

Executive Summary

The City of Greater Sudbury Strategic Plan 2019-2027 acknowledges the City's location within the Robinson-Huron treaty area and within the traditional territory of the Anishnawbek and the Métis. The plan states that the CGS will work to strengthen Indigenous relations towards reconciliation by, amongst other initiatives, establishing and implementing an organizational plan to respond to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Since the TRC Calls to Action were released in 2015, CGS staff have worked to understand the implications and obligations inherent in the 94 Calls to Action and have responded with several initiatives across the organization. With specific direction incorporated in the City's new strategic plan, staff will build upon the existing and past efforts and will develop a coordinated and appropriately resourced strategy to reframe Indigenous relations and the concepts of truth and reconciliation so that they become integral to all of the work that is carried out, and the services that are delivered, by the CGS municipal organization.

According to the 2016 Census, Indigenous peoples in Greater Sudbury make up almost 10% of the City's total population. In addition, the City shares a boundary with the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiatae First Nations and residents of both reserves are active participants in the Greater Sudbury community and economy. These geographic and demographic realities reinforce the importance for the City to become sensitized to the needs of these citizens and partners, and to build responsive structures and policies to ensure that the municipality and community advance towards reconciliation.

As outlined in this report, the CGS will start this coordinated effort by educating staff in the truths of Indigenous culture and history. At the same time, the City will reach out to Indigenous-led organizations and others within the community to establish networks that will allow information-sharing and common solutions-development to support improved Indigenous relations. Staff will continue to support the role of the Mayor's Office in managing formal relationships with local First Nations and explore opportunities to expand existing partnerships and service relationships in the context of the goals identified by Council.

To coordinate and advance existing and new initiatives in Indigenous relations, the CGS will establish a dedicated staff position within the Strategic Initiatives Division under the leadership of the Chief Administrative Officer and the Executive Director of Strategic Initiatives, Communications and Citizen Services. The potential for additional staff and financial resources to support these efforts will be submitted to the federal and provincial governments as opportunities are identified.

Over the medium term, staff will consult with the Indigenous community in the broadest sense to develop permanent policy approaches and institutions that will acknowledge the foundational role of Indigenous peoples to our community and will define the City's future relationship with Indigenous citizens and First Nations.

Background and Existing Initiatives

Prior to the release of the TRC Calls to Action, the work of the CGS Diversity Advisory Panel had identified the demographic growth of the Indigenous population in the City and across the region, and the importance of inclusion for the community's future social and economic success. Barriers to success were identified and the results of this work were carried forward in a variety of small initiatives across

the CGS. Greater Sudbury Council accepted the recommendations of the Panel in a Diversity Policy Statement that was adopted unanimously in May 2014. A link to this statement is in the Resources Section below.

The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was released in 2015. The report provided a new way for all Canadians to reconcile together through a healing journey hand-in-hand with Indigenous communities. The document contains 94 'Calls to Action' that are designed to lead governments and other actors along a path to truth and reconciliation. Five of these recommendations, which are summarized here, specifically address municipal governments and lay out the requirements to begin the process of reconciliation. The complete text for all of the Calls to Action can be accessed via the link in the Resources Section of this report. The five specific Calls to Action are:

TRC Call to Action #43 – Call on governments at all levels to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Persons, as the basis for reconciliation.

TRC Call to Action #47 – Call on governments at all levels to repudiate concepts such as Doctrine of Discovery and reform policies and legislation based on these concepts.

TRC Call to Action #57 – Call on governments at all levels to train their staff in the truths of Indigenous history and culture and the impacts of Residential schools.

TRC Call to Action #75 – Call on governments and organizations with custodial role for cemeteries to work to identify burial sites of residential school students and erect appropriate markers and memorials.

TRC Call to Action #87 – Call on municipal and community archives to work cooperatively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify, document and preserve records associated with the history and legacy of the residential school system.

Since the issuance of the TRC report, several initiatives have taken place within the CGS to begin to create a shared understanding and pathway towards reconciliation as well as to better serve Indigenous citizens in a culturally respectful manner.

Over the past three years, staff in several CGS divisions began efforts to understand the TRC, the Calls to Action and their potential implications for the City. The Community Development Department partnered with the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre to access cultural training and advice on strengthening the City's response. Similarly, the Economic Development Division reached out to Laurentian University for cultural awareness training and to begin a process to develop a two-way relationship leading towards reconciliation.

Through the United Nations University, the City leveraged its work on Population Health to undertake a research study on education for Indigenous youth. The results of this work were recently presented to local school boards to assist in the development of better services for the identified group. The City supports Indigenous licensed child care through an Anishnawbek program with 31 child care spaces,

delivered by Jubilee Family Resources. In addition, support is provided for the Indigenous EarlyON Child and Family Centre operated by Better Beginnings, Better Futures. This program offers free, high-quality drop-in programs for families and children from birth to six years old.

The Economic Development Division has maintained good relationships with local First Nation partners since the inception of the City of Greater Sudbury resulting in several successful shared initiatives. More formal relations also exist, particularly with Atikamekshing Anishnawbek where the CGS provides water and other services to the community.

Moving Forward

In developing a more coordinated and comprehensive response to the TRC Calls to Action, CGS staff have researched wise practices from other municipalities in Ontario and Manitoba. Staff from the Cities of Toronto and Thunder Bay have been particularly helpful in providing insights into their approaches to truth and reconciliation. Local and regional Indigenous leaders, in particular the leadership of the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre, have also lent important knowledge and support.

The lessons learned through this research indicates that long term success for the City's Indigenous Relations will be founded on mutual trust and understanding, shared goals and effective relationships. To begin to move toward these aspirational goals, the City will undertake the following initiatives in the immediate term:

1. Education – By end of Q1 2020, three pilot programs from different providers will educate CGS staff and senior leadership in accordance with TRC Call to Action # 57. Based on results from these pilot programs, a more comprehensive program will developed to reach all CGS employees by the end of 2021.
2. Dedicated Resources – By the end of Q1 2020, a full-time position, dedicated to coordinating the City's Indigenous Relations initiatives, as described in this report, will be in place. The City's Executive Leadership Team has committed to provide internal resources to support and learn from this position in the same time frame. Support from provincial and federal governments to expand this effort will be explored on an ongoing basis.
3. Community Network – CGS staff are engaged in an active effort to build an ongoing dialogue with Indigenous-led organizations and support organizations within Greater Sudbury. This network is intended to create a forum for information and advice exchange with a shared goal to improve services and programming for Indigenous citizens.
4. Workforce – While the 2016 CGS Employee Survey indicated that approximately 5% of CGS staff members self-identify as Indigenous, this number would need to double to reflect the reality of the community's population. Staff are actively exploring strategies to address this discrepancy and will incorporate this work in the Human Capital Management Plan that is currently under development.

Conclusion

Staff are confident that the initiatives outlined in this report will firmly establish the City of Greater Sudbury on a path towards truth and reconciliation. These first coordinated steps will lead to a shared dialogue with the community and consideration of larger symbolic initiatives over time.

Given the priority status of the Indigenous Relations initiatives and their relationship to Council's direction in the Strategic Plan, Council can expect regular updates on progress and future opportunities. The first such update is planned for April 2020.

Resources

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada – Calls to Action - http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
- CGS Diversity Policy Statement - <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/city-hall/reports-studies-policies-and-plans/diversity-policy/>