



REPORT FOR ACTION

Fulfilling Calls to Action from Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report

Date: April 1, 2016
To: Executive Committee
From: City Manager
Wards: All

SUMMARY

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its Calls to Action report. The report listed 94 Calls to Action that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission wants enacted in order to redress the legacy of residential schools.

As requested by City Council, the Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Division (EDHR), in consultation with the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee (AAAC), has identified eight Calls to Action that recognize the role of municipalities. These eight Calls to Action are related to health, reconciliation, professional development and training, museum and archives, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, commemoration, sports and reconciliation and newcomers to Canada.

This report outlines the progress made by the City, in partnership with the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee, in implementing the relevant eight Calls to Action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications to this report.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

By fulfilling the listed Calls to Action, the City of Toronto is taking steps to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the spirit of reconciliation as requested by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

DECISION HISTORY

At Executive Meeting on March 9, 2016, the Executive Committee adopted the recommendations in the report, Records at City of Toronto Archives, as it Relates to Identification and Collection of Records Relevant to Residential School System. EDHR was requested to consult with City Clerk Division to identify possible records at the Toronto Archives and other city divisions related to the history and legacy of the residential school system that could be forwarded to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. (EX13.16)

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX13.16>

At its December 9, 2015 meeting, City Council endorsed all Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report. City Council directed the City Manager's Office, in consultation with the AAAC, to develop concrete actions to fully implement the eight Calls to Action that explicitly recognize the role of municipal government. (EX10.16).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX10.16>

The Calls to Action were also part of the report considered by Council at its meeting on December 9 and 10, 2015 entitled Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal Communities of Toronto - Annual Update 2015 (EX10.1).

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX10.1>

BACKGROUND

Over 35,000 people who self-identify as Aboriginal live in Toronto and many are dealing with the consequences of inter-generational trauma caused by the residential school system. The City of Toronto has acknowledged the need for reconciliation by adopting the Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal Communities of Toronto in 2010; creating an Aboriginal Employment Strategy; an Aboriginal Education Strategy; increasing outreach to Aboriginal communities for the City's public appointments process; and by declaring 2014 the year of Truth and Reconciliation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission mandate is to inform all Canadians about what happened in the Indian Residential Schools and to guide and inspire reconciliation and renewed relationships between Aboriginal peoples and Canadians. The Calls to Action are the Commission's recommendations to address the residential schools legacy and to advance the reconciliation process in Canada.

COMMENTS

Truth and Reconciliation activities are being considered across Canada. At its meeting on December 9, 2015, City Council endorsed the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Report and requested the development of concrete actions to fully implement the calls to action that explicitly recognize the role of municipal government.

In response to Council's direction, EDHR, in consultation with the AAAC, identified eight relevant City actions related to health, reconciliation, professional development and training, museums and archives, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, commemoration, sports and reconciliation, and newcomers to Canada.

The eight Calls to Action are listed here along with the City's actions for each:

1. Health

Commission Action #23

We call upon all levels of government to:

- I. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health care field.
- II. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.
- III. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.

City Action

The City of Toronto has two Scholarships, administered by the University of Toronto, for Aboriginal Students Studying in Health Professions, undergraduate or graduate, on the basis of financial need, academic merit and demonstrated community leadership skills. The value is \$4,500.00 dollars. These scholarships raise the numbers of Aboriginal professionals working in the health care field. Recipients are expected to serve their communities, creating greater retention of health care providers. These scholarships have been in existence since 1989 and are awarded to two Aboriginal students a year.

TPH's Strategic Plan (2015-2019) identifies the development and implementation of Toronto's first comprehensive Indigenous Health Strategy as a priority action. The Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), Toronto Public Health (TPH) and Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT) have partnered on the development of a community- led advisory circle. The Toronto Indigenous Health Advisory Circle (TIHAC) launched a holistic and comprehensive Indigenous Health Strategy (IHS) in March 2016 that will guide the work of both TPH and the Toronto Central LHIN in improving health outcomes in Toronto.

In 2015, TPH launched a multi-year Indigenous Cultural Competency Training program. The purpose of this training is to provide staff, managers, directors and Board of Health (BOH) members with the knowledge and skills necessary to build/maintain trusting relationships, relevant programs and respectful services with and for Indigenous communities in Toronto. Last year, TPH trained BOH members and 240 employees.

The Division plans to train approximately 400 employees each year until 1200 (more than half of) TPH employees have completed the course. The training emphasizes the impacts of historic trauma, Indigenous culture-based practices and health perspectives, self-determination, as well as effective Indigenous community engagement strategies.

2. Reconciliation

Commission Action # 43

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

City Action

The City adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as part of the City's year-long proclamation on Truth and Reconciliation 2013 - 2014.

The City of Toronto in its 2003 Vision Statement on Access and Equity acknowledged the unique status and cultural diversity of the Aboriginal communities and their right to self-determination. This aligns with Article 3 of the UNDRIP which calls for Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination.

Article 11 of the UNDRIP states that Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature. The City of Toronto acknowledges this right through the work of Heritage Preservation and many other divisions that do environmental assessments that require consultations with Aboriginal peoples of the area as part of City staff's legal duty to consult.

The AAAC at the City comments on many of the initiatives being implemented by the City that may affect Aboriginal communities and makes recommendations to Executive Committee. The AAAC workings support UNDRIP Article 18 which enshrines the right of Indigenous peoples to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as the right to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making-institutions. Further, the workings of the AAAC supports UNDRIP Article 23 which states that Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

In 2010, The City adopted the Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal Communities of Toronto. Statement #1 commits the City to creating appropriate education for the Toronto Public Service on Aboriginal History and its current-day impacts which complements UNDRIP Article 15 on the need to appropriately recognize Aboriginal History in education and public information. Other Statements of Commitment include capacity building (#3), representation and decision making (#4), employment (#5), working with exploring promising practices and opportunities for collaboration on Aboriginal initiatives (#6), and working jointly with Aboriginal communities to evaluate the success of its Commitments (#7). In short, the Statement of Commitment supports the UNDRIP on many important issues facing Aboriginal communities in Toronto and entrusts the AAAC to oversee the implementation.

The City of Toronto will continue to ensure it supports the rights of Aboriginal peoples as set out in UNDRIP and in its Statement of Commitment.

3. Professional Development and Training for Public Servants

Commission Action #57

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

City Action

The City has acknowledged the impact of the Residential School System on Aboriginal peoples and on all Canadians. Part of the reconciliation process requires that everyone collectively learns about the Aboriginal history of Toronto. In July 2012, City Council adopted an Aboriginal Education Strategy, which combines formal and informal learning approaches, and a recommendation for a needs assessment to determine who in the Toronto Public Service should be educated on Aboriginal history, and what information staff need to know about Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. The needs assessment will be conducted in Q1 2016.

The Needs Assessment asks staff to identify if they are familiar with city initiatives related to Aboriginal peoples, to rate their knowledge of the Aboriginal community in Toronto, and to rate the importance of the need to know the Aboriginal history of Toronto. Based on the results an educational program will be developed that is relevant to City of Toronto staff. In addition to the Needs Assessment, the training program will also consider the Aboriginal community demographics and the issues identified in the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP), specifically housing, homelessness, poverty, health and child and family well-being.

The Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee is regularly updated on the progress of the Education Strategy and has been canvassed to provide information on potential Aboriginal consultants who can provide this training.

4. Museums and Archives

Commission Action #68

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, and the Canadian Museums Association to mark the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation in 2017 by establishing a dedicated national funding program for commemoration projects on the theme of reconciliation.

City Action

This initiative is not specifically related to municipalities, however, the City of Toronto Economic Development and Culture (EDC) is planning events to mark the 150th anniversary of Canada and are considering how best to incorporate an Aboriginal project related to the theme of reconciliation. EDC has presented to the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee on their planning process and will be seeking input from the committee as a theme is developed.

5. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

Commission Action #77

We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

City Action

The AAAC has considered this Action and has asked City of Toronto Archives to review their collection for any records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system. If there are any documents, City Archives has been requested to notify the AAAC and provide the documents to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

6. Commemoration

Commission Action #82

We call upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.

City Action

In 2014, the Toronto and East York Community Council adopted a report to consider enhancing the name of Allen Gardens to reflect the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation. The AAAC has also considered the possibility of creating a reconciliation pathway in Allen Gardens. Consultations with the local community, stakeholders and local Councillor are needed before any further steps can be taken.

As the Capital of the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto will consider working with the Provincial government and the Aboriginal Community to develop proposals for a Residential Schools Monument for the City. Possible future actions may include the City Manager's Office contacting the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and determining the stakeholders from the province and the City who ought to be involved in the discussions for a Residential Schools Monument. The AAAC will be invited to participate in the planning process.

7. Sports and Reconciliation

Commission Action #88

We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

City Action

The TRC recognizes that physical activity and sport are important to physical well-being and mental health and seeing Aboriginal athletes participating at a high competitive level can be a motivator for Aboriginal youth. The City of Toronto will be the host City for the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) for 2017. The Economic Development and Culture (EDC) division is working with NAIG organizers to determine the best way it can help to facilitate the games.

The Games are a multi-sport event and promote indigenous cultural activities, and local indigenous history. The City of Toronto, through EDC, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PF&R) and EDHR, are considering monetary as well as in-kind support through the use of City of Toronto facilities. EDC, PF&R and EDHR will also form an interdepartmental working group to plan for City involvement in this event.

8. Newcomers to Canada

Commission Action #94

Call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following:

I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen.

City Action

This action is not within municipal jurisdiction. However, given that Toronto welcomes the largest number of newcomers to Canada each year, the AAAC will explore how the City of Toronto can support this change.

The progress of these eight actions will be part of the annual staff update to City Council on the Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal Communities of Toronto.

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SIGNATURE

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