

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action Update – April 2021

The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with highlights of the City of Saskatoon's 2020 initiatives in responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.

ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon (City) has been continuing work towards implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action in 2020 by doing internal work as well as external work with a number of community partners through Reconciliation Saskatoon the Saskatoon Survivors Circle and the Saskatoon Police Service. A letter from SPS (Appendix 1) is attached that outlines their commitment to addressing and meeting the TRC Calls to Action in partnership with the City of Saskatoon.

BACKGROUND

On June 22, 2015, City Council directed the Administration to identify responses and financial implications of the TRC Calls to Action and declared July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 the Year of Reconciliation. The Administration was directed to work with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC), and other community groups, leaders, and institutions in Saskatchewan to promote reconciliation. The Administration reported on October 19, 2015, and was directed to provide regular updates outlining successes, as well as outstanding items, along with an update of events recognizing the Year of Reconciliation in Saskatoon. Accordingly, Administration has provided annual updates to City Council.

CURRENT STATUS

The City continues to champion and model implementing the TRC Calls to Action by working with community partners to ensure the City contributes to the collective movement. In doing so, the City collaborates and invests in initiatives like the annual Wicahitowin Indigenous Engagement conference, Rock Your Roots Walk for Reconciliation, Reconciliation Saskatoon Stewardship Committee and various Action Groups.

The City is currently undertaking a Pilot Project with Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) on Reconciliation Action & Measurement in order to assess progress and where the City is at with respect to reconciliation; identify gaps and increase the impact of the work. It will play a vital role on how Administration reports annually to City Council on the outcomes.

As part of the OTC work, a community of practice (CoP) was established with 23 staff from various departments, as well as Saskatoon Police Service and Saskatoon Public Library. Data about the City's current efforts to advance truth and reconciliation was

collected and analyzed, according to an OTC-developed methodology called the Growth Model.

The Growth Model proposed a series of steps and outcomes which was used to interpret the City's activities and prioritize recommendations. The environmental scan and mapping exercise identified 142 unique activities underway within the City. A number of recommendations were made for 2021 and 2022. Administration is currently in the process of conducting an analysis of the recommendations and will bring a report to City Council.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The following are highlights of 2020 initiatives.

New Director of Indigenous Initiatives

The City welcomed Melissa Cote as the new Director of Indigenous Initiatives in August of 2020. Melissa will continue to provide leadership to support the City's journey of reconciliation, develop strategies and activities that support and enhance an inclusive workplace for Indigenous people, and lead the development of short and long terms strategies relating to the TRCs Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Two-Spirit Calls for Justice.

Treaty Six & Métis Flags installed in City of Saskatoon Council Chambers

Early in 2020, the City responded to a request to show commitment to relationship building with Indigenous orders of government. Accordingly, the City permanently installed Treaty Six and Métis Flags in City of Saskatoon Council Chambers to recognize Indigenous orders of government and to symbolize the on-going commitment to foster relationship building with Indigenous leaders in Saskatoon and surrounding area.

Official Community Plan Redesign (OCP)

The OCP is the primary comprehensive policy framework for the collective vision of the City. The contents of the OCP can be interpreted as a continuous cycle with people at the center representing a diverse and equitable community. The redesign project was led by Planning and Development with the new OCP approved by City Council in June, 2020.

The redesigned OCP opens with recognition of the city's location within Treaty Six Territory where First Nation and Métis people have occupied lands since time immemorial. Presenting the OCP as a cycle with a circular table of contents represents a commitment to the goal of enhancing and honoring relationships with the original stewards of this land and brings an Indigenous perspective that emphasizes that no one section is more important than the others. This approach is also consistent with and respectful of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

As well, a team of City staff, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, each equipped with unique knowledge, experience and background was brought together to review the

document from an Indigenous perspective. Alongside this internal review of the document, the full OCP was provided to a highly respected Elder for additional insight.

Under the Elder's guidance, language was incorporated into the OCP to:

- Recognize the distinct order of government of First Nations and Métis, recognize the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) and Saskatoon's commitment to reconciliation and to responding to the Calls to Action (CTAs), and
- Commit to maintaining strong relationships through meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities and organizations.

It also includes policy to:

- Ensure the City's heritage, economic, and tourism programs and policies encourage appreciation for, and are reflective of, Saskatoon's varied history and cultures, including Indigenous communities and the true history of the region that predates Saskatoon's creation;
- Promote respect, understanding, and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of all people who may be racialized, and communities most affected by social inequities in Saskatoon;
- Engage and work together with First Nations, Métis communities and Indigenous organizations on economic opportunities and challenges facing the region;
- Support the creation of urban reserves and development interests; and
- Provide direction on Indigenous inclusion.

The process of reviewing the OCP from an Indigenous perspective and the care taken to ensure Saskatoon's commitment to reconciliation is accurately reflected in the City's primary city building document provides a framework for the City's long journey towards reconciliation.

21st Street Bike Rack Project

The City of Saskatoon Urban Design Team has undertaken projects to reinforce and renew 21st Street's historic character and to celebrate Saskatoon's rich Indigenous history. One such project is the installation of bicycle racks that display Treaty Six Territory and Homeland of the Métis medals. Elders Harry Lafond and Senator Nora Cummings were consulted during the development of the medals.

The bike racks were created in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action No. 79: *Participate in a strategy to commemorate the contributions and history of Aboriginal peoples to Canada*. Saskatoon is located on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis, these medals were chosen as meaningful symbols that could demonstrate respect for Saskatoon's Indigenous histories on one of the city's major historic streets.

In order to explain the significance of the medals and area history from a First Nations and Métis perspective, interpretive posters will be displayed in the street directories along 21st Street and a webpage will be created on the City's website. There will be an

official unveiling ceremony in the summer of 2021 to coincide with National Indigenous Peoples Day to commemorate the work on this project.

Implementing Memorandums of Understanding and Partnership Agreements

a) *Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) Prosperity Through Reconciliation Partnership Agreement*

This Agreement was signed in October 2019 with the overall goal of improving quality of life of urban Indigenous people in Saskatoon. A number of meetings between City and leadership from the Saskatoon Tribal Council officials have occurred. The 2021 workplan includes a range of activities indifferent sectors including sustainability, procurement, employment and training and community safety and wellbeing.

b) *MOU with the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT)*

This MOU was signed in 2018 to support Indigenous education, career development and training opportunities for SIIT students as well as clients of SIITs Career Centre. A workplan for 2021 has been developed.

Indigenous Initiatives Intern

Through a Work Experience Partnership with Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment program, the Indigenous Initiatives Department was able to bring on a recent graduate. The position will be extended for an additional six months through a partnership agreement with the Saskatoon Indigenous Community Action Partnership.

Saskatoon Survivors Circle

The Saskatoon Survivors Circle (SSC) was created by Survivors of the government run Indian residential schools in Saskatoon and area to create a safe space to connect with other survivors, share stories, foster a sense of community, while promoting wellness, inclusion and cultural protocols and teachings. Members of the SCC have been called upon by community groups and agencies to participate as advisors and speakers on topics regarding reconciliation. Elders and Survivors are key contributors to the work the Indigenous Initiatives Department does throughout the City. The Indigenous Initiatives Department continues to work with the SSC to provide and build capacity with respect to grant writing and administration. During the onset of COVID-19, the Indigenous Initiatives Department worked with local funding agencies to equip this group with 28 iPads to ensure Elders and Survivors can stay connected in a safe virtual environment, continue to meet and provide services, limit social isolation and increase wellness throughout the pandemic.

Reconciliation Saskatoon

The City continues to co-chair Reconciliation Saskatoon which is a collective of 115 community-based organizations, businesses, and non-profit faith-based groups that meet to provide education and learning opportunities on reconciliation. In 2019, an

evaluation of the City's response to the TRC Calls to Action was conducted, and recommendations were made in the "Pathway Forward Report." A Stewardship Committee was created to assist in the transition and implementation of the recommendations coming out of the Report. Members of the Stewardship Committee are Saskatoon Public Library, The Children's Advocate, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Office of the Treaty Commissioner, and the City. The Stewardship Committee is guided by Survivors and Knowledge Keepers to ensure their voices are heard, respected, and insights are incorporated in ongoing reconciliation initiatives. Another recommendation from the Pathway Forward Report was to create small working groups of people focused on fostering action in specific areas of reconciliation. In the fall of 2020, the following Action Groups were created: Business; Youth & Families; Two-Spirit Education; Book Club; and Newcomers.

Wicihitowin Indigenous Engagement Conference

The City provides significant financial and human resource support to the very successful annual Wicihitowin Indigenous Engagement Conference. The 6th Annual Conference, themed Through the Fire, held in October 2020 had just under 1,000 people registered, with a number of virtual attendees located in communities around the world. In addition to hosting a number of residential school survivors, sectors represented by those registered include: Indigenous, Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments, education and post-secondary education sectors, health sector, non-profit sector, unions and labour sector, and the business and economic development sector.

Indigenous Engagement

Despite COVID-19, the Indigenous Technical Advisory Group continues to see increasing interest from various project managers and departments to meet with them to seek advice and review projects as well as provide advice on approaches for further engagement. In addition, the number of City projects requiring advice on Indigenous engagement is increasing. Engaging with local Indigenous individuals, organizations, communities and leaders is critical to maintain our commitment to improving the quality of life of residents of Saskatoon and to continue responding to the TRC Calls to Action #43 and #53.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Most City initiatives that respond to the TRC Calls to Action are within existing budgets or reallocation based on priorities.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social, or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

Administration is currently working on an analysis of the recommendations made in the Office of the Treaty Commissioner Reconciliation Action & Measurement Pilot Project and a report will be brought back to City Council.

Administration has created a Stewardship Committee comprised of Community Services, Human Resources and Strategy and Transformation Divisions to provide vision, guidance, and inform key objectives for the development of a long-term strategy on Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI). Discussion is currently underway on the approach for planning the development of the long-term strategy.

APPENDIX

1. Letter from Dave Hays, Superintendent, Saskatoon Police Service dated March 11, 2021

Report Approval

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