

# Hamilton **URBAN INDIGENOUS STRATEGY** Implementation Report









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Hamilton

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT STATEMENT

The City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississauga's. This land is covered by the 'Dish With One Spoon' Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe 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.

**“Meaningful consultation and inclusion of Indigenous Elders, leaders and community members are crucial for moving ahead.”**







## RECOGNITION

The Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS) team would like to acknowledge the guidance and continued support from the Indigenous Community, Service Providers, Elders and Knowledge Keepers creating meaningful work within the Traditional territories.

**“The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts. When it comes to truth and reconciliation we are forced to go the distance.”**

*–Justice Murray Sinclair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*

We would also like to acknowledge the UIS Coordinating Circle, the City of Hamilton’s Staff Indigenous Relations Circle, and the City of Hamilton for their continued collaboration towards the development and contributions of the implementation plan. As we start the journey towards restoring relationships and trust, the core focus is acknowledging the past, present and future creating an Inclusive inequitable place for all Indigenous in non-Indigenous peoples.

Lastly, we would like to honour in recognition the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and those contributing towards the TRC Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls to Justice for the ongoing efforts and strategies to become a community of Reconciliation.



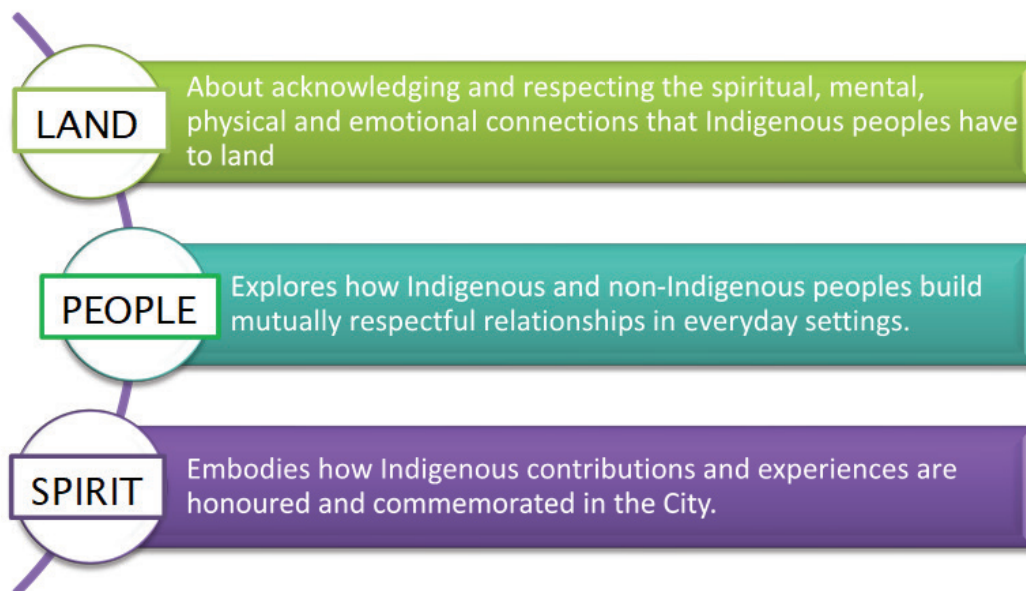
# BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2015, Hamilton City Council committed to developing and strengthening the City of Hamilton's relationship with the Indigenous community through the development of an Urban Indigenous Strategy (previously referred to as an Aboriginal Justice Strategy).

The City's Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS) team focused on developing a strategy which was endorsed by City Council in July 2019. The UIS identifies actions and charts out a path to reconciliation that aims to strengthen the City's relationship with the Indigenous community.

The strategy is intended to demonstrate respect for Indigenous knowledge by promoting a better understanding among all residents about Indigenous histories, cultures, experiences, and contributions. It focuses on the alignment of key initiatives and strategies that support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls to Justice.

The UIS plan consists of 40 actions that were identified based on consultations with the Indigenous community. The 40 action items are grouped into three strategic themes (Land, Spirit, and People) creating a pathway towards the importance of collaboration and awareness which measures commitment through continued consultation and accountability. The success of this strategy is dependent on the engagement of staff across the corporation and involvement by all City departments.



# ACTIONS

LAND THEMED ACTIONS	
<b>1</b>	Develop guidance and policy tools for senior leaders and staff about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
<b>2</b>	Raise awareness and strengthen the role of the Hamilton Aboriginal Advisory Committee.
<b>3</b>	Improve meaningful consultation with urban Indigenous residents and First Nations communities on municipal projects, plans and approvals.
<b>4</b>	Include and listen to Indigenous Elders on key initiatives and partnerships between the City of Hamilton and the Indigenous community.
<b>5</b>	Show respect for traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) by including Indigenous voices in environmental leadership and incorporating TEK in municipal practises.
<b>6</b>	Work with the Indigenous community to establish and maintain a piece of land that the community can use for ceremonial, spiritual and other activities.
<b>7</b>	Work with Indigenous communities to provide education to staff and residents about acknowledging traditional territories in Hamilton.
<b>8</b>	Understand how concepts such as the Doctrine of Discovery affect municipal decision making and develop tools to reform those processes.
<b>9</b>	Create more opportunities to access traditional foods.
<b>10</b>	Increase outreach to Indigenous residents to access conservation areas.



SPIRIT THEMED ACTIONS	
<b>11</b>	Incorporate more Indigenous stories and voices into the City of Hamilton's culture and heritage plans.
<b>12</b>	Use markers and signs to restore Indigenous names and identify significant Indigenous landmarks in Hamilton. This could include street names, trails, and parks.
<b>13</b>	Create opportunities for public art by Indigenous artists.
<b>14</b>	Establish an Indigenous Cultural Centre that offers interpretive programming, provides a gathering space for Indigenous peoples to practice their ceremonies and hold cultural events.
<b>15</b>	Update the City's grant programs to provide small grants to residents and community groups who are making a difference in reconciliation.
<b>16</b>	Raise local Indigenous flags permanently at City Hall.
<b>17</b>	Bring together Indigenous artists with youth to create a mural or other forms of street art.
<b>18</b>	Ensure that Indigenous stories and local Indigenous history are included in official archives across Hamilton.
<b>19</b>	Continue to improve how the City works with First Nations when conducting archaeology. This will include identifying how to educate the public on the rich archaeological history in Hamilton.
<b>20</b>	Expand the promotion and celebration of Indigenous History Month at City Hall and across Hamilton.
<b>21</b>	Identify or create ways to support Indigenous artists.
<b>22</b>	Commission public art in a prominent location that honours mutual respect and the spirit of reconciliation.

PEOPLE THEMED ACTIONS	
<b>23</b>	Bring together partners to offer public education to all residents about the history of Indigenous peoples and current topics that will contribute to reconciliation. This public education program should include highlighting local Indigenous resources and museums and promote awareness of national holidays such as National Indigenous Peoples Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
<b>24</b>	Enable City staff to deliver City services in a culturally-appropriate way.
<b>25</b>	Launch a program for Indigenous youth to gain employment and training experience at the City.
<b>26</b>	Identify and eliminate municipal barriers that prevent Indigenous peoples from carrying out ceremonial practises in public spaces.
<b>27</b>	Support the expansion of Indigenous early childhood education.
<b>28</b>	Increase access to recreation for Indigenous children, youth and families.
<b>29</b>	Provide education to all city staff about Indigenous peoples, Indigenous-settler history, treaties, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. This education should also cover the urban Indigenous community in Hamilton and the history of traditional territory in the Hamilton area.
<b>30</b>	Ensure Public Health programs respect Indigenous medicines and healing practices.
<b>31</b>	Increase the number Indigenous health-care professionals in Hamilton.
<b>32</b>	Support Indigenous peoples to have more access to Elders and spiritual teachings.
<b>33</b>	Create opportunities for young Indigenous athletes to develop their skills.
<b>34</b>	Increase opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents to play Indigenous sports and recreation activities.



PEOPLE THEMED ACTIONS	
35	Work with local Indigenous communities to host major sports events for Indigenous athletes.
36	Increase the number of Indigenous employees at the City and support networking and mentorship opportunities for Indigenous staff.
37	Use the City's Age-Friendly Plan to support Indigenous seniors with accessing health and community services.
38	Identify how to increase accessible and affordable housing for Indigenous peoples through the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.
39	Require social housing providers and boards to be educated on Indigenous peoples and history, colonialism, treaties, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples. This education should also include information on the Indigenous community in Hamilton.
40	Provide opportunities for Indigenous peoples to understand their rights as tenants.

# THE JOURNEY

The creation of the implementation plan identifies timelines, resources and priorities to move forward with the action items identified in the UIS. Recognizing that we are still early in our journey towards reconciliation, the UIS's implementation plan is intended to be a fluid document that will be updated on a regular basis as we move forward with additional action items and continue to engage the Indigenous community in further conversations.

This plan is considered a living document, one that reflects bringing our minds together as one mind to improve and enhance relationships with Indigenous peoples and is built on nation to nation principles and values. The plan incorporates the values, history, and traditional teachings of Indigenous peoples, which includes First Nations, Inuit, Métis and the Urban Indigenous Peoples.

The UIS team will provide leadership and work with the internal Staff Circle and the Senior Staff Circle to develop working groups that will be responsible for implementing specific actions. The working groups will provide input and advice, develop workplans and policies to achieve specific actions in the UIS, and will engage internal and external partners to achieve the actions.

The Indigenous Coordinating Circle and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee will continue to guide the actions towards implementation to ensure the plan reflects the guiding principles that honour traditional knowledge and teachings including the Seven Grandfather Teachings of the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee teachings of respect and care of the earth follows the strategic tone and direction set by the Indigenous community. This ensures accountability and responsibility maintaining strong links with the Cultural values and beliefs including the significance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers as they are integral in the work, we do to bind our journey together.





## A COLLECTIVE FOUNDATION

As the City of Hamilton verges in ways to work collaboratively, six work groups were created that will help define details necessary to reach the action items of the UIS. The work groups consist of UIS team, the City of Hamilton leadership and staff, and community agencies working together with Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents. As we focus on the implementation plan priorities, our focus is to keep the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and the Indigenous community's recommendations for the strategy at the forefront knowing they are all equally important. It is about the Indigenous communities and what we need to do together towards reconciliation.

## UIS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WORK GROUPS

**Group 1:** Education, Awareness, Guidance and Policies Group

**Group 2:** Ecological, Archaeology & Natural Heritage Group

**Group 3:** Public Art, Museum, Markers & Heritage Group

**Group 4:** Land, Culture & Cultural Spaces Group

**Group 5:** Sports & Recreation, Tourism Group

**Group 6:** Housing, Employment, Health & Food

## SCOPE OF PRIORITIES

Since March 2020, the priorities and work of the implementation plan has shifted. The UIS team has been redeployed and actively responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with Public Health, the vulnerable sector team and the combined efforts with the Indigenous community partners, we focused on critical services to meet the needs necessary to offer support for the Indigenous community and will continue as needed.

COVID-19 resulted in some changes to the way we will work on priorities in the deliverables for the implementation plan. The focus is to continue the work necessary to support reconciliation and the relationship with the Indigenous community, but under safe measures to protect us from the pandemic.



The Implementation plan will establish activities for each work group through collaboration and action planning for each deliverable determined. Phases of each work group will capitalize on engagement strategies, work plans, developing policies and procedures maintaining intercultural work necessary for Indigenous and non-Indigenous engagement.

## STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The following work groups prioritized for 2021 and 2022

### Group 1: Education, Awareness, Guidance and Policies

#### DELIVERABLES:

- Develop guidance and tools for senior leaders and staff about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Work with the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Coordinating Circle to strengthen and streamline the role they play in informing the implementation of the Urban Indigenous Strategy
- Include and listen to Indigenous Elders on key initiatives and partnerships between the City of Hamilton and Indigenous Community
- Work with Indigenous communities to provide education to staff and residents about acknowledging traditional territories in Hamilton
- Understand how concepts such as the Doctrine of Discovery affect municipal decision making and develop tools to reform those processes
- Bring together partners to offer public education to all residents about the history of Indigenous peoples and current topics that will contribute to reconciliation. This public education program should include highlighting local Indigenous resources and museums and promote awareness of national holidays such as National Indigenous Peoples Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Enable City staff to deliver City services in a culturally-appropriate way
- Identify and eliminate municipal barriers that prevent Indigenous peoples from carrying out ceremonial practices in public spaces
- Provide education to all City staff about Indigenous people, Indigenous-settler history, treaties, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This education should also cover the urban Indigenous community in Hamilton and the history of the traditional territory.
- Ensure public health programs respect Indigenous medicines and healing practices



## Group 2: Ecological, Archaeology & Natural Heritage

### DELIVERABLES:

- Improve meaningful consultation with the urban Indigenous residents and the Indigenous communities on municipal projects, plans and approvals.
- Show respect for traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) by including Indigenous voices in environmental leadership and incorporating TEK in municipal practises.
- Increase outreach to Indigenous residents to access conservation areas.
- Use markers and signs to restore Indigenous names and identify significant Indigenous landmarks in Hamilton. This could include street names, trails and parks.
- Continue to improve how the City works with First Nations when conducting archaeology. This will include identifying how to educate the public on the rich archaeology history in Hamilton.

## Group 3: Public Art, Museum, Markers & Heritage

### DELIVERABLES:

- Incorporate more Indigenous stories and voices into the City of Hamilton's culture and heritage plans
- Use markers and signs to restore Indigenous names and identify significant Indigenous landmarks in Hamilton. This could include street names, trails, and parks
- Examine existing monuments and memorials in public spaces, such as the Sir John A. MacDonald monument in Gore Park, in order to create a collective and inclusive space for all
- Bring together Indigenous artists with youth to create a mural or other forms of street art
- Ensure that Indigenous stories and local Indigenous history are included in official archives across Hamilton
- Expand the promotion and celebration of Indigenous History Month at City Hall and across Hamilton
- Identify or create ways to support Indigenous artists
- Commission public art in a prominent location that honours mutual respect and the spirit of reconciliation



# FRAMING THE WORKGROUPS

As we formulate the framework, the focus is to support internal efforts across the Corporation to strengthen relationships with the Indigenous community and treaty territories. This process will establish high-level guidance to build more specific and sustainable deliverables creating meaningful efforts towards matters of historical, traditional and cultural significance in ways of knowing municipal planning and decision-making.

Each phase will coordinate flexibility and innovation towards a process of reconciliation creating strategic alignments. **Phase one**, planning the purpose will initiate ways to build on opportunities necessary to strengthen Council and the Corporation's understandings, relationships, and opportunities that are important with the Indigenous community. **Phase two** will develop engagement of shared responsibilities, mutual understanding and opportunities on matters to collaborate with on joint initiatives, policy's, and processes. Ways of knowing provides guidance to be authentic and reciprocal in building and sustaining relationships. **Phase three** will provide the foundation of ways forward being transparent and building more equitable and inclusiveness towards deliverables.

## PHASE 1 – PLANNING THE PROCESS – WAYS OF BUILDING

- Coordinate the process internally and build relationships with the Indigenous community, Elders/Knowledge Keepers, youth and potential key partners.
- Focus on gathering input and information that will support a meaningful outcome for each deliverable
- Create awareness based on understanding historic roots of colonization
- Build capacity through training, materials and organizational cultural awareness

## PHASE 2 – ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES – WAYS OF KNOWING

- Develop draft plan on approach and strategies of each deliverable
- Gather material and tools to inspire conversation in providing valuable information to understand substantive issues in supporting the deliverable
- Gather input from key partners, community engagement, departmental representatives, Senior Management Team and Council
- Build corporate capacity for meaningful engagement

## PHASE 3 – OUTCOME – WAYS FORWARD

- Transparent and accountable reporting of final reports of each deliverable and overall process
- Recommendations for decisions and best outcome
- To inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower



# **A way forward is to build foundational teachings with Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Community.**

As we focus on taking the necessary steps to continually recognize the important work through the process of collective actions, it has come a time when things are to be done differently due to the pandemic. Much in the same as it has been for the Indigenous people, creating ways of resiliency and understanding is an important factor during a time of need.

**Nia:wen  
Miigwetch  
Thank you!**









Hamilton

