



City of Hamilton Report for Information

To: Mayor and Members
General Issues Committee

Date: April 30, 2025

Report No: HSC25010

Subject/Title: Furthering a Collaborative Path with Urban
Indigenous Residents

Ward(s) Affected: City Wide

Recommendations

That Report HSC25010 respecting Furthering a Collaborative Path with Urban Indigenous Residents be received for information.

Key Facts

- Report HSC25010 responds to the Motion approved by Council at its July 12, 2024, meeting seeking information on the progress of Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS), best practices of municipalities to implement Truth and Reconciliation, and the legislative responsibilities that shape this work
- Members of the Indigenous Community organizations have articulated through various requests and presentations the need for accelerated progress in the methods and processes to achieve the goals of the UIS
- Highlights of the municipal scan found that while Hamilton is doing well in a few areas such as local Treaty Nation participation in archaeological monitoring, reviewing landmarks and colonial monuments, and a focus on the urban Indigenous Community, there is still much work to be done regarding United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, (which is the UIS Land Action #1) and compensating First Nations for consulting.
- To advance reconciliation, further attention should be placed on building a political relationship with Nations.
- As a corporate strategy, there needs to be a more active role and ownership for outcomes on the actions of the UIS across departments to really progress

- There is a way to improve meaningful consultation with Urban Indigenous residents and First Nations communities on municipal projects, plans, and approvals by more directly involving Indigenous community in City decision making.

Financial Considerations

Not Applicable

Background

At the July 12, 2024, Council approved the following Motion:

- That the City of Hamilton's Indigenous Relations Division provide a presentation to a future General Issues Committee detailing the current status and progress on the Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS) and its various components, including but not limited to those that improve meaningful consultation and participation of Indigenous peoples in municipal
- That an updated scan of Truth and Reconciliation best practices currently being implemented in other Canadian municipalities and ongoing work being done through organizations like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities be completed; and
- That the City of Hamilton's Legal Services Division provides an overview of the statutory framework and responsibilities that exists at the Federal, Provincial and Municipal orders of Government, relating to the work detailed in the Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS).

Report HSC25010 provides the information requested in the above.

Analysis

In 2015, Council committed to developing and strengthening the City of Hamilton's relationship with the Indigenous community through the development of the Urban Indigenous Strategy (UIS). The UIS was formally endorsed in 2019 and included 40 action items grouped into three (3) themes, Land, Spirit, and People.

Through the [Urban Indigenous Strategy Implementation Plan Report HSC21001](#), Staff outlined the process and some priorities to move forward on the UIS actions. Cross divisional Work Groups would be established over time to collaborate on Strategy initiatives, beginning with three of the Work Groups. A summary of the status of each of the early prioritized actions is attached as Appendix "A" to Report HSC25010. Of the 21 prioritized action items, 13 are in progress, 1 is on-going/recurring, none have been fully complete, and seven (7) are yet to be initiated.

Recognizing that transitioning the organization to work better and collaboratively with Indigenous people will take time, progress has varied across departments. Moreover, some of the Actions that are not underway reflect the fact that they represent systemic

change; these are broad in scope and require significant corporate responsibility to implement.

Through our research and discussions with other municipalities and staff, we found in order to take further meaningful steps in reconciliation there needs to be a two-pronged approach to relation building.

- i) Currently at the staff level, positive relationships with Indigenous partners agencies and communities are being made and bridges are being built to close gaps in communications and look for opportunities for change and to better engage.

Continued revision of policy and standard practices should also be done regularly, as we learn more we can do better. So far, the Indigenous Relations team (IRT) has worked with many other City departments and divisions to further enhance engagement practices; this is ongoing but an important piece of the work. The IRT are also participating in various corporate strategies (such as Community Safety and Well-being Plan, Climate Action Strategy) to ensure that Indigenous voices are considered.

- ii) The second part of this approach would be for there to be an intentional effort being made by council members to strengthen the relationship politically with the Nations, council members on a government to nation relationship. This will open a host of opportunities for partnerships and economic reconciliation and will also aid in possible Relationship agreements and/or Memoranda of Understanding.

Alternatives

Not Applicable

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Priority 3: Responsiveness & Transparency

Outcome 2: Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving

The City's continued commitment is vital to delivering on the actions in the UIS including listening to Indigenous voices, enabling more Indigenous participation and potential partnerships that will enhance overall outcomes through collaborative problem solving around municipal priorities.

Previous Reports Submitted

None

Consultation

Corresponded and/or met with the following municipalities:

Region of Halton, Cities of Toronto and Mississauga, Town of Caledon

Cities of Winnipeg, Montreal, Edmonton, and Vancouver

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A to Report HSC25010: Status update on the priority actions of the
UIS

Appendix B to Report HSC25010: Municipal scan of Truth and Reconciliation
best practices

Appendix C to Report HSC25010: The Duty to Consult and the Urban Indigenous
Strategy

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