



Indigenous consultation during COVID-19

Overview

Due to the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority has adjusted its approach to Indigenous consultation to ensure that key projects continue to proceed while continuing to obtain feedback and facilitate important discussion with Indigenous groups. The following outlines the approach to Indigenous consultation for Project and Environmental Reviews (PER) during COVID-19. Use this information concurrently with the Indigenous Consultation – Information for Applicants document posted on our [website](#) until further notice.

Indigenous consultation during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Port of Vancouver plays a vital economic role in Canada by connecting consumers and businesses with the global marketplace. At the port authority, as we respond to the extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19, the health and safety of our employees, customers, operators and stakeholders is our top priority. The Port of Vancouver remains open for business, keeping the supply of important goods moving through the port to ensure Canadian businesses and Canadian livelihoods continue to thrive, right across the country. During this challenging time, the port authority continues to support the delivery of critical trade-enabling projects and engagement remains an important element for any project progressing within the PER process.

The port authority recognizes that Indigenous governments are responding to COVID-19 health agency recommendations. While each Nation may take a slightly different approach to following these recommendations, protecting their communities is their highest priority. In consideration of these circumstances, it is important to be flexible and sensitive to the current health crisis. The port authority has outlined its approach to Indigenous consultation and engagement below.

Proactive:

- Engage Indigenous referral staff to determine capacity and identify potential Nations requiring support or potential participation challenges
- Identify technological solutions and provide technological support for Nations

Flexible:

- Adapt response options (i.e., conference calls, digital meetings or workshops, and/or data sharing through online portals)
- Extend response timelines when possible
- Respond to engagement needs

Alternative approaches:

- Collaborate with Indigenous groups to determine suitable engagement alternatives on a case by case basis
- Coordinate with Indigenous staff, consultants or port authority employees attending site visits and those Indigenous staff unable to attend, utilizing technology for remote participation

Prioritize:

- Defer non-critical path activities or consultation to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on Indigenous partners and organizations

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Regular updates to this document will be made to reflect the changing practices that emerge as we work with Indigenous groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For additional information or questions regarding the port authority's approach to Indigenous consultation during this time, please contact the Manager, Project Consultation, Planning and Development by email at Karen.Neilson@portvancouver.com.