



Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy Findings from Phase One and Emerging Themes

Phase One, “Plant the Strategy,” focused on building relationships, increasing awareness, and conducting research. The research looked at two areas: one area focused on the activities and strategies of other municipalities; the second focused on how local Indigenous Service Providers are responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. Community feedback was shared at the Coordinating Circle table as well as a community conversation event held on December 13, 2017. Finally the Coordinating Circle worked to review and identify the relevant Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. All combined, the findings from Phase One have been organized into three themes to be explored in Phases Two and Three.

Land

This theme is about acknowledging and respecting the spiritual, mental, physical and emotional connections that Indigenous peoples have to land. This connection extends into Indigenous knowledge, governance, language, and relationships with non-Indigenous organizations.

In Phase One, we listened to Indigenous community members and learned the following key points that relate to Land:

- The City of Hamilton must build a stronger relationship with the Indigenous community.
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is an important framework to adopt to move forward in reconciliation. In particular, the right of Indigenous peoples to self-determination is critical.
- Indigenous youth want to connect with their roots.
- Traditional Land Acknowledgements should be mandatory. The City will need to understand how to demonstrate that acknowledgement beyond words.

Research conducted on local Indigenous Service Providers and on other Canadian municipalities revealed these findings relating to Land:

- Indigenous Service Providers in Hamilton offer language and traditional healing programs to community members. Language and spirituality connect Indigenous people to the land.
- A number of municipalities officially acknowledge traditional Indigenous lands and have endorsed the UNDRIP.
- A number of municipalities have signed Accords or Memorandums of Understanding with urban Indigenous community groups or with neighbouring First Nations. These instruments range in scope but often include commitments

to ongoing dialogue, shared principles, and building a working relationship between the two governments or bodies.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action that fit within Land are the following:

- Call to Action (CTA) #43: We call upon ... municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.
- CTA #44: We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and any other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- CTA #47: We call upon ... municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts
- CTA #92i: We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.
- CTA #93: We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.

People

This theme embodies how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples build mutually respectful relationships in every day settings. This can include how services are provided and accessible to Indigenous peoples, employment and support for Indigenous peoples in the workplace.

In Phase One, we heard from Indigenous community members and learned the following key points relating to People:

- Training and education are needed to break down stereotypes and racism.
- Indigenous families, particularly young parents, experience disrespect and racism.

- City employees should be mandated to have a cultural understanding. This includes an understanding of how intergenerational trauma has affected Indigenous people and still continues to affect communities.
- Mainstream services do not work for Indigenous people. Ideas to address this include incorporating City services in Indigenous organizations, or having Indigenous Advocates in services throughout the City of Hamilton.
- Hire more Indigenous people through hiring processes that are more culturally sensitive and equitable.
- The City of Hamilton needs to be more involved in the Indigenous community. Ideas include providing Information Sessions so that Indigenous residents are more aware of the resources within the City.

Research conducted on local Indigenous Service Providers and on other Canadian municipalities revealed these findings about People:

- Indigenous Service Providers in Hamilton expend many resources to offer training and education to mainstream organizations. Further action is needed by Hamilton's non-Indigenous organizations to address discrimination and racism faced by Indigenous peoples by engaging staff in cultural awareness and safety training.
- Collaboration and partnerships with Indigenous Service Providers will help to build capacity and offer more culturally based supports to Indigenous peoples.
- The Hamilton Community Legal Clinic's "Journey to ReconciliAction: Calls to Action Report" describes how the Clinic has revised internal policies and procedures to be more supportive of Indigenous employees. This report was presented to the City of Hamilton in a traditional ceremony in 2017.
- A majority of municipalities are implementing cultural awareness training and education for employees.
- A number of municipalities have developed Indigenous Employment Strategies that may include summer student hiring, internships, recruitment activities, leadership development and mentorship.
- Some municipalities have collaborated with urban Indigenous community groups to develop welcome guides with information for Indigenous people who are new to the community.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action that fit within People are the following:

- CTA #12: We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.
- CTA #17: We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five-years for the name

change process and the revision of identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licences, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.

- CTA #22: We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients..
- CTA #23: We call upon all levels of government to:
 - i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health care field.
 - ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.
 - iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.
- CTA #57: We call upon ... municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
- CTA #88: We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.
- CTA #92ii: We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - ii. ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.

Spirit

The Spirit theme embodies how Indigenous contributions and experiences, including the Indian Residential School system, are honoured and commemorated. This may involve exploring archives to shed light on untold histories. The Spirit theme explores how Indigenous peoples and histories are visibly represented in the City.

In Phase One, we heard from Indigenous community members and learned the following key points relating to Spirit:

- Indigenous cultures and traditions need to be respected and seen as more than performing songs and dancers.

- Indigenous people have many contributions to society, including talents, gifts and dedication.
- The Indigenous community is becoming more visible and showing its contributions and pride.
- There is a need for funding dedicated to local Indigenous programming and artwork.
- Build a local Truth and Reconciliation Centre to provide services to City residents affected by Indian Residential Schools.
- Indigenous youth need to be able to use their voice and be taken seriously when change is arising in their community.

Research conducted on local Indigenous Service Providers as well as on other Canadian municipalities revealed these findings that relate to Spirit:

- Indigenous Service Providers have collaborated on projects to raise the visibility of Indigenous peoples in their neighbourhood. One example is a mural project in a local alley.
- Local Service Providers also provide supports for dealing with Intergenerational Trauma. One example is a support group at De dwa da dehs n<yes Aboriginal Health Centre for Indian Residential School Survivors.
- Municipal awards have been established in some jurisdictions to recognize Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents and their contributions to reconciliation or strengthening Indigenous communities.
- A number of municipalities have renamed municipal facilities and infrastructure in local Indigenous languages. Examples include renaming of roads, bridges, and welcome signage.
- Supporting and providing space for Indigenous cultural and arts spaces is explored. One example is seen in Montreal.
- Many municipalities have declared a “Year of Reconciliation” and delivered a variety of public education opportunities and community engagement.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action that relate to Spirit are the following:

- CTA #75: We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.
- CTA #77: We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to

identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

- CTA #78: We call upon the Government of Canada to commit to making a funding contribution of \$10 million over seven years to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, plus an additional amount to assist communities to research and produce histories of their own residential school experience and their involvement of truth, healing and reconciliation.
- CTA #79: We call upon the Federal Government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal Organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.
- CTA #80: We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.
- CTA #87: We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.