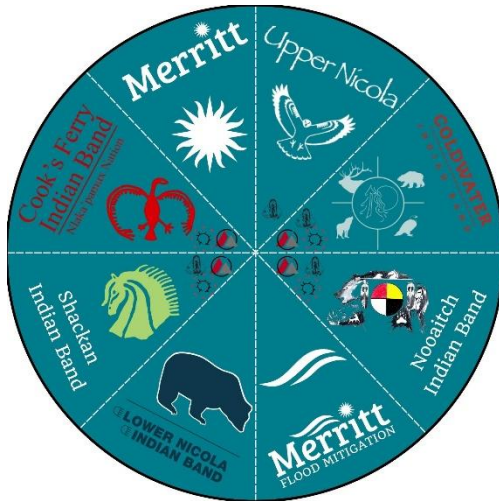
6.5 Communication Preferences

Through early engagement and ongoing communication, the Flood Mitigation Department has gathered each Nation's preferred communication methods, key contacts, and related information. This information is maintained internally and updated as needed to ensure respectful and consistent communication. All engagement regarding Flood Mitigation projects is coordinated through a single point of contact: the Indigenous Engagement Manager, Flood Mitigation Department.

NOTE: If your Nation or organization would like to update key contacts, please connect with the Indigenous Engagement Manager .

- Coldwater Indian Band (coldwaterband.com)
- Cook's Ferry Indian Band (cookserry.ca)
- Lower Nicola Indian Band (lnib.net)
- Nooaitch Indian Band (nooaitch.ca)
- Shackan Indian Band (shackan.ca)
- Upper Nicola Band (uppernicola.com)
- K'en T'em Limited Partnership (kentem.ca)
- Scw'exmx Tribal Council (scwexmxtribal.com)
- Citxw Nlaka'pamux Assembly (cna-trust.ca)

7.0 Engagement Approach

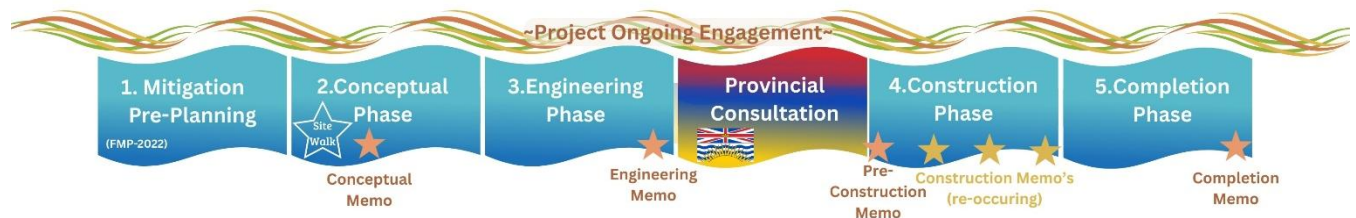


As the overarching principle, the Flood Mitigation Department is committed to engaging with each of the identified Indigenous communities at five key points in the project lifecycle to provide resiliency project updates. The proposed communication strategy includes information sharing at specific points, in order to maintain a systematic approach that is expected by all parties. Further, a key engagement intention is to ensure that each community is heard, that information and feedback are acknowledged and considered in a meaningful way, that concerns are addressed, that guidance and recommendations are implemented wherever possible, and that appropriate follow up is carried out.

Generally, references to the City of Merritt within the proposed engagement approach and activities are specific to the Flood Mitigation Department, who will lead most project delivery and engagement activities.

The first phase of engagement was completed as part of the creation of the Flood Mitigation Plan, while the remaining four phases will be undertaken at various steps throughout projects implemented within the Flood Mitigation Plan. Though each project will be considered and planned uniquely, examples of the key points at which the Flood Mitigation Department may engage with participants can be visualized below:

Project Phases and Engagement Milestones



7.1 Mitigation Pre-Planning (Complete) - FMP 2022

Pre-planning engagement was primarily conducted during development of the Flood Mitigation Plan. During this phase of engagement, the Flood Mitigation Department engaged in high level conversations with the Chiefs of each community, community leaders and staff, and the Nicola Watershed Governance Partnership to identify issues that the Flood Mitigation Plan must address and values that it must incorporate. The City also sought preliminary feedback from each community on what future phases of engagement should look like. The Indigenous Leaders were also formally invited to the two open house sessions as part of the Flood Mitigation Plan development. The input and feedback received during pre-planning engagement is included in Section 6.0, above.

Once it was ready, the Flood Mitigation Department circulated the Flood Mitigation Plan and all appendices to the Chief and Council of the Bands, along with administrative and technical staff

that have been identified for each community. The City then set up individual meetings with each Band to review the proposed plan and engagement framework to ensure that it accurately heard and implemented the recommendations that were collected during pre-planning engagement. As necessary, portions of the plan, including the engagement framework, were revised based on community feedback and guidance.

During pre-planning, several flood mitigation objectives were identified by the Bands and compiled as inputs to the design process. As the Flood Mitigation Department continues to work with the Provincial and Federal Governments to identify funding sources to pay for the costs of implementing the flood mitigation projects, engagement will continue, and specific project objectives provided by the Bands will be collected. These objectives will form an important basis for detailed project design and will also set the framework for measuring success and reporting to the communities throughout the construction process through to project completion.

7.2 Conceptual Phase Memo

Conceptual Phase of the design is an early project stage (approximately 30% design) that aims to take a client's project requirements and translate them into ideas that can be visualized. Part of this preparation is for the Flood Mitigation Department and engineering firm to organize a "Site Walk" with Indigenous Communities and include it in the Conceptual Design Phase Memo. Also included in the Memo will be these key details:

- Location Map and Early Site Plans
- Anticipated Regulatory and Permitting Processes
- Anticipated Schedule of Phases/Timelines/Procurement and Logistics
- Archaeological or Heritage/Cultural Impacts
- Environmental Impacts
- Project Contacts
- Supporting Documents and Reports:
- Project Photos

This Memo will then be shared with the Indigenous Communities. With this Memo the City will encourage input and feedback which may look like:

- Traditional Knowledge
- Advice on potential impacts to the environment
- Historical or Heritage/Cultural context
- Traditional customs
- Opportunities and/or partnerships

There may be important input on project delivery that needs to be considered. Incorporating early and proactively creates better opportunities for meaningful feedback and helps build stronger, lasting relationships.

7.3 Engineering Memo

After the Conceptual Design Phase of a project, it then proceeds to Engineering Design Phase (75-80% Design), often with the same engineering firm who did the Conceptual Design (preliminary engineering). During Engineering Design Phase, the project is sent for permitting and tendering. By the conclusion of the Detailed Engineering Phase, the project will have:

- completed drawings
- survey data, Environmental Management Plan
- and all of the other documents required for completion

At the same time, the project plan must be detailed enough to identify potential alignments, environmental impacts and mitigation measures, construction windows, and other key considerations. With this in mind, the Merritt Flood Mitigation Team has established target timelines for Conceptual Design and Engineering Design Phase Memos to align with the development of the Environmental Management Plan and support information sharing with Indigenous communities.

This approach is intended to allow sufficient time for feedback and plan adjustments prior to submission to regulators. Where feedback is received after submission, it can still be incorporated through the Province's formal consultation process.

The Engineering Design Phase memo will be a more complex document, intended to be read and used by more technical staff. It will contain, at minimum:

An Engineering Design Phase Memo from the Engineer of Record, describing:

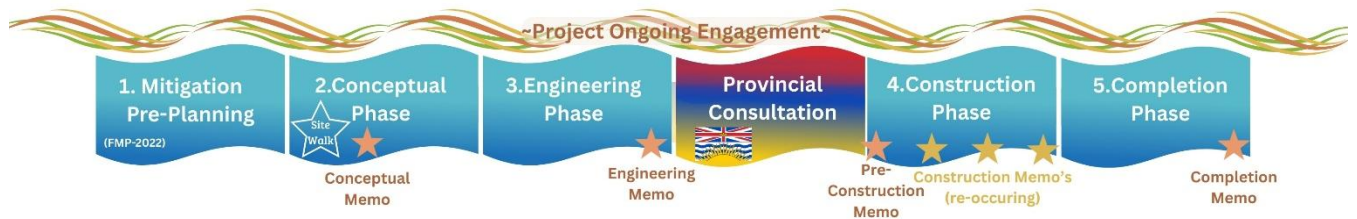
- Project background
- Location
- A summary of work done to date
- Studies Carried Out, to-date
 - Fish Habitat Assessment
 - Archaeological Impact Assessment
 - Contaminated Sites Assessment
 - Bird Cavity Assessment
- Environmental Management Plan summary, etc.
- Draft technical drawings of the proposed project
- Draft Environmental Management Plan for the Proposed Project
- Supporting Documents and Reports
- Project Contacts
- Project Photos

The Flood Mitigation Team will accept and comment on any feedback, consider it in a meaningful and genuine way, and incorporate this feedback wherever possible. By adding this process before project submission for permitting, Merritt hopes to maximize the ability to incorporate feedback into the final design. Any feedback is welcome, but not mandatory, and at the conclusion of the engineering phase, the project will be sent to the regulators. At this point, the formal, legally

required Consultation process will begin between the Provincial/Federal government and the land title and rights holders.

At the conclusion of this phase of engagement, if any community wishes to provide formal support for a project, they will be invited to provide a letter of support or non-objection, which may support consultation efforts as well.

Project Phases and Engagement Milestones



7.4 Provincial Consultation

Under currently regulated consultation guidelines, land title and rights holders do not see this work until it is complete and sent in to the Provincial and Federal regulators. Merritt wishes to begin engagement, communicate, and provide an opportunity for feedback during the design phase, not after it is completed.

- Refer to Section 2.1 Duty to Consult.

7.5 Pre-Construction Memo (Within the Construction Phase)

Once the Provincial Consultation is completed, the Pre-Construction Phase Memo can be shared with the Indigenous Communities.

Pre-Construction Memo will be sent out prior to construction start. The Pre-Construction Phase Memo will include information such as:

- Project overview (executive summary of the plan for the project)
- Environmental Work Plan
- Heritage/Cultural Work Plan
- Construction Plan
- Construction Schedule
- Project Contacts
- Pre-Project Photos

7.6 Construction Memo

During the construction phase, the Flood Mitigation Department will aim to provide the Indigenous Communities with regular, detailed information on project progress and issues such that their leaders can confidently respond to issues or questions in a timely manner.

Since construction activities for flood mitigation projects are likely to span the course of multiple years, this will likely be the longest phase of engagement. Construction Memos will be sent out weekly if works are in-or-near the water and monthly thereafter. Construction Phase Memo's will include information such as:

- Project Overview
- Environmental Update
- Heritage/Cultural Update
- Construction Update
- Schedule Update
- Project Contacts
- Project photos

7.7 Completion Memo

At the conclusion of a project, after the final Construction Memo, a Construction Completion Phase Memo will be prepared detailing the steps that were taken to meet the project objectives identified during the earlier phases of engagement:

- Project Overview
- Environmental Considerations
- Heritage/Cultural Considerations
- Previous Phase Memo's and Supporting Studies
- Indigenous Engagement Manager Contact
- Project Completion Photos

The final Construction Completion Memo will also be provided to the Indigenous Communities and posted on the flood.merritt.ca website.

8.0 Engagement Activities

8.1 Overview

Within the approach defined above, engagement touchpoints are expected to vary depending on numerous factors (See section 4.3) such as:

- Engagement participants (and number of)
- Project scope of work
- Project duration
- Project delivery methodology/phases

8.2 Potential Activities

Below are examples of engagement activities that may be considered by the parties when developing an engagement strategy and plan for a project. Certain activities will be applicable during one or more phases of a project, or potentially not at all, depending on the individual project details, timelines and engagement participant interest.

Example Engagement Methods and Activities	Project / Engagement Phase			
	Conceptual Design	Detailed Design & Engineering	Pre-Construction/ Construction	Construction Completion
Flood Mitigation Department, City of Merritt:				
Provide notice of upcoming project to Indigenous Communities and respond to inquiries.	✓			
Develop, communicate and collaborate on project-specific engagement plans.	✓	✓		
Provide information sharing memo(s).	✓	✓	✓	
Conduct design activities/design sessions.		✓		
Collaborative refinement of the design and delivery plans as it pertains to engagement.		✓		
Request project letter of support.	✓	✓		
Carry out construction activities.			✓	
Carry out commissioning activities.			✓	
Communicate and collaborate on project-specific engagement plans.			✓	
Collaborative refinement of the delivery plans, where possible, as it pertains to engagement.			✓	
Host visit or site walk.	✓			✓
Present to Band Chief and Council or other groups.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Host relationship-building activity (dinner or other team-building activity).	✓	✓	✓	✓
Host collaboration sessions outlining what has been done to date, current state of activities, and inclusion of feedback on the plan ahead.	✓	✓	✓	
Partake in discussions on collaboration opportunities, partnerships, etc.	✓	✓	✓	
Inform Indigenous Communities of project status and respond to inquiries in a timely fashion.	✓	✓	✓	
Provide in-person or online updates to Indigenous Communities as requested.	✓	✓	✓	
Provide informal project updates or hold various discussions.	✓	✓	✓	
Hold specialized committee meetings as needed.	✓	✓	✓	
Provide construction completion and engagement summary reports.				✓
Follow up activities as needed.				✓

Engagement Participants:	Project / Engagement Phase			
	Conceptual Design	Detailed Design & Engineering	Pre-Construction/ Construction	Construction Completion
Detail the desired level of engagement and any specific objectives.	✓	✓		
Participate in collaboration sessions to discuss, inform, and provide feedback on the upcoming project(s).	✓	✓	✓	
Review project information provided; advise on Traditional Knowledge, historical and Heritage/Cultural context; provide comments, feedback, etc.	✓	✓	✓	
Provide input and feedback and collaborate on engagement plans.	✓	✓	✓	
Provide input and feedback on the design and delivery plans.		✓		
Provide project letter of support.	✓	✓		
Provide input and feedback on the delivery plans, where possible.			✓	
Participate in Knowledge Keeper sessions.	✓	✓	✓	
Participate in in-person design sessions, committee meetings, events, etc.	✓	✓	✓	
Partake in discussions on collaboration opportunities, partnerships, etc.	✓	✓	✓	
Participate in focused input sessions on an as-needed basis.	✓	✓	✓	
Review project information provided; provide comments, feedback, etc.				✓
Participate in final meetings, events, etc.				✓
Follow up activities as needed.				✓

8.3 Additional Engagement Programs

STUWI(x) Steering Committee, Indigenous Community Collaboration.

The STUWI(x) Naturalization Project is a community-led, Indigenous-guided initiative located at the confluence of the Coldwater and Nicola Rivers in Merritt, BC. It focuses on restoring a heavily impacted floodplain by returning the river to a more natural state while strengthening long-term flood resilience.

The project brings together representatives from local Bands, a community of Merritt member through a Steering Committee that guides all major decisions. Blending traditional knowledge with green infrastructure initiatives, the project prioritizes ecological restoration, Heritage/Cultural values, and sustainable flood mitigation.

Key phases include voluntary land acquisition, removal of man-made objects from high-risk areas, collaborative design, and implementation of a naturalized floodplain. Outcomes aim to improve habitat, support biodiversity, and allow the river more space to function naturally.

For the most up-to-date information, visit flood.merritt.ca/project/STUWIx.

9.0 Ongoing Development and Relationship Building



The Flood Mitigation Department is committed to implementing, updating and improving upon this Indigenous Engagement Plan as flood mitigation projects are delivered and engagement continues. In future revisions, successes and lessons learned will be documented in this section to enable continuous improvement and accountability – both as contributors to relationship building with our neighbouring Indigenous Communities.

The responsibility of updating this document will belong to the Flood Mitigation Department's Indigenous Engagement Manager. It will be updated a minimum of once per year or more often if needed. Engagement identifiers (see Section 4.3) will continue to be assessed by the Flood Mitigation Department and with the participating Indigenous Communities, and will be tracked and summarized in an annual report. This will allow the Department and the Indigenous Communities to individually and collectively assess engagement to date and identify areas for improvement.

Other means of assessment and improvement may include discussions and meetings with the Indigenous Communities, feedback from Indigenous Communities, surveys, etc. In future, this section may also incorporate any shared commitments that are developed as additional benefits out of this Indigenous Engagement Plan, and examples.

During the yearly update process, this document will be circulated to the contacts in section 6.3, with any updates summarized.

The Flood Mitigation Department, City of Merritt looks forward to reviewing this plan with the Indigenous Communities of the Nle?kepmx and Syilx Nations and to collaborating and furthering our relationships.

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10.0 Resources/References

Reports:

Associated Engineering (BC) Ltd., 2022. *Flood Mitigation Plan*. Project Number 2021-2385-02.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*.

Legal:

The Constitution Act, 1982, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982 (UK)*, 1982, c 11.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, Resolution 61/295 / adopted by the General Assembly, 2007, A/RES/61/295.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Act, SC 2021, c 14.

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, SBC 2019, c 44.

