



Legislation Text

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TAMRMS#: B06

Truth & Reconciliation Initiatives for Municipalities

Presented by: Kelly Jerrott, Director

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the City of St. Albert supports all Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Report.
2. 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.
3. That following the consultation with local Indigenous Elders, 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.
4. That an Indigenous Cultural Awareness Workshop be conducted with Council during 2018.
5. That Administration consult with local Indigenous Elders to develop an inclusive acknowledgement statement for civic events, ceremonies and functions.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with background information and research regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action Report, to assist in determining an approach and strategy to begin addressing those actions identified in the report that relate to our municipality.

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On May 2, 2016 Council passed the following motion:

(C275-2016)

That Administration perform the necessary research and consultation relative to the Truth and Reconciliation initiatives that affect municipalities in Canada and Alberta and report back to Council in Q3, 2017 and propose any future direction including any policy direction in this regard

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Overview: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an international instrument adopted by the United Nations on September 13, 2007, to enshrine the rights that “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.” Alberta is intent on implementing the principles and objectives of the UN Declaration so that First Nations, Metis and Inuit people are able to participate as equals in all aspects of Alberta’s society, while maintaining their cultures and unique identities. A copy of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Persons is included in attachment entitled: United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was established in 2007 to probe the history of Indian Residential Schools and its legacy and to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities and all Canadians. In June 2015, the TRC presented an Executive Summary of the findings contained in its multi-volume Final Report, including 94 "Calls to Action" to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples, as may be referenced in attachment entitled: **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action**.

In response to these Calls to Action, and to Council’s direction of May 2, 2016, Administration has performed the necessary research and consultation in order to propose some future actions. Administration has reviewed the 94 Calls to Action and identified those that are specifically directed to municipalities, those that indirectly affect municipalities and those that collaboratively affect municipalities, a copy of this list may be found in the attachment entitled: **TRC Calls to Action and UN Declarations Related to our Municipality**. We have also compiled an inventory of the programs and initiatives already in place that address the spirit and goals of the Calls to Action. A copy of the summary of this initial inventory is included in attachment entitled: **Summary of Current Programs and Services**.

Research: On July 28, 2017 Administration invited municipalities within the Capital Region to participate in a roundtable discussion about how they were approaching and addressing the reconciliation and the Calls to Action identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions’ Report. The City of Calgary, City of Lethbridge and City of Medicine Hat were invited to make presentations to the group. Present at the discussion were representatives from 11 municipalities (in addition to St. Albert), as well as representatives from the Government of Alberta Indigenous Relations Department, with 22 attendees in total. The following municipalities were represented: Town of Devon, Town of Beaumont, Strathcona County, City of Spruce Grove, Town of Morinville, City of Leduc, City of Edmonton, City of Fort Saskatchewan, City of Calgary, City of Lethbridge, City of Medicine Hat. Although not available to attend, interest was also expressed from, Parkland County, Sturgeon County and Leduc County.

It was discovered that where some municipalities have not yet begun to consider the implications of the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and to begin to address the Calls to Action, some others have long been forming relationships, bridging these issues, addressing these concerns and have developed formal reports, plans and policies.

The City of Calgary approved their Indigenous Policy Framework in April 2017, and also has a strategy document in place called “White Goose Flying”. Their Indigenous Policy includes initiatives such as:

- formal opportunities for City staff and Council to learn from Treaty 7 First Nations and urban indigenous communities.
- the development of an indigenous-relations office at the City of Calgary (motion pending).
- developing a formal welcoming protocol that recognizes Treaty 7 and the traditional peoples of the territory.
- designing strategies to help the city understand the effects of policy decisions on indigenous communities.

Overall, the City of Calgary is working to make an internal cultural shift so that business units are embracing the TRC work being done. A copy of White Goose Flying may be found in the attachment entitled: **City of Calgary White Goose Flying Report**.

The City of Edmonton signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Treaty 6 Nations in 2012. Council has not provided an explicit motion (in reaction to the work of the TRC and the calls to action) as their Indigenous Relations Department is already integrating this work throughout City Departments.

The City of Lethbridge, in partnership with the Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network has developed, through consultation and stakeholder participation, a Reconciliation Implementation Plan addressing the Calls to Action. Council has supported this plan which is in the process of being implemented. The Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network acts as an Advisory Committee to Council, and is largely comprised of indigenous members. A copy of the City of Lethbridge's Reconciliation Implementation Plan may be found in the attachment entitled: **City of Lethbridge Reconciliation Implementation Plan**.

Themes and Learnings: The main themes and learnings taken from the roundtable discussion include: the need to build and develop relationships with the indigenous community, particularly the Traditional Knowledge Keepers, and make them an active part, if not active part of any Indigenous Relations plan or policy development; the need to educate City Council and Administration and the public, and build relationships between business units and the community, and the need to consider the fiscal requirements of implementation.

Administration also reviewed actions taken by other municipalities and organizations, such as Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), as part of the research process. A copy of the FCM's Pathways to Reconciliation, Cities Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action may be found in the attachment entitled: **FCM Pathways to Reconciliation**.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

The following representatives from Administration were part of a sub-committee reviewing the TRC's Calls to Action in the preparation of this report to Council:

Director of Community and Social Development Services, Director of Cultural Services, Business Manager of Community and Protective Services, Government Relations Manager, and the Legislative Initiatives Officer. Preliminary consultation was also conducted with Legal Services.

Moving forward, it will be important to actively engage Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the Treaty Six First Nations, Metis and other non-status indigenous stakeholders from the local community.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

While funding assistance has already been secured from the Province of Alberta Urban Initiatives Program to assist with initiating Cultural Awareness Programs for Council and Administration and also the general public, additional resources will be required to support the potential Committee, on an ongoing basis.

Legal / Risk: N/A

Program or Service:

Indigenous Relations is a new portfolio within the City. While departments such as Community Social Development and Cultural Services have been providing initial support through existing services, as the City moves forward to address the Calls to Action and address needs in the community, a new service level and standard will be required to ensure community needs and expectations are met.

Organizational:

Additional resources will be required to support the consultation with Elders, and the longer-term work of the potential Committee, as the City moves forward toward reconciliation and addressing the relevant Calls to Action.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

1. Should Council not support the recommendations as presented, they may refer the matter back to Administration with direction.
2. Council could also choose to receive the report for information.

STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS

Social - We are a friendly and inclusive community of passionate equals, where everyone feels a sense of belonging. We believe that community starts with the person next door.

Economic - We prosper and excel through a strong and diverse economy that is supported by forward-thinking commerce, outstanding local businesses and a dynamic downtown core.

Built Environment - We build our community towards the future to sustain balanced development, with a reverent eye to the past, honouring our unique settlement history and distinct identity.

Natural Environment - We protect, embrace and treasure our deeply-rooted connections with the natural environment through championing environmental action.

Culture - We are proud of our storied history that has fed and nurtured our festive and culturally-rich community.

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