

ENGAGEMENT REPORT AUGUST 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In late 2018 and early 2019, engagement took place to understand the appropriate structure to bring forward actions relations to the truth, healing and reconciliation in the City of St. Albert. This report summarizes the conversations that took place with organizations, residents and staff in the form of recommendations.

KINANÂSKOMITIN / MARSEE / THANK YOU'S

We thank the members of the Reconciliation St. Albert Circle, especially the knowledge keepers Hazel McKennett and Tom Ghostkeeper. Sadly, Elder Ghostkeeper passed on to the spirit world while this project was underway. His dedication to Reconciliation in St. Albert, advice and guidance throughout the process will be remembered and hopefully his vision realized through the actions that will come forward.

We express our sincere gratitude to the Indigenous communities and allies for taking the time to meet with the consulting team and municipal staff. We'd especially like to the thank Michif Cultural Connections, who provided the foundation upon which this Reconciliation initiative was built. Their continuous effort to bring education, culture and language to the process cannot be overlooked. Their consistent programming and innovation are not only commendable but truly one of the reasons that Reconciliation is underway. We give a special mention to the St. Albert Public Library, Poundmakers Lodge, the St. Albert RCMP Detachment, the St. Albert Arts and Heritage Foundation (Musée Héritage Museum) and the Art Gallery of St. Albert and the St. Albert – Sturgeon County Métis Local for their contributions and efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Reconciliation is a priority of the City of St. Albert. Based on a desire for further work to be completed, a taskforce was established, renamed and expanded. The intention is to establish a structure that will establish and implement an action plan for Reconciliation in St. Albert.

The City of St. Albert plays a very important role, both as a decision maker for how the community is planned and evolves but also as a provider of services and programs. Municipal services and decisions affect the daily lives of residents, business owners and neighbours. Whether it be investment in capital infrastructure, land-use decisions, or economic development, many of the decisions made today will impact the lives of future generations living in the St. Albert area. It is important local government actions are informed not only through engagement with residents, but with a clear understanding and respectful consideration of First Nations and Metis concerns.

In the local government context, there are minimum legislated requirements for Indigenous consultation and notification, such as statutory documents or land developments. As reconciliation within municipalities has evolved in the past decade, we are seeing examples of innovative and collaborative planning and development between Indigenous groups and Municipal governments. By

sharing information more freely and consulting Indigenous groups earlier in decision-making processes, communities are reaping the benefit of more voices, diversity of ideas and ultimately broader community understanding of the complexity of issues being addressed.

PAYHONIN: WHAT'S BEHIND THE NAME?

Payhonin is a Cree word for gathering place and is a traditional Indigenous description of the valley where St. Albert is located. Many stories passed down through the Nehiyaw people describe numerous places at certain lakes and along the Sturgeon River valley as places of Payhonin to rest, camp or use as navigable coordinates in their travels. One way to think of the term Payhonin is referring not to a specific location like St. Albert, but to a place for something to happen. Each reference to Payhonin has context for a given place and time.

In the case of our working circle, we are using Payhonin to refer to our community's collective journey toward reconciliation. Payhonin is a term that may be interpreted in different ways. Members of the Indigenous community have different perspectives on use of the term. As we continue on our journey toward reconciliation, we invited community members to share their thoughts on the term Payhonin and what it means to them. Our conversations about Payhonin will help increase our understanding of the term, provide context for our respective viewpoints, and foster conversations on how we can move forward in this work together.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

A Land Acknowledgement is an opportunity for the City of St. Albert to recognize that we are residing and working in First Nation and Métis traditional territory. This statement was discussed with the Reconciliation Committee, Mayor and Council, Indigenous organizations and public at large both in person and through an online survey. The team decided on two versions. A formal land acknowledgement that would be available on print materials and should be widely displayed throughout Municipal spaces, especially meeting areas. The other, an informal land acknowledgement that could be used at the start of a meeting, if no other order of government have also acknowledged Indigenous land in a respectful manner.

Formal Land Acknowledgement	Informal Land Acknowledgement
Council Meetings	In Camera & Administrative Meetings
Sports & Tourism Events	Committee Meetings
Public Announcements	At the commencement of programming
Large Public Gatherings	Small Public Gatherings
Central meeting places and public spaces in print	Internal Website

It is recommended that the land acknowledgment starts off the conversation, if there is a prayer or blessing, it should take place immediately afterwards by the Master of Ceremonies or host of the event.

These land acknowledgements are to be used as a guide, as it is always encouraged that individuals should take the time to understand the land that they are visiting, working or living upon and its history. Well researched and authentic land acknowledgements that respect the uniqueness of St. Albert and the Indigenous people who live here, are most appreciated and impactful. It is not the intention that these suggested Land Acknowledgement Statements be used as a script that is mechanically recited over and over again at various events. That would turn the statement into an empty gesture or checkmark, rather than a genuine effort to establish a foundation of reconciliation for all discussions.

The land acknowledgement statements were the result of a dialogue on suggested wording and edited as the engagement process progressed. Throughout the engagement period, these land acknowledgments evolved through four versions ending on the current proposed land acknowledgment. These words should be treated as a living document, checked on a frequent basis, responsive to changing terminology and recognizing Indigenous innovations both historically and in the present.

FORMAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Metis peoples. As treaty People, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, we share the responsibility for stewardship of this beautiful land.

INFORMAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Metis peoples.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Short Term (0-6 months):

Clarify decision-making processes to make it easier for Indigenous groups and people to provide input into municipal decisions:

Recommendation 1: Develop a detailed or comprehensive Reconciliation plan for St. Albert.

Recommendation 2: The Reconciliation plan should be overseen by a Council committee that is cochaired by Indigenous people or representatives of Indigenous organizations and include a number of representatives from Indigenous communities.

Recommendation 3: Establish sustainable funding for the committee and ongoing programming related to truth and reconciliation, for example, per capita budgeting.

Recommendation 4: Adopt the Land Acknowledgements, both formal and informal, to be used at City of St. Albert gatherings, events, on print material, and throughout municipal spaces.

Expand or establish communication channels to Indigenous groups and individuals and provide earlier notification and involvement where appropriate:

Recommendation 5: Establish a City of St. Albert full time equivalent position to work on reconciliation initiatives with the Committee as well as maintain relationships with Indigenous organizations and people in St. Albert.¹

Recommendation 6: With administrative support, request leadership to leadership, nation-to-nation meetings with Indigenous organizations. The goal is to establish a regular dialogue about opportunities, issues and upcoming decisions.

Medium Term (6-12 months)

Build municipal organizational capacity to support increased Indigenous relations competency:

Recommendation 7: City of St. Albert administration consistently offer training opportunities both online and in-person to ensure that all Municipal staff have access.

Recommendation 8: Include Indigenous Awareness workshops and Blanket Exercises, as part of new Council orientation to orient Council and senior leadership to reconciliation and respectful relations with Indigenous organizations and people.

Recommendation 9: Seek input on project-specific methods of dialogue with Indigenous communities, prior to commencing broader engagement, in order to follow proper and respectful protocols.

Recommendation 10: Amend the flag policy to have the Treaty 6 and Métis flags hung next to the Canadian flag, followed by the provincial and municipal flags, recognizing that First Nations and Métis Nations are sovereign entities. This should apply to all flags that are under the control of the City of St. Albert and located in both indoor and outdoor venues.

Long Term (12 months and further)

Cultivate a culture of Reconciliation:

Recommendation 11: Report annually on reconciliation efforts and submit to the City of St. Albert Council and the National Centre for Truth & Reconciliation. Include information about learnings and progress made toward improving the relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Recommendation 12: Recognize and celebrate success and learnings as achieved, not only by the City as a whole, but individual staff and community members who contribute to Reconciliation.

¹ In keeping with the seven generations planning.

Invest in infrastructure that contributes to reconciliation:

Recommendation 13: Consider the installation of two additional flag poles at all Municipal flagpole locations to have Métis and Treaty 6 flags permanently flying.

Recommendation 14: Consider permanent spaces, both indoor and outdoor, for delivery of Indigenous cultural programming and space for Indigenous organizations and their administrations to be housed.

PROJECT VISION

The project was initiated by St. Albert City Council on September 11, 2017, when it passed the following motions in support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action Report.

The goal of the motion was to address the Calls to Action identified in the report that relate to the City of St. Albert. Administration had established an internal Indigenous Reconciliation Task Force to begin to address the actions identified by Council. That Taskforce evolved with the inclusion of Elders and other community partners, to a Circle. The Circle continues to be committed to moving forward & addressing the Calls to Action related to municipal level of government.

Reconciliation is an ongoing process. This project is the first of three phases. One of the most important aspects recognized was for the City of St. Albert to move through this process in a respectful manner recognizing Indigenous cultural traditions and protocols to enable a positive move forward with Indigenous communities. Based on our initial meetings and informal consultations with Indigenous

That the City of St. Albert supports all Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report; and

That Administration facilitate a meeting with local Indigenous Elders to seek advice regarding the creation of an Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee and to address the relevant Calls to Action, at the municipal level, of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and to provide advice to Council and Administration on matters of interest to Indigenous peoples; and

That following the consultation with local Indigenous Elders, possibly including youth, that Administration prepare a report summarizing the learnings from the meeting and a proposed approach to developing a plan to address the relevant Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and

That an Indigenous Cultural Awareness Workshop be conducted with Council during 2018; and

That Administration consult with local Indigenous Elders to develop an inclusive acknowledgement statement for civic events, ceremonies and functions.

communities, City of St. Albert administration learned that the process of how the City engages and who they engage with as well as the process and protocol are extremely important.

THREE PHASED APPROACH TO RECONCILIATION

PHASE 1 – INFORMATION GATHERING

PHASE 2 – RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANNING

PHASE 3 – IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

MUNICIPAL RECONCILIATION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada mission was to inform all Canadians about the scope and legacy of the colonial systems imposed upon all Indigenous people in Canada. In June 2015, the Commission released a report that contained 94 calls to action.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada defines Reconciliation as "an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships". The Commission further explains that "concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change" and "revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions" that will inform the reconciliation process, are crucial parts of this process.

Reconciliation is a process, involving symbolic and practical actions, that contribute towards the development of respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It is more than language, it is government and public servants taking the time to understand, value and use Indigenous histories, realities and ways of knowing in its operations.

Municipal governments can play an important role in Reconciliation. While there are specific recommendations for local governments, an even more important action is the righting of relationships with Indigenous peoples and groups. Municipalities, by nature, are the front facing level of government that offer services that affect people's daily lives. This interaction offers an opportunity to have ongoing, continual partnership and relationship building.

The report identifies additional Calls to Actions for all levels of government associated with administrative costs, health care practitioners, adequate funding for victim services, annual reporting on progress toward reconciliation, school funding for denominational schools for Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices, collaboration on telling the history of Aboriginal athletes, and support for the North American Indigenous Games.²

A neighbouring municipality, the City of Edmonton, have commenced their reconciliation activities by training more than 10,000 city employees about the history and impact of colonialism on Indigenous people. They are presently engaging the broader City of Edmonton population through community conversations to learn more about how they can strengthen relations with urban Indigenous people. Similar sized municipalities in Alberta, the City of Grande Prairie and the Regional Municipality of Wood

² S

Buffalo are currently undertaking reconciliation activities. The City of Grande Prairie has "Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous people" as a priority item for their Youth Council and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is in the process of developing a reconciliation framework to inform their activities in the future.

Other Municipalities, such as the Town of St. Paul, together with surrounding First Nations, formed a reconciliation committee who hosted racism forums to address the division that existed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Supportive collaborations, such as seeking recognition as an Indigenous Municipality, is underway at the Improvement District No. 17 which may result in increased infrastructure funding.

Smaller centres such as the Town of Devon and the Town of Canmore have focused their efforts on bringing in education opportunities for staff and residents. The Town of Canmore brought in the Kairos Blanket Exercise and the Town of Devon recently welcomed the Michif Cultural Connections.

Other steps taken by Municipalities in Alberta include (but are not limited to):

- 1. Education and awareness activities, such as:
 - Using arts and culture to raise awareness and generate dialogue on reconciliation;
 - Delivering informative and experiential workshops;
- 2. Supporting youth dialogue to explore common goals and opportunities for action, exchange of community ideas and challenges to improve systemic processes and shared capacity building;
- 3. Cultural events and community gatherings that feature connection, engagement, participation, cultural sharing and skills development, such as:
 - Healing/talking circles;
 - Culture camps and/or gatherings of participants with a focus on incorporating cultural elements and language into the dialogue;
 - Performances;
 - Feasts;
 - Resilience and strength-themed events or programs, including activities that speak to sense of self, sense of family, sense of community and sense of culture, language and connection to land.

These steps that are taking place all across Alberta is the start of transformational change. Federation of Canadian Municipalities Past-President, Clark Somerville said it best: "Only by shining light on our dark past can we ensure a brighter future for all of Canada's children" (Sommerville, 2017).

#PAYHONIN

I ______, in the spirit of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, solemnly pledge to:

- Learn more about Indigenous Peoples, their experiences and their history;
- 2. Actively support positive change in our relations in St. Albert;
- 3. Examine colonial structures in our institutions that limit the full participation of Indigenous Peoples;
- 4. Look for ways, both personally and professionally, to implement Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action;
- 5. Find ways to address the Indigenous-related myths and misconceptions with my fellow Canadians;
- 6. Not perpetuate stereotypes in my conversations or observations; and
- 7. Encourage others around me to keep reconciliation an ongoing effort.

Building on earlier work of municipal staff and St. Albert Indigenous communities, along with input collected from December 2018 to May 2019, the Apakosis Consulting team heard from over one hundred staff and residents about their preferred pathway to reconciliation within the City of St. Albert municipal government.

During the same period, an online survey collected input from 178 residents and staff. As well, a review of reconciliation actions in other municipal governments was undertaken. The consulting team also met with the City of St. Albert's Mayor and Council and senior leadership team and collected input from staff to hear their perspectives as they relate to incorporating reconciliation, especially skills-based training into their work.

The online survey and in-person engagement events (focus groups, talking circles and a number of meetings and interviews) brought forth rich input that resulted in items ranked in importance to the community. Overall, there is a desire to see more education and awareness. The community wants more information about reconciliation, especially the history of residential schools, where there were two located in St. Albert. In terms of the structure, there is a desire to see a committee that is led by Indigenous representatives that have a direct line of communication to Mayor and Council and has adequate staff and financial support.

There is an overall agreement that relations are **somewhat positive** and there is a general interest about existing Indigenous programs and educational opportunities. Equally important is that there exists a strong sense of interest within the Indigenous community to share Indigenous culture with all.

While feedback is positive, the majority of Indigenous interviewees cited negative experiences within the boundaries of the City of St. Albert, especially in customer service interactions, highlighting the relationship the front-line role customer service experience plays in reconciliation. These experiences inspired the Circle to establish a pledge, encouraging citizens of St. Albert to step forward and commit themselves to further understanding and action.

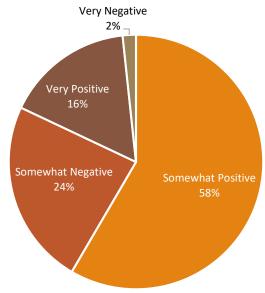
THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology principles included ensuring that meaningful Indigenous participation and knowledge, rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing. These principles are based on both traditional knowledge and academic literature on Municipal-Indigenous relations, Treaty 6 First Nation cultural protocols, Métis cultural protocols and reconciliation initiatives by other local levels of government in Canada.

The following table provides an overview of the engagement connections that took place from December 2018 to June 2019.

Engagement Events/ Interviews/ Meetings	Date(s)	Total Number of Individuals Engaged
Business Luncheon/Breakfast	January 31, 2019 and February 27, 2019	12
Michif Institute	February 1, 2019	1
Mus é e Heritage	February 5, 2019	1
RCMP	February 1, 2019	2
Poundmakers	February 26, 2019 and April 9, 2019	4
Elder Ghostkeeper	December 20, 2019	1
Sturgeon County – St. Albert Metis	January 16, 2019 and February 20, 2019	12
Public Library & Musée Heritage	January 22	2
Michel Band	February 19, 2019	1
Ministerial Circle	March 20, 2019	8
Payhonin Reconciliation Circle (City of St. Albert staff, Elders, Arts and Heritage Foundation, Michif Institute, RCMP and St. Albert Library)	December 11, 2018, January 23, February 5, 19, 25, March 5, 19, April 16, 30, May 16, June 13, 2019.	8
Launch Event	April 17, 2019	Approximately 100
Talking Circles	May 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, 2019	Approximately 78
Focus Groups	May 4, 11, 14 and 16, 2019	15
Surveys	May – June, 2019	178 respondents
Total Engaged Individuals 423		





Note: The survey results show reflects the internal and external surveys conducted with residents and staff from April - July 2019

RECONCILIATION IS THE PROCESS OF ACKNOWLEDGING THE PAST AND NOT ALLOWING THE BELIEFS OF PREJUDICE AND RACIST POLICY DICTATE HOW WE HONOR INDIGENOUS CULTURE IN A COMMUNITY FOUNDED BY THE MÉTIS AND OTHER INDIGENOUS CULTURES THAT WERE SETTLED IN THIS AREA.

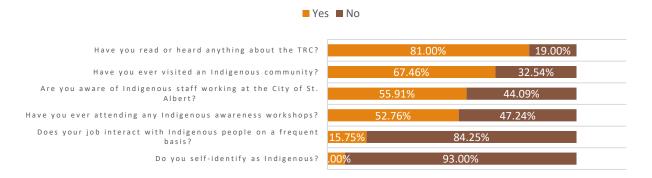
Survey Respondent

For Indigenous respondents, Circle members and community leaders, we heard loud and clear that being inclusive of Indigenous people, symbols and governance methods is what is necessary to move reconciliation forward. Inviting Indigenous governance methods into Municipal practices, will allow for decisions about reconciliation activities to be founded by traditional Indigenous laws, instead of colonial decision-making practices. What Indigenous laws and processes bring to the table an alternate and diverse method of problem solving. Indigenous laws derive from "the Creator, the land, and their own customs and decision making processes." (Morales & Nichols, 2018) This unique perspective should be spearheaded by someone who works within the City of St. Albert, that can establish continual and respectful relations with Indigenous leadership and communities (Recommendation 4). The majority of key recommendations that are proposed in this report relate to shared governance through the Reconciliation Committee as the foundation of reconciliation.

WHAT STAFF HAD TO SAY

Staff throughout the City of St. Albert have been open and willing to discuss their role as a public servant in the journey of reconciliation. The majority of respondents (75%) were interested and excited at the prospect of taking Indigenous Awareness training; those who were not had for the most part received extensive training from previous employers.

INTERNAL STAFF SURVEY



The general feeling amongst staff is to be cautious when interacting or reaching out to Indigenous communities due to lack of awareness and fear of being disrespectful, which has impeded the City of St. Albert's ability to strengthen relationships with Indigenous organizations and leadership. There is a strong desire to do the best job possible and achieve right relations with Indigenous residents and community groups.

LIMITATIONS

Municipalities in Alberta are faced with a challenge. How to implement reconciliation within municipal processes and policies, when many of those procedures are directed by the Provincial and Federal Government. The Government of Alberta has a significant role to play in the success of reconciliation initiatives, especially those related to land management and decision making. It is important that all parties understand that local governments are bound to legislative procedures established by the province.

In order to fully implement the Calls to Action, specifically the enactment of the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, there is need for dynamic legislative and policy shifts throughout provincial and federal jurisdictions.

CONCLUSION

Reconciliation is a journey. This report represents the first phase of gathering information on how to proceed in a manner that respects the cultures of Indigenous communities and peoples. On-going Indigenous input into decisions and services is an essential component of municipal community-

building. As Council and staff anticipate and respond to the needs of the community, it is important for them to provide avenues for sharing information, feedback and active and ongoing dialogue with Indigenous communities. Many of the decisions made by Council affect different people in different ways, welcoming more voices and diversity of opinion helps make better decisions.

Establishing an Indigenous Advisory Committee of Council (referred throughout this report as the Reconciliation Committee) and developing a reconciliation action plan that considers Indigenous voices in decision making processes will help Council, staff and the community to have better conversations with Indigenous partners about how best to community-build together. In addition to the action plan and committee, some of the other key considerations include:

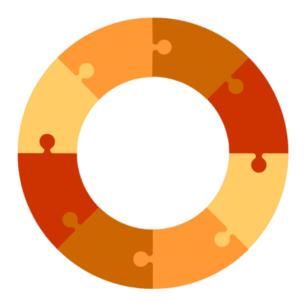
- offering opportunities for Indigenous governance methodology as the foundation of reconciliation and relationship building, and
- following the guiding principles of reconciliation in all activities, not just those associated directly with reconciliation.

These are practical and preliminary actions that would show that the City of St. Albert has taken the time to understand, value and use Indigenous histories, realities and ways of knowing as it relates to their role as a neighbour and in their role as a municipal government. Both roles play an important role in reconciliation.

As the order of government closest to people, there are numerous opportunities for public education and ongoing, continual partnership and relationship building with Indigenous communities. Across Canada, there are many examples of innovative and collaborative planning and development between Indigenous groups and municipal governments. Communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous are reaping the benefit of more voices, diversity of ideas and ultimately broader community understanding of the complexity of issues being addressed. Reconciliation is not only a dialogue starter, but a business and social economic development driver. The opportunity for a positive and fruitful relationship with Indigenous communities is dependent upon the follow-through of the public engagement-based recommendations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF RECONCILIATION

- 1. Engage Elders
- 2. Engage Youth
- 3. Do so respectfully
- 4. Do so positively
- 5. Recognize traditional lands, the right way



- Participate in an Indigenous Cultural Awareness Workshops
- 7. Understand the best way to keep talking with Indigenous residents and partners
- 8. Develop a Reconciliation plan

APPENDICES

NINE CALLS TO ACTIONS THAT MENTION MUNICIPAL OR ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT (SPECIFICALLY MUNICIPAL ARE IN DARK RED)

#40 We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

#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.

#64 We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.

#75 We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.

#77 We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the NCTR.

#87 We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.

#88 We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

REFERENCES

Morales, S., & Nichols, J. (2018). Reconciliation beyond the Box: The UN Declaration and Plurinational Federalism in Canada. *Centre for International Governance Innovation Online*.

Sommerville, C. (2017, April). Reconciling Canada Together. Municipal World.