

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Healthy and Safe Communities Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	March 26, 2018
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy (CES17026(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

At the March 30, 2015, General Issues Meeting, Council approved the following:

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,

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.

- (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.

Information:

Background

In December 2016, the City of Hamilton began work on developing an Urban Indigenous Strategy that will identify actions and strengthen the City's relationship with the Indigenous community. The strategy will also demonstrate respect for Indigenous knowledge and cultures, and assist to promote a better understanding among all residents about Indigenous histories, cultures, experiences and contributions.

The Urban Indigenous Strategy is being developed in collaboration with Indigenous community partners and guided by principles that honour traditional knowledge, teachings and reciprocity. The key objectives of the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy include:

- Identify actions within municipal jurisdiction and capacity arising from the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 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 and service providers.

Key Project Accomplishments

Phase One: "Plant the Strategy": December 2016 – December 2017

The first phase of the Indigenous strategy project was focused on building relationships, increasing awareness and conducting research. The following were the key accomplishments within that period:

- **Establishment of a Coordinating Circle**
A Coordinating Circle was established to drive the strategy with membership comprised of Indigenous community partners and City staff. The Coordinating Circle Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix A to Report CES17026(a). The Coordinating Circle has reviewed the 94 Calls to Action from the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report and identified 17 actions to be addressed within the City's strategy.

- **Best Practices Research**
A research report by McMaster students on behalf of the Coordinating Circle looked at how Indigenous services providers in Hamilton are addressing the TRC Calls to Action. Report findings are attached as Appendix B to Report CES17026(a). The Coordinating Circle further reviewed actions that Canadian municipalities have taken to respond to the TRC Report and to develop urban Indigenous strategies.
- **Community Outreach**
Outreach and relationship building initiatives occurred through participation and partnership on community events. Examples include a Haudenosaunee Legal Principles workshop, a photo exhibit, the 12th Annual Celebration of Growth, the Soaring Spirits Festival, and an Ally=Action event. Hundreds of Indigenous partners, residents and staff attended these events.
- **Staff Engagement**
The Staff Circle on Indigenous Relations was established and is comprised of supervisors and managers from all City Departments. Its mandate is to champion relationship building, and identify opportunities for improved engagement with Indigenous peoples. The Corporate Leadership Team welcomed Amos Key Jr., Mohawk Nation, Turtle Clan, to speak about the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. Additional learning opportunities for staff included a Summer Doc Series and tours of the Chedoke Collection of Inuit Art at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. A separate staff working group also worked collaboratively to develop a Use of Indigenous Medicines Policy and Procedure.
- **Indigenous Partners' Community Conversation**
The Coordinating Circle held a community conversation on reconciliation with Indigenous community members on December 13, 2017 at the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre. 41 participants came and shared their experiences and views on what reconciliation means to them and what should happen in Hamilton. Educating City staff and the general public about Indigenous history and intergenerational trauma was one of the major recommendations.

The findings from Phase One have been organized into three key themes: Land, People and Spirit, which are based on the research, community feedback and the 17 TRC Calls to Action. An overview of the findings is attached as Appendix C to Report CES17026(a). These themes will be further explored as the project progresses in 2018.

2018 Work Plan and Key Priorities

Phase Two (January – August 2018) will focus on community engagement to explore the Land, People and Spirit emerging themes, and gather feedback on how the City can take action in relation to these themes. Key activities in Phase Two include:

- Hold a community conversation on reconciliation in the format of a KAIROS Blanket Exercise on March 19, 2018. This event is open to Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and service providers, and builds upon the first Indigenous community conversation on December 13, 2017.
- Continue consultation with community partners and First Nations leaders regarding the City's traditional land acknowledgement.
- Explore the theme Spirit by engaging Indigenous youth in a creative activity to envision how the City can more visibly commemorate the history of residential schools and honour the traditional territories upon which Hamilton is located.
- Explore the theme of People by hosting a gathering for Indigenous residents to come and speak with City staff about the many services and programs that are offered by the City of Hamilton.
- Explore the theme of Land and collaborate with community partners by conducting a public workshop that explores what land means to Indigenous peoples. This will feature storytelling and sharing from the Indigenous community.
- Partner with McMaster University Indigenous Studies Program to create a survey to collect community input on what actions the City can take in the Strategy. The survey will be available online and at community events.
- Engage Indigenous youth in a contest to create a project identifier for the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy.
- Engage senior leadership and staff to identify how to address the themes, Calls to Action and the feedback from the engagement events. The Staff Circle team will play a role by developing recommendations on staff training and education.
- Analyze the feedback gathered at the events and collected through the survey.

Phase Three (September – December 2018) will wrap up the development and prepare a final strategy for approval. Specific activities include:

- Report back to the community on the findings from Phase Two and the timing for the final strategy.
- Use the analysis from Phase Two to prepare a draft Urban Indigenous Strategy.
- Share a draft strategy and seek support from Indigenous community partners.
- Review and discuss the draft strategy with senior leadership to identify next steps and implementation.

- Present a final strategy to City Council for approval.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A to Report CES17026(a): Terms of Reference, Urban Indigenous Strategy Coordinating Circle

Appendix B to Report CES17026(a): Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action Response: A Summary Report to the Coordinating Circle, Urban Indigenous Strategy, (November 2017)

Appendix C to Report CES17026(a): Findings from Phase One, Urban Indigenous Strategy