

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 12, 2017
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy (CES17026) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

On April 8, 2015, Council endorsed the following motion:

That the City of Hamilton initiate an Indigenous Justice Strategy, consisting of:

- (i) A commitment by the Mayor, the City Manager, available senior staff, and any available Councillors to meet on an occasional basis with Hamilton area Indigenous leaders, at least twice per year, to discuss topics of concern to Indigenous people, with appropriate follow-up by City staff based on what is heard;
- (ii) Arrangements for training that creates awareness of the unique issues and circumstance faced by Indigenous persons be provided to City public servants who occasionally interact with Indigenous citizens;
- (iii) An official, symbolic commemoration by Council of the coming of the Witness Blanket to Hamilton;
- (iv) A letter sent by the Mayor of Hamilton to the Office of the Prime Minister, expressing Hamilton Council's desire that the Prime Minister take significant action on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous girls and women, so as to create greater justice and protection for Indigenous girls and women in Hamilton and across Canada; and,
- (v) That up to \$5,000 be provided to bring the Witness Blanket to Hamilton Central Library to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Information:

Background

The City of Hamilton is home to over 15,000 residents who identify as Indigenous, which is inclusive of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. A 2015 report by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton provides a socio-economic profile of Indigenous residents in the areas of education, employment and income levels. Most notably, the report identified the overrepresentation of Indigenous residents in Hamilton who experience homelessness and poverty. For example, 37% of Aboriginal children in Hamilton live in poverty compared to 21% of children in Hamilton's general population (Social Planning and Research Council, 2015).

Indigenous-led services and supports were first established in Hamilton over 40 years ago. Many Indigenous community members have been tireless advocates for creating improved access to culturally appropriate services for the Indigenous community. These services have grown into a network of non-profit agencies and grassroots groups that are critical resources to strategic relationship building between the City of Hamilton and urban Indigenous peoples.

City Council endorsed the motion to develop Hamilton's first urban Indigenous strategy in light of prominent national issues that have local significance, such as the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada documented the tragic legacy of Canada's Indian Residential School system through archives and the stories of the schools' survivors. The report issued 94 Calls to Action that governments, public institutions and the private sector should take up in order to foster reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Many of the Calls to Action are directed towards all levels of governments, including municipal governments. A summary of those Calls to Action relevant to municipal jurisdiction is attached as Appendix A to Report CES17026. Various municipalities across Canada have already begun taking initiatives to respond and implement some of these actions in their communities. An environmental scan of municipal activities is attached as Appendix B to Report CES17026.

In addition to efforts at reconciliation, other national Indigenous issues continue to have local impacts include Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and poverty. The development of Hamilton's first urban Indigenous strategy is expected to account for these pertinent issues, engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and determine how these issues can be addressed within municipal jurisdiction.

Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy

Project Goals & Objectives

The City of Hamilton has begun work to develop a strategy that will identify actions that will strengthen the City's relationship with the Indigenous community and demonstrate respect for Indigenous knowledge and cultures. The strategy will be developed in collaboration with the Indigenous community and guided by principles that honour traditional knowledge and teachings.

The key objectives of the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy include:

- Identify actions within municipal jurisdiction and capacity arising from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report.
- Celebrate and honour Indigenous people, cultures and traditions.
- Promote a greater understanding among all Hamiltonians through public education on the histories and contributions of Indigenous peoples.
- Create opportunities for education and internal collaboration among city staff to strengthen the relationship with the Indigenous community.

Project Development Process

Phase One: "Plant the strategy" (December 2016 - December 2017):

The strategy will establish the governance structure, guiding principles, and raise awareness of this new work among the Indigenous community and all Hamilton residents. This phase is focused on beginning the conversation and its outcomes will be critical to how the rest of the process evolves.

Phase Two: "Cultivate the strategy" (January 2018 – August 2018):

The strategy will convene working circles to focus on main areas of the plan. In Phase Two, Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents will be strategically engaged in a variety of ways about the needs and priorities for the strategy.

Phase Three: "Harvest the strategy" (September 2018 – December 2018):

The strategy will finalize and share the findings and recommendations from Phase Two with a strategic document. A process evaluation will be conducted as well as the development of an implementation plan.

A project brief has been developed for the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy and is attached as Appendix C to Report CES17026.

2017 Workplan and Key Priorities

Initial community outreach has begun through formal and informal connections, one-on-one meetings with community leaders and participating in community events. This

engagement continues to raise awareness of the strategy and learning about key community programs and priorities of strategic alignment to the strategy.

Project Governance and Research

- In 2017, community partners will be brought together at different tables to provide advice (a Partnership Circle), and drive the work (a Coordinating Circle). The Coordinating Circle has been formed and includes representatives from the Hamilton Aboriginal Advisory Committee, the Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition (“HEDAC”), the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic and support from city staff.
- A team of McMaster University students has conducted an environmental scan of 16 Canadian municipalities and found that all of these municipalities have begun looking at how to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Report. Some municipalities have also moved on to implementation.

Information Sharing

- A new webpage is under development: www.hamilton.ca/indigenous. The website will be providing current information and regular updates on the status of the strategy, key priorities, and upcoming engagement activities.
- Staff met the Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation to learn about the Ministry’s progress on an Urban Indigenous Action Plan for the province.
- Staff participated in the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre “Collaborating for Change” sessions and shared information on the City of Hamilton’s Urban Indigenous Strategy.
- Communications materials have been created for sharing information with the community and key Indigenous partners.
- Four media interviews have occurred and profiled the strategy. The media channels include TVO, CBC Hamilton, Hamilton Spectator and Cable 14.
- Staff continue to connect with key community Indigenous partners such as the Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition (HEDAC).
- Staff met with the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, and have provided an opportunity to discuss the strategy and begin building a relationship with both communities.

Celebrating and Highlighting Community Events

- Staff assisted the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic and the Six Nations Justice Program on a “Haudenosaunee Legal Principles” workshop on February 22, 2017.
- The Mayor and staff participated in a traditional ceremony with the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic to receive the Clinic’s “A Journey to ReconciliAction: Calls to Action Report” on February 23, 2017 in Council Chambers.
- Staff supported the Professional Aboriginal Advisory Networking Group (PAANG) on the 11th Annual *Celebration of Growth* event on May 11, 2017.
- Staff will continue to raise the profiles of community-led events and initiatives by Indigenous partners. Some of the 2017 identified priority events include:
 - The Soaring Spirits Festival in Gage Park, June 16-18, 2017
 - National Aboriginal Day, City Hall forecourt, June 21, 2017
 - The North American Indigenous Games at various facilities across Hamilton, July 16-22, 2017

Next Steps

Various community partners and stakeholders engaged since the launch of the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy have commended the City for taking leadership and moving in the right direction towards a long-lasting reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples of Hamilton. The strategy will continue to complete the project as identified within the three phases. The strategy will also specifically ensure the following throughout project development:

- Foster opportunities that enable dialogue between Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous residents and City staff.
- Provide regular updates to City Council on the progress of the strategy through staff reports.
- Create and communicate opportunities for all residents to become involved and inform strategy development.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES17026: Summary of Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action Directed At or Related to Municipal Governments

Appendix B to Report CES17026: Environmental Scan of Municipal Truth and
Reconciliation Initiatives

Appendix C to Report CES17026: Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy Project Brief