



URBAN INDIGENOUS STRATEGY

June 20, 2019

Beginning of a Journey

In December 2016, the City of Hamilton began work on developing the Urban Indigenous Strategy to identify actions and strengthen the City's relationship with the Indigenous community.

The strategy was developed in collaboration with Indigenous community partners and guided by principles that honour traditional knowledge, teachings and reciprocity.

The work has been guided by the Coordinating Circle and the Staff Circle on Indigenous Relations.



Phases of the Journey

Phase One:
Plant the
Strategy

(Dec. 2016 –
Dec. 2017)

Phase Two:
Cultivate the
Strategy

(Jan. 2018 –
Aug. 2018)

Phase Three:
Harvest the
Strategy

(Sep. 2018 –
Dec. 2018)

Community Engagement

Over 500 Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents were engaged in the development of the strategy through a variety of mechanisms. One of the most significant mechanisms was to conduct a survey.



Urban Indigenous Strategy Survey

The Urban Indigenous Strategy survey was conducted from May to June 2018 to collect community input on what actions the City of Hamilton can take in the development of the Urban Indigenous Strategy.

At a Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy presentation on December 3, 2018, City staff and community partners presented the findings and key directions from the survey to the community. Feedback that was given by the community to City staff during the presentation has been incorporated in the final report of the Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy.



Strategic Themes and Actions

The Urban Indigenous Strategy uses the strategic themes of Land, People and Spirit to understand how the identified actions connect to an Indigenous understanding of the relationships people have to land, to each other, and to spirituality.

In total, there are 40 strategic actions grouped into the three themes.



Land Theme

- The City should adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the framework to move forward with reconciliation.
- Indigenous peoples must be involved in decision-making in municipal activities that affect them.
- Consultation with urban Indigenous peoples and with local First Nations communities must be meaningful.
- Urban Indigenous peoples need a space outdoors for gathering, practicing sacred ceremonies and sharing teachings.
- Care for the environment, including the land and water, are important. Respecting Indigenous ecological knowledge will benefit environmental restoration and preservation in Hamilton.
- Acknowledgement of traditional Indigenous territory in Hamilton should be practised across the city. The City needs to demonstrate this acknowledgement beyond words.

Spirit Theme

- The City of Hamilton can do more to visually represent the historic and continuing presence of Indigenous peoples.
- Indigenous art in public spaces is needed to honour historic and contemporary contributions.
- Increase support for Indigenous artists and art programming.
- Indigenous cultures and traditions need to be respected and seen as more than a performance.



- Indigenous stories and languages need to be seen as part of Hamilton's heritage.
- More can be done to celebrate National Indigenous History Month in Hamilton.

People Theme

- Use public education to increase understanding and break down stereotypes and racism.
- The City of Hamilton should become a leader for other corporations and institutions in increasing employment opportunities for Indigenous people.
- City employees should be mandated to have a cultural understanding.
- Be creative about how to deliver mainstream services to Indigenous peoples in culturally appropriate ways.



Key Accomplishments on the Journey

- Development of a Use of Indigenous Medicines Policy and Procedure.
- Hosting a KAIROS Blanket Exercise to build awareness and engage residents in a conversation on reconciliation.
- Launch of an Indigenous Cultural Competency Training pilot.
- “Bringing the City to the Community” Information Fair.
- Launch of two lunch and learn documentary series viewings for City staff.
- Celebration of National Indigenous History Month, including display panels and artifacts.
- Raising Indigenous flags at City Hall to commemorate National Indigenous History Month.
- Development of a revised traditional land acknowledgement statement.



Revised Traditional Land Acknowledgement

“The City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Today, the City of Hamilton is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island (North America) and we recognize that we must do more to learn about the rich history of this land so that we can better understand our roles as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers.”

The Urban Indigenous Strategy charts out the path to reconciliation and will require the ongoing commitment and engagement of City staff across the corporation. Staff will:

- Share the recommendations and develop an implementation plan.
- Continue to consult with and report back to the Indigenous community.
- Continue to engage with both the Coordinating Circle and Staff Circle on Indigenous Relations to guide the implementation of the strategy.

The City of Hamilton is committed to strengthening its relationship with the Indigenous community. Work has already begun on some of the recommendations in the Urban Indigenous Strategy; however, there is recognition that we are still early in a long journey towards reconciliation.



Hamilton

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MIIGWETCH
THANK YOU

www.hamilton.ca/Indigenous