

Indigenous Initiatives - 2021 Annual Report

ISSUE

Since the release of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the City of Saskatoon (City) has been focused on implementing policies, programs and practices that drive Reconciliation. The City has been recognized as a national leader in advancing Reconciliation and particularly, the relevant Calls to Action. This report will outline what achievements were led or supported by the Indigenous Initiatives Department in 2021. Moreover, it will highlight what actions will be taken in 2022 to advance the work it is doing on Reconciliation and other related initiatives.

To consider the full context, the report is meant to complement and be read in conjunction with the Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion 2021 Annual Report. It reflects on work not only within the organization but in our connection to and work with the Indigenous community.

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 presented a report at Committee 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.

To support this work, City Council approved \$595,300 for 2022 and \$569,300 for 2023 during budget deliberations in November 2021. These new capital and operating resources will go a long way to assisting in the many initiatives and areas of focus for Indigenous Initiatives.

For several years, the work of the Indigenous Initiatives Department (formerly Aboriginal Relations) has been broader than just reconciliation. Accordingly, this annual report responds to previous City Council direction and provides updates on Reconciliation, but also captures the complementary work that the Department does to advance the Reconciliation.

CURRENT STATUS

The Indigenous Initiatives Department is primarily responsible for building and maintaining relationships with the Indigenous community, Indigenous governments, and guiding the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action along with responding to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Two-Spirit Calls for Justice. This work requires us to work externally with the

community and internally with other departments at the City. Relationships are fundamental to achieving outcomes.

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

Internally, the development of a Reconciliation Community of Practice helps to develop a one-city approach and is a network of change champions and change agents established to assess and advance the City of Saskatoon's journey toward truth, reconciliation and Treaty implementation. This Community of Practice builds capacity within the organization to ensure continued action in meeting the TRC Calls to Action.

Important work is also being done by the City's statutory boards, namely the Saskatoon Public Library and the Saskatoon Police Service, many in collaboration with City. Appendix 1 and 2, respectively, provide an overview of the Reconciliation initiatives implemented by each of these boards.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Appendix 3 summarizes the many important City initiatives carried out in 2021, both internally and externally. The City is often looked to as a leader in reconciliation by the community and other municipalities and, as a result, expectations for action is high.

Looking Ahead to 2022

A focus of Indigenous Initiatives for 2022 is the implementation of several of the recommendations made through the Reconciliation Action and Measurement Pilot Project. In addition to engagement of Elders/Knowledge Keepers and survivors, it includes:

- Working in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Meewasin Valley Authority on the development of an urban ceremonial space or spaces. In the 2021 budget deliberations, the Indigenous Initiatives Department was approved for \$50K for the initial stages and engagement of a future urban ceremonial space or spaces. These funds will go towards partnership development, project management and engagement.
- Creating a communications strategy and designing marketing materials to ensure the City is reflective of the distinct groups of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, history, and land.
- Evaluating the effectiveness and make any improvements necessary in the delivery of the Reconciliation Ambassador Program.

Indigenous Initiatives will also be supporting the Sustainability Department and the Planning and Development Department in a Traditional Land Use and Knowledge

Assessment (TLU&KA) project. The purpose of the TLU&KA is to build relationships with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous organization(s) to assess historical and current Indigenous/traditional land uses, stories, and relationships of this landscape, identify significant cultural landscapes and other elements, and provide the City with recommendations for incorporating these findings into City land use planning.

In the 2022-23 budget deliberations, the Indigenous Initiatives Department was approved for funding for a Cultural Resource Liaison. This person will be key to the ongoing work of the Indigenous Initiatives Department and the support we provide to other departments at the City and Reconciliation Saskatoon. The work must be done in an authentic way. During 2021, Indigenous Initiatives through Reconciliation Saskatoon and the City was involved in over 450 engagements with Elders, survivors, youth, community advocates and people with lived experience. This number is expected to increase in 2022 and 2023 due to an increase in the amount of work Reconciliation Saskatoon does as well as an increase in the amount of City projects that will require Elder/knowledge keeper and survivor engagement.

Indigenous Initiatives will continue to work with the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Two Spirit (MMIWG2S) Advisory Group and City departments on implementation of the IWG2S* Coming Home Report. Communications and engagement are key components.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy, legal, environmental, privacy, financial or CPTED implications or considerations.

NEXT STEPS

Indigenous Initiatives will continue to work towards developing a short and long-term strategy for implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action and the MMIWG2S Calls for Justice. We will work with departments across the organization to focus efforts on the strategic initiatives and identified outcomes within the REDI priorities.

APPENDICES

1. Report from Saskatoon Public Library dated March 2022
2. Letter from Nolan Berg, Acting Superintendent, Saskatoon Police Service dated May 6, 2022
3. City of Saskatoon Indigenous Initiatives

Report Approval

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