



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 16, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Urban Indigenous Strategy and Indigenous Relations Updates (HSC21001(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Jennifer DiDomenico (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5596
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COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable

INFORMATION

Report HSC21001(a) provides a progress update on implementation of the Urban Indigenous Strategy and broader work in Indigenous relations for the City. There are many facets to the portfolio of the Indigenous Relations Team (IRT) including coordinating delivery of the Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS) and progress towards its goals, developing relationships with the local Treaty Nations, and serving as an advisory and support role to City divisions. The goal of the IRT is to strengthen relationships with the Indigenous communities and to build capacity, knowledge and understanding within the organization to work effectively with Indigenous Peoples.

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.

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Strategic Background:

- In 2004, the City ratified the [Haudenosaunee – Hamilton Red Hill Agreements](#) (PW04055) which set the foundation for a relationship between the communities to work together to fulfill our responsibilities in the Red Hill Valley via the [Joint Stewardship Board](#) (JSB)
- In the spring of 2015, Council committed to develop an Urban Indigenous Strategy in response to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's Final Report. The strategy was co-developed by City staff and Indigenous community partners
- In July 2019, [Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy](#) (UIS) (HSC19030) was endorsed by Council which identifies actions and charts out a path to reconciliation that aims to strengthen the City's relationship with the Indigenous community
- An [Implementation Plan](#) (HSC21001) with term priorities was shared with Council in 2021
- Also in 2021, the organization shifted to a more comprehensive approach to Indigenous Relations and expanded the scope and portfolio of the UIS section to the IRT which reflects the overall work with Indigenous People (both the urban population in Hamilton as well as the Treaty Nations).

Key accomplishments:

Over the past eighteen months, significant progress has been made to build up the relationship the City has with Indigenous residents and enhance the value proposition of the Indigenous Relations Team. Some examples of the accomplishments include:

- Days of Recognition
 - using various communication tactics, learning tools, activities and events, acknowledged and honoured days of significance to the Indigenous community (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day, etc.)
- Indigenous Landmarks and Monuments Review
 - May 2022: Council approved [Phase 1 report](#) Honouring our Roots: Creating Space for Indigenous Voices (HSC21025(a))
 - Winter 2022: temporary interpretive signage was developed and hired two temporary staff to support Phase 2 work
- Initiated Indigenous Cultural Capacity Training with senior leadership in the organization
- Provided support to the City of Hamilton members of the Joint Stewardship Board (JSB)
- Collaborated and supported Indigenous partner agencies on community events (e.g. Indigenous Music Social)
- Took on the role of staff liaison and support to the [Indigenous Advisory Committee](#) (a Volunteer Advisory Committee to Council)

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- Continued to develop corporate-wide strategies, policies and consistent approaches to how the City engages with First Nations and other Indigenous groups regarding archaeology and environmental assessment work; including
 - Application of the Interim Archaeological Monitoring Policy
 - Creation of a Policy for Natural Heritage Monitoring
- Conducted a corporate-wide survey to understand the needs and priorities of divisions as it relates to the work of the Indigenous Relations team, and what resources and supports are required from the IRT for city-led work and initiatives;
- Development of a hybrid (centralized and decentralized) staffing model to encourage and increase the hiring of Indigenous individuals in key roles across the City, and resourcing recommendations to ensure the City has adequate resources and the organizational structure to support the implementation of the UIS and other Indigenous Relations priorities.

Additional initiatives and details on these achievements are attached as Appendix “A” to Report HSC21001(a).

Priorities for 2023:

Recognizing that the UIS is a significant strategy and implementation will be ongoing, work on the Actions has been prioritized within the UIS Implementation Plan Work Groups. Following are some key areas of focus for this year.

- **Cultural Capacity Training**

To build their cultural understanding, municipal staff and elected officials need education about Indigenous Peoples, history, treaties and Aboriginal rights. During the development of the UIS, this was identified as one of the most important TRC Calls to Action for the City of Hamilton to implement. Training for the newly elected Council is being planned for Q2 of 2023. Continuing with what was initiated with the Senior Leadership Team in late 2022, cultural capacity training is targeted to be rolled out to the organization more broadly, with a focus on people leaders in 2023.

- **Indigenous Landmarks and Monument Review**

Phase 2 of the project is underway with the interim interpretive signage being installed at each of the priority sites by spring 2023. The new Indigenous Curator and Indigenous Community Outreach Coordinator, roles developed through Phase 1 of the review, and now successfully recruited, will initiate consultation with the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community, along with a public education campaign on Indigenous histories of the area.

- **Indigenous Relations Staffing Model**

As the City moves forward with implementation of the UIS and its commitment to strengthening relationships with the Indigenous community, there is significant need to provide adequate support for this work, and additional staffing resources are required.

An internal survey was conducted to inform priorities and resourcing for the IRT. The findings are that there is an increased level of support needed across the organization (such as advice on consultation, staff development, protocols, creation of policy/programs, etc.). A business case for permanent resourcing and director-level leadership in the Indigenous Relations team is before Council for consideration during the 2023 budget deliberations. In 2023, the IRT will also continue to work closely with Human Resources to develop and implement recruitment and retention best practices aimed at increasing and supporting Indigenous staff. This will also include the development of a community of practice for staff working on the various actions within the UIS.

- **Indigenous Advisory Committee**

The IRT will work with the Indigenous community in Hamilton to establish a new Indigenous Advisory Committee for the 2022-2026 term of Council. Although managed independently, the recruitment and selection process will coincide with recruitment for the Volunteer Advisory Committees overseen by Clerks.

- **Relationship Agreements**

Work is underway to improve the City's relationships with each of the Treaty Nations more broadly. The development of relationship agreements or friendship accords with each of the Treaty Nations will be a priority in 2023. This will include relationship agreements with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council, and Huron-Wendat Nation.

- **Natural Heritage Monitoring**

Regarding First Nations' engagement with Environmental Assessment projects, the working group anticipates bringing recommendations on a policy and procedure on Natural Heritage assessments to Council in the latter half of 2023. This work builds on the success and learnings from the Indigenous Archaeological Monitoring Policy already established and will align closely with the development of relationship agreements.

The key priorities are designed to address the TRC as well as the Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) which is outlined in Appendix "B" to Report HSC21001(a).

The City of Hamilton together with Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents, and neighboring Treaty Nations is continuing on a journey to reconciliation that will honour the history, knowledge, rights, languages and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. This work requires ongoing commitment to strengthening relationships and adequate support of resources towards our desired outcomes.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report HSC21001(a) - Updates on initiatives in the Indigenous Relations portfolio

Appendix "B" to Report HSC21001(a) - Urban Indigenous Strategy Alignment