

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2016 June 22

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 2155 01

SUBJECT: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA –
OVERVIEW OF CALLS TO ACTION

PURPOSE: To provide the Committee with information related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, specifically those which pertain to local governments.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information purposes.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of 2016 February 3, the Social Planning Committee under 'New Business' requested staff to prepare information related to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, specifically those which pertain to local governments. This report responds to that request.

2.0 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN BURNABY

Burnaby is within the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Nations including the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Katzie, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, Semiahmoo, and Tsawwassen Nations. According to the 2011 Statistics Canada National Household Survey, approximately 3,805 individuals living in Burnaby self-identified as being Aboriginal. This accounts for approximately 1.7% of the total city population. Just under half of this number self-identify as being Métis. Indigenous peoples in Burnaby are on average younger than the general population, with most individuals being between 5 and 40 years of age. Based on enrollment information from the Burnaby School District, the Burnaby neighbourhoods with the highest percentage of Indigenous families are the Heights, Edmonds, Richmond Park, Cameron and Stride.

3.0 TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA

3.1 Origins

The mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) is outlined in *Schedule N* of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*. The implementation of this approximately \$1.9 billion dollar agreement began on 2007 September 19 and represents the agreement reached between legal counsel for former students, legal counsel for the involved Churches¹, the Assembly of First Nations, other Aboriginal organizations, and the Government of Canada.

Beginning in the 1870's, approximately 150,000 Indigenous children were removed and separated from their families and communities to attend residential schools. While most of the 139 residential schools ceased to operate by the mid-1970s, the last federally-run school closed in 1996.²

The establishment of residential schools was part of then-Federal government policy to eliminate Indigenous people as distinct peoples and to assimilate them into the Canadian "mainstream". As Canada's first Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, told the House of Commons in 1883:

"When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men."

Residential schools also had a physical impact on the mortality of Indigenous peoples. The Commission estimates that one out of every 25 students died while attending the schools. The Settlement Agreement aims to begin a process of resolution regarding the legacy of residential schools. The Agreement includes five different elements:

- a Common Experience Payment (CEP) for all eligible³ former students of residential schools. The deadline to apply for these payments was 2011 September;
- an Independent Assessment Process (IAP) for claims of sexual or serious physical abuse. The deadline to apply for this compensation was 2012 September;
- measures to support healing such as the establishment of the 'Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program'⁴ and an endowment to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation;

¹ Specifically: The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, and Roman Catholic Entities.

² The last operational Residential School was Gordon Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan.

³ Eligible individual are those who were registered and lived at one of 139 identified school locations across Canada. The payment structure set out in the Settlement is \$10,000 for the first school year (or part of a school year) plus \$3,000 for each school year (or part of a school year) after that.

- commemorative activities (e.g. art pieces, dialogue circles, memorial marches, film productions); and,
- the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In addition, on 2008 June 11, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke in the House of Commons to acknowledge the inter-generational damage caused by Indian Residential Schools and to offer an official apology.

3.2 Mandate and Process

The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was overseen by three Commissioners⁵ and supported by a staff team at the national head office in Winnipeg and smaller offices in Ottawa, Vancouver, Yellowknife and Hobbema, Alberta. As well, a 10 member Indian Residential School Survivor Committee advised the Commission. The mandated work of the TRC included:

- preparing a complete historical record on the policies and operations of residential schools;
- completing a public report including recommendations to the parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (the ‘Settlement’);
- documenting missing children and unmarked burials; and
- establishing a national research centre on reconciliation.

In order to complete this work, the Commission hosted seven national events at which over 1300 hours of testimony from Residential School survivors was recorded. As well, the TRC collected over 6,000 written statements. Documents from all parties subject to the Settlement were also examined.

From this process, the TRC released its final report, *Honouring the Truth – Reconciling for the Future*⁶, on 2015 December 15. This report includes sections outlining the history and impact of residential schools, including the experiences of Metis and Inuit peoples; provides estimates on the number of missing children and unmarked burials; and details the continuing impacts of residential schools felt by Indigenous individuals and communities today. The report then concludes with 94 ‘Calls to Action for Reconciliation’. The Actions are directed towards all parties of the Settlement as well as to individuals, other community institutions, and all levels of government including local government. *Section 4.0* below provides more information on the ‘Calls to Action’.

In anticipation of the final report release, the TRC established the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation housed at the University of Manitoba. This Centre fulfills the TRC’s commitment to establish a national research centre on reconciliation and also is a permanent repository and

⁴ For example, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada seeks to support former students in crisis by funding the National Indian Residential School Crisis Line, a national, 24-hour toll-free support service (1-866-925-4419).

⁵ The Commissioners were: Senator Murray Sinclair, Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild.

⁶ A full copy of the report can be found at: <http://nctr.ca/reports.php>

archive for the statements, documents and other materials the TRC gathered over its years of operation. The Centre was officially opened in 2015 November.

3.3 Final Report and Calls to Action

The ‘Calls to Action’ included in the final report of the TRC are divided into two categories: legacy (Actions #1 to #42) and reconciliation (Actions #43 to #94.). The ‘legacy’ actions include sections on Child Welfare, Education, Language and Culture and Health and Justice. The ‘reconciliation’ actions include sections relating to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples*, equity for Indigenous peoples in the legal system, professional development and training for public servants, education, relationships with faith institutions, youth, museums and archives, missing children and women, sports, business, and immigration. These actions also provide direction to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to continue its research and cataloguing activities.

The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples*⁷ was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 and recognises the wide range of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of Indigenous peoples. In particular, the Declaration highlights the requirement for prior and informed consultation, participation and consent for activities of any kind that impact Indigenous peoples. Although broad in scope, the content of the Declaration largely references the level of government, which differs from country to country, that is respectively responsible for relationships with Indigenous peoples and nations. On 2016 May 10, the Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister, the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, formally declared at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues that Canada is now a full supporter of the declaration and that its content would be adopted and implemented in accordance with the Canadian Constitution. The previous Conservative Government had previously lodged ‘permanent objector status’ with the UN against the *Declaration*.

As mentioned above, the ‘Calls to Action’ speak not only to parties of the Settlement but also to other levels of governments, including local government, and to other community institutions and individual Canadians.

The eight actions that specifically name municipal governments or which refer to ‘all levels of government’ in areas of local government jurisdiction/involvement are excerpted below:

- #43) We call upon all levels of government to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as a framework for reconciliation.
- #47) We call upon all levels of government to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands.
- #55) We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports and/or any current data to the National Centre for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation.

⁷ A full copy of the Declaration can be found at: <http://www.iwgia.org/human-rights/international-human-rights-instruments/undeclaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

- **#57)** We call upon all levels of governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
- **#75)** We call upon all levels of government, as applicable, to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing protection of residential school cemeteries. This includes the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honour the deceased children.
- **#77)** We call upon the archives of all levels of government 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.
- **#87)** We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
- **#88)** We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth and continued support for North American Indigenous Games.

Other actions directed towards higher levels of government will, should they be implemented, also impact Burnaby. For example, these include a call to the federal government to establish multi-year funding for youth programs on reconciliation (#66), and a call to provincial governments to develop age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools as a mandatory requirement for all students from kindergarten to grade 12 (#62). As well, the actions contain a call to the corporate community to commit to relationship-building and consultation and ensure equitable access to jobs, training and professional development (#92), which may inform the activities of the Burnaby Board of Trade and similar entities in other cities.

4.0 ACTIVITIES OF OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

A number of other local government entities around British Columbia are also working on responding to the ‘Calls for Action’ contained within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Final Report. A snapshot of these activities include:

- *Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District* declared a ‘Year of Reconciliation’ in 2013 and have engaged in staff and elected leader competency training. As well, a section of the Regional District’s website is now dedicated to reconciliation information and activities.
- *City of North Vancouver* contributed to a public art project acknowledging the site of the former St. Paul’s Residential School. As well, the North Vancouver Public Library has created a program called the Truth and Reconciliation Pledge Project that provides resources to library users and encourages community members to become familiar with the work and recommendations of the TRC.
- *City of Prince George* has renamed Fort George Park to Lheidli T’enneh Memorial Park to honour the people who were forced to move their village in 1913 to make way for the growing city. The Lheidli T’enneh burial ground is located in the park.

- *City of Vancouver* also declared a ‘Year of Reconciliation’ in 2013 and has endorsed the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*. Based on this, staff were instructed to develop a ‘reconciliation framework’ including training for staff, strengthening relationships with local Nations and urban Indigenous population, and building corporate cultural competency. This framework has begun to be implemented. An ‘Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence’ position has also been created at Vancouver Public Library.
- *City of Surrey* is in the process of developing an ‘Urban Aboriginal Social Strategy’ which is being led by a citizen-based leadership committee.

5.0 RECENT AND ONGOING RELATED INITIATIVES IN BURNABY

Burnaby has always been home to diverse communities of Indigenous peoples. Today, in addition to Coast Salish Nations, the city is home to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit from all over the country. As a reflection of this reality, the City has and is participating in a number of recent and ongoing related initiatives. For example, these include:

Recent Initiatives

- Indigenous history is recognized in the ‘Charting Change’ atlas included on the Heritage Burnaby website.
- Links to Aboriginal studies and local programs for Indigenous families are included in the Social Planning website content for the main City website.
- The City participated in the development of the Burnaby School District’s most recent ‘Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement’ (approved 2014 November). The City is also a signatory to this Agreement as a ‘Community Witness’.
- City staff participated in and supported a professional education opportunity for local social service agencies in 2015 May entitled ‘First Peoples 101’. This opportunity was provided in partnership with North Burnaby Interagency Council⁸ and the Burnaby School District.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Burnaby Village Museum is:
 - working with Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Musqueam Nations to research Aboriginal history as it relates to Burnaby and to deliver Aboriginal programming on site⁹;
 - retaining educators to train staff and volunteers about First Nations cultural traditions;
 - working with local First Nations as well as the Burnaby School District’s Vice Principal of Aboriginal Education to update the Museum’s school programs with Aboriginal content in order to meet the new K-12 curriculum objectives mandated by the Provincial government; and,

⁸ This Committee is composed of a variety of local social service organizations active in North Burnaby. The training was open to non-profit organizations active in all areas of Burnaby.

⁹ For example, the Museum has retained First Nations educators to deliver regular public programs, including ‘Weaving Squamish Stories’ and ‘Aboriginal Medicinal Plant Tours’.

- working to make information about Indigenous artifacts in its collections available through the 'Heritage Burnaby' website.
- Since 2014, Council has proclaimed and recognized June 21st as 'National Aboriginal Day', the national holiday recognizing and celebrating the many accomplishments and contributions of Indigenous peoples.
- City Archives is reviewing its records and will provide copies of any findings related to Indigenous peoples to the National Council for Reconciliation¹⁰.
- City staff have participated in the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table since its inception in 2007.
- Related Heritage Burnaby content is being expanded as resources allow. This includes recognizing related 'places of significance' and interpretive signage, where appropriate.
- City staff are supporting the Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame to complete community outreach in order to connect with and recognize local Indigenous athletes.
- Burnaby Public Library is expanding its collection of Indigenous materials, including resources for both adults and children¹¹. The Library is also partnering with Spirit of the Children Society, a locally-based agency offering services for Indigenous families, to develop additional programming for library branches.
- City staff participated in an ad-hoc community-based planning committee to organize Burnaby's inaugural 'National Aboriginal Day' celebrations, which occurred on 2016 June 21 at Edmonds Community School.

6.0 ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

Building upon these initiatives, staff have consulted with relevant City Departments to identify further initiatives the City could explore. These include:

- A City proclamation supporting the intent of and acknowledging the Federal Government's recent adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and its implementation by the Federal Government in accordance with the Canadian Constitution.
- A further Burnaby Oral Histories project, through the Community Heritage Commission, related to Indigenous community members as well as members of other ethno-cultural groups.
- City staff training through the annual internal professional education program (e.g. incorporated into Believe and Achieve programming, content included in new employee orientation, support of Department in-service training opportunities) and/or by supporting

¹⁰ To the knowledge of staff, as based upon a listing of residential schools covered by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, no residential schools were based in Burnaby. The closest residential schools were located in North Vancouver, Mission and Chilliwack as well as other communities (e.g. Sechelt, Alert Bay) across B.C.

¹¹ This includes bookclub sets of Aboriginal authors, online recommendations and resources, and developing related curriculum resource information for teachers.

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From: Director Planning and Building
Re: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada – Overview of Calls to Action
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staff to take the online Union of BC Municipalities Indigenous Cultural Competency Training¹².

- Other opportunities to include Indigenous elements into community events.

Staff would further develop these opportunities within the City's existing programs and initiatives. As required, separate subsequent reports would be brought forward to Council containing implementation details for review and approval.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On 2015 December 15, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released its final report, *Honouring the Truth – Reconciling for the Future*. The report contains 94 'Calls to Action for Reconciliation'. The Actions are directed towards individuals, other community institutions, and all levels of government including local government. More specifically, there are seven actions that specifically name municipal governments or which refer to 'all levels of government' in areas of local government jurisdiction/involvement. The City is already active in undertaking a number of initiatives that relate to many of these actions.

Based on this existing involvement, a staff review across departments identified several other initiatives that can be developed further under the City's existing programs and initiatives. As such, it is recommended that this report be received for information.



Lou Pelletier, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RM/sla/sa

cc: City Manager
Deputy City Manager
Director Engineering
Director, Human Resources
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Chief Librarian
City Solicitor
City Clerk
Burnaby Village Museum, Curator
City Archivist

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¹² Beginning in 2015, September the Union of BC Municipalities has been offering online cultural competency training, via a partnership with Sany'has Indigenous Cultural Safety Training, for BC elected officials and local government staff.