



TORONTO ABORIGINAL SUPPORT SERVICES COUNCIL

MEMO

TO: The City of Toronto Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee
RE: Community Safety and Wellbeing
DATE: January 29, 2020
FROM: The Toronto Aboriginal; Support Services Council

This memo serves to advise the members of the City of Toronto Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee and all respective and relevant City staff, police and emergency services peoples, mayor and council and other stakeholders that the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) on behalf of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre is requesting your attention in consideration of a Community Safety and Wellbeing Initiative.

The Issue:

Canada's colonial legacy that has shaped the current status of safety and wellbeing for many urban Indigenous peoples today remains striking. WE overrepresent in the incarcerated and the homeless and there continues to be an onslaught of Indigenous related overdoses causing death. Policing is not enough to respond to these and a litany of other community concerns. Young women in our communities are twice as likely to become victims of human trafficking and to go missing than any other ethno-specific group and the need to keep our people safe out there is now.

The 2019-20 City engagement on the MMIWG Calls for Justice and the engagement report produced by Mandy Wesley (2019) the instructions to act were clear:

- The need for safe spaces for active users
- Indigenous Liaisons within non-Indigenous specific services to help with access – i.e., Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit (Unit) within Toronto Police Services (TPS)
- Council Fire – Peacekeeping training & training and support for staff and other organizations serving survivors of violence and families of MMIWG



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The Idea:

The Community Safety and Wellbeing initiative is to provide an Indigenous community-led approach to peacekeeping to address community safety from an Indigenous-led perspective. Similar to the concept of the Winnipeg Bear Clan Patrol model which was created in 1992 to respond to a community need to increase safety in a non-judgmental and community led way. The Community Safety and Wellbeing initiative as we are loosely calling it, will work in compliment to the Toronto Police Services but autonomous of TPS in a community grounded manner that supports inner circle conflict resolution and trust building from a cultural perspective.

In order to keep our women, children, youth, Elders, men, 2Spirited folk and families safe we need to design approaches in-line with our own traditional worldview on community protection and that of a community wraparound approach that works to resolve conflict, restore traditional roles for the protectors and

The Plan:

We will hire and train Indigenous community members and agency staff people on harm reduction, conflict and crisis response, peacekeeping in the form of traditional roles regarding community safety patrol and protection. This pilot would seek to initially operate and include Council Fire, Miziwe Biik and other native agencies in Wards 10, 11, 12 and 13; with aspirations to grow it city-wide.

Next Steps:

We call upon the City of Toronto and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to motion to direct City staff and Council to work with Toronto Council Fire and the members of TASSC and others as partners toward coming together to develop this pilot and to ensure it is adequately supported, promoted and resourced. We ask that this be done in the spirit of action toward creating the kind of bold change that is needed to stop the continued and senseless harming and loss of our people in response to Truth and Reconciliation and the MMIWG Calls for Justice and in all that the City stands for in its Statement of Commitment to Indigenous People.



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The City of Toronto, Toronto Police and Emergency Services and the urban Indigenous social serving sector of Toronto will work in partnership to resource and initiate a community approach to peacekeeping toward community safety and wellbeing for Indigenous people by training, planning and mobilizing Indigenous community people and agency staff to take to the streets to establish a grounded and visible presence that promotes cultural safety and wellness while working to ensure we are keeping our most vulnerable safe and free of harm from predatory and harmful individuals, situations and substances. We will do this as a united front and in honour of the Call for Justice and to bring safety to our own in solidarity.

Draft Model:





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Resource Requirements:

Ward Specific City Councillors
Toronto Police Services, Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit
Community Safety Focused Division Heads
Mayor John Tory
Related Funding Units
TBD

In Solidarity,

The Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council

2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations
Aboriginal Legal Services
Association for Native Development in the Performing & Visual Arts/Arts Indigena
Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes
Miziwe Biik Employment and Training
Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto
Na Me Res (Native Men's Residence)
Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
Nishnawbe Homes
Thunder Woman's Healing Lodge Society
Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
Toronto Inuit Association
Wigwamen Inc.
Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle
Toronto & York Region Métis Council
Urban Indigenous Education Centre
Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy

