



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 20, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Indigenous Relations Updates (HSC21001(b)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable

INFORMATION

Report HSC21001(b) provides a progress update on the work of the Indigenous Relations team and implementation of the Urban Indigenous Strategy. There are many facets to the portfolio of the Indigenous Relations Team including serving as an advisory and support role to City divisions, coordinating delivery of the Urban Indigenous Strategy, working with the Indigenous community in Hamilton, and developing relationships with the local Treaty Nations. The goal of the Indigenous Relations Team is to strengthen relationships with the Indigenous communities and to build knowledge, understanding and competency within the organization to work effectively with Indigenous Peoples.

a) Key accomplishments:

Since the previous update to Council in [February 2023](#), continued progress is being made in developing the relationship the City has with Indigenous residents and local Nations. Some examples of the accomplishments include:

- Launched Indigenous Cultural Capacity (Indigenous Awareness) Training with
 - the newly elected City Council
 - senior leadership
 - people leaders across the organization
- Indigenous Landmarks and Monuments Review
 - Phase Two work initiated; interim signage installed, public education campaign planned and developed
- Establishing an annual Days of Recognition program
 - using various communication methods, activities, events and learning tools, acknowledged, and honoured eight days of significance to the Indigenous community (e.g., National Indigenous Peoples Day, etc.)
- Provided support to the City of Hamilton members of the Joint Stewardship Board and on projects that fall within the Red Hill Valley
- Collaborated and supported Indigenous partner agencies on community events (e.g., Welcome Ceremony Indigenous Liaison Officer, Indigenous Music Social)
- Provided support to the [Indigenous Advisory Committee](#) (a Volunteer Advisory Committee to Council) to the end of its term
- Continued to develop corporate-wide strategies, policies and consistent approaches in many areas including:
 - how the City engages with First Nations and other Indigenous groups regarding archaeology and environmental assessment work
 - working in collaboration with Recreation on the use of Indigenous Images/Themes Policy
- Finalized recruitment for the new role of Director, Indigenous Relations to lead the team to support the implementation of the Urban Indigenous Strategy and other Indigenous Relations priorities.

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

b) Priorities for 2024:

The Urban Indigenous Strategy is a long-term strategy and will require implementation over several years. To manage workloads, the Actions have been prioritized based on the Implementation Plan and emerging opportunities/issues. Following are some key areas of focus for this year.

Indigenous Landmarks and Monument Review

Phase Two of the project is underway with the interim interpretive signage having been installed at each of the priority sites in Spring 2023. Staff have developed a public education campaign that will launch following Council’s receipt of Report HSC21001(b). The campaign includes publishing a twenty-two-minute educational video designed to

raise awareness of three monumental sites that have been identified as problematic for the City based on the Honouring Our Roots report. The video will be accompanied by a survey to collect feedback and solicit ideas on how we could move forward at these sites.

It is anticipated that the campaign will commence the last week of June with the release of a few short video trailers and extend into the Fall. A modified Summer approach will leverage opportunities to join other municipal/partner events as available to share a pamphlet and information about the video and survey (which will be posted online at [Engage Hamilton](#)). To ensure accessibility for the community, in-person events will also be hosted in September/October in various locations across the city where residents are able to watch the video and paper copies of the survey will be made available.

The information gathered will be analyzed and organized to identify themes. The themes will then be used to frame the wording in a follow-up survey that would provide more specific ideas for comment on options at each of the three sites. The data that is assembled will be synthesized by the Landmarks and Monuments Working Group and subsequently shared with Council.

Cultural Capacity Training

Building on Indigenous Awareness education provided to elected officials, senior leadership and all people leaders, training is targeted to be rolled out across the organization more broadly, with a focus on project and engagement leads in 2024. All municipal staff need a solid foundation of education about Indigenous Peoples, history, treaties, and Aboriginal rights – this was identified as a high priority in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action for the City of Hamilton to implement during the development of the Urban Indigenous Strategy.

Relationship Agreements

Work has been ongoing to enhance communications and improve relationships that the City has with each of the Treaty Nations. Relationship Agreements are one way to help identify areas of mutual interest and concern, to develop a long-term broader relationship of practical cooperation and commitment. Initiating dialogues with the Treaty Nations to determine if they are interested in working with the City on this will be a priority in 2024. 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.

West Harbour Projects

In partnership with the Hamilton Public Library, the team will continue working on the Discovery Centre Study to examine the proposed concept for future use. The

preliminary option for redesign of the facility would incorporate a library services area; Indigenous community gathering space; exhibits and gallery space; café; and visitor amenities. Feedback from the urban Indigenous community and public indicated general interest in the preliminary option and general support for moving forward with further work to develop the concept. As this project unfolds, the Treaty Nations will also be engaged, where appropriate. This year, the Project Team will establish project governing structure and issue a Request For Proposal to assist with advancing details for the Concept.

Through a collaborative engagement process with members of the Indigenous community, the Municipal Land Development Office and the Indigenous Relations Team will plan and construct improvements for the Macassa Bay shoreline area. As this project takes shape, the Treaty Nations will also be engaged, where appropriate. This project has the potential to fulfill a number of actions in the Urban Indigenous Strategy as well as advance objectives in the West Harbour Waterfront Recreation Master Plan; work in 2024 will include re-envisioning Macassa Bay and creating a concept.

Natural Heritage Monitoring

The working group anticipates bringing recommendations on a policy and procedure to engage First Nations in Environmental Assessment (natural heritage work) projects by the end of 2024. This work builds on the success and learnings from the Indigenous Archaeological Monitoring Policy already established and could align closely with the development of relationship agreements.

Policy Review

Some of the Urban Indigenous Strategy actions can be addressed by revisions to or creation of City policy and/or procedures. Staff continue to work with the urban Indigenous community and internal partners to identify areas for improvement in this regard. In 2024, the team is looking to bring an updated Use of Indigenous Medicines Policy and Procedure forward, as well as a new policy and procedure respecting Sacred Fires.

Indigenous Relations Staffing Model

During the 2023 budget deliberations, the business case for permanent resourcing and director-level leadership in the Indigenous Relations team was approved by Council. There continues to be an increased level of support needed across the organization (such as advice on consultation, staff development, protocols, creation of policy/ programs, etc.). As the team reviews its workplan, Staff will determine if additional resources are required and needed will be brought to the 2025 budget process.

Indigenous Advisory Committee

Once Council has considered the review of Volunteer Advisory Committees and confirmed those that can move forward (assuming the Indigenous Advisory Committee is reinstated), the Team will work with the Indigenous community in Hamilton to establish a new Committee for the 2022-2026 term of Council. It is important to note that the recruitment and selection process are managed independently but will coincide with recruitment for other Volunteer Advisory Committees overseen by Clerks.

c) Conclusion

Since the Actions in the Urban Indigenous Strategy require participation by and the commitment of staff across the corporation, the team continue to build connections and engage with Senior Leadership Team and staff in all departments and divisions. Seeking opportunities for collaboration will enable learning and increased benefits associated with all facets of municipal service delivery and improved relationships with community. The City of Hamilton together with Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents, and neighboring Treaty Nations is continuing 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(b) - Updates on initiatives in the Indigenous Relations portfolio