

**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2019 October 30

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 2155 01

**SUBJECT: TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA  
'CALLS TO ACTION' FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT – PROPOSED  
FRAMEWORK FOR FURTHER ACTION**

**PURPOSE:** To propose a framework for further action regarding the City of Burnaby's efforts to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 'Calls to Action' for local government.

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** the Committee request Council to approve implementation of the proposed framework as described in *Section 5.0* of this report.
2. **THAT** the Committee request Council to approve the establishment of a new staff position to implement the proposed framework as described in *Section 5.3* of this report.
3. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Environment and Social Planning Committee and the Community Heritage Commission for information.

### **REPORT**

#### **1.0 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN BURNABY**

Burnaby is located on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hə́nqəmínə́m and Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh speaking peoples, and we are grateful to be on this shared territory. According to the 2016 National Census, approximately 4,195 individuals living in Burnaby self-identified as being Aboriginal. This accounts for approximately 1.8% of the total city population. Based on enrollment information from the Burnaby School District, the Burnaby neighbourhoods with the highest percentage of Indigenous families are the Heights, Edmonds, Cameron, and Stride.

#### **2.0 POLICY SECTION**

The City of Burnaby efforts to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 'Calls to Action' for local government are supported by the following Council-adopted policies:

- Equity Policy, approved by Council in 1994, which states that “The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect”;
- Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy, approved by Council in 2011, includes a primary goal of ‘Community Inclusion’. This goal is particularly concerned with ensuring the City is “welcoming of all cultures, identities and abilities”, which focus on “principles of economic and social security and justice”; and the
- Goals and sub-goals of the Corporate Strategic Plan through:
  - An Inclusive Community
    - Celebrate diversity –  
Create more opportunities for the community to celebrate diversity
    - Serve a diverse community –  
Ensure City services fully meet the needs of our dynamic community
    - Create a sense of community –  
Provide opportunities that encourage and welcome all community members and create a sense of belonging
  - A Thriving Organization
    - Organizational culture –  
Ensure that our core values are reflected in our policies, programs and service delivery

### **3.0 TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA**

The mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) is outlined in *Schedule N* of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (2007)*, which is the agreement reached between former residential school students, the involved Churches<sup>1</sup>, 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.<sup>2</sup>

Commissioners of the TRC spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada to hear from Indigenous people who had been taken from their families as children, often by force, and placed for much of their childhoods in residential schools. What they heard regarding the ongoing impacts felt by Indigenous individuals and communities of the abuse, neglect and cultural genocide experienced in these residential schools is contained in the Commission’s final report *Honouring the Truth – Reconciling for the Future* (2015 December). The report also contains a series of 94 ‘Calls to Action for Reconciliation’, which are directed towards all parties of the Agreement as well as to individuals, community institutions, and all levels of government including local government.

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

<sup>2</sup> The last operational Residential School was Gordon Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan.

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Since that time, staff have been working to implement the eight 'Calls to Action' that specifically name municipal governments or which refer to 'all levels of government' in areas of local government jurisdiction/involvement. At its 2019 October 07 meeting, Council received an update regarding these efforts.

#### **4.0 RECONCILIATION EFFORTS IN BURNABY**

To-date, staff implementation of the 'Calls to Action' has focused on:

- initiating staff-to-staff relationships with local Nations;
- recognizing and beginning the work of physically demonstrating ancestral and ongoing Indigenous presence on this land; and,
- developing, with input from local Nations, appropriate language for verbal and written territory acknowledgement at a corporate level.

This work has resulted in, for example, the creation of an Indigenous Learning Week (in partnership with the Burnaby School District) and Matriarch's Garden at Burnaby Village Museum; the development of School/Public Programs at Burnaby Art Gallery that incorporate and feature Indigenous content; and the creation of staff guidelines which inform and actualize territory acknowledgment at City events and in civic documents.

Another significant piece of work has been the creation of an Indigenous Learning House at Burnaby Village Museum. This space is staffed and animated by Indigenous Educators who work closely with local First Nations, Indigenous artists, elders and knowledge keepers to develop Indigenous curriculum materials for Museum visitors. This work has also informed other related City processes, and has formed a critical cornerstone of City reconciliation related efforts to implement Action #47 of the TRC Final Report.

These processes and projects have strengthened staff relationships with local Nations and have established a baseline for possible further action to implement the TRC 'Calls to Action' for local governments at a corporate level.

#### **5.0 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR FURTHER ACTION**

Following input from local Nations, and based upon staff learnings to date from working to implement the 'Calls to Action' for local government, the following framework is proposed for further reconciliation efforts.

##### **5.1 Initiate Government-to-Government Relationships**

It is proposed that Council formally initiate relations with the following Local Nations on a government-to-government (Council-to-Council) level: the Katzie; Kwantlen; Kwikwetlem; xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam); Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish); and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. This is an appropriate 'next step' in implementing the TRC 'Calls to Action' while working with the governance structures of Nations. The creation of such connections aims to

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recognize and address the consequences of colonial policies and the corresponding lasting impacts experienced by Indigenous peoples, while establishing effective working relationships.

If approved, staff would support Council with the necessary contacts and protocol/process information in order to formally initiate relationships. Once established, these relationships will guide the identification of specific further processes, projects and efforts to advance reconciliation at a corporate level.

## **5.2 Build Organizational Cultural Competency**

'Call to Action' #57 of the TRC Final Report, references the crucial importance that training for public servants plays in the implementation of reconciliation efforts at a government level. The creation and formalization of Canada's governance structures occurred at a time in our country's history that was characterized by overt and systematic attempts at destruction of Indigenous peoples and their ways of life. The impacts of these structures, and associated injustices, continue to reverberate for Indigenous peoples and Nations. As such, it is only with concerted effort and awareness on the part of the governments of today, via the individuals that work within them that operations and practices can shift from those rooted in colonization to those that embrace reconciliation.

Given this context it is recommended that a plan be developed to provide all City of Burnaby staff, including exempt and senior staff, with targeted education opportunities, which:

- introduce the rich diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures and communities both locally and across Canada;
- provide essential knowledge regarding the history of Indigenous-settler relationships and the human, social and economic impacts of past government policies and practices;
- identify details of current civic efforts towards reconciliation; and,
- create opportunities for personal and professional insight into how individuals can contribute to positive change.

If approved, staff, in consultation with local Nations, would bring forward a more detailed content outline and rollout strategy for Council approval.

## **5.3 Coordinate and Prioritize Reconciliation Efforts**

As corporate reconciliation efforts increase and more staff are engaged in associated activities, there is a need to coordinate and prioritize information, consultation, and collaboration opportunities with local Nations. It is proposed that this be addressed via the creation of a new staff position (Planner 3), located within the Planning and Building Department, to oversee implementation of the City's framework for reconciliation.

If approved, this position would serve as the City's primary contact for its relationships and interactions with local Nations. Other staff requests and communications would be managed through this position. As well, this position could support Council in its initiation of official

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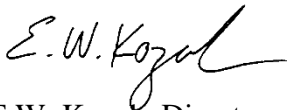
relationships with local Nations and could organize subsequent discussions with their respective leadership regarding which processes/items/efforts should be prioritized moving forward. As relationships with local Nations are formed, this work may be further supported and guided through the use of consultants who are experts in this field.

## 6.0 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, community institutions, and all levels of government including local government. Since 2016 the City of Burnaby has been working to implement those directed towards local government.

To further these efforts, it is recommended that the Committee request Council to approve implementation of the proposed framework as outlined in *Section 5.0* of this report. It is also recommended that the Committee request Council to approve the establishment of a new staff position to implement the proposed framework as described in *Section 5.3* of this report.

Finally, it is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Environment and Social Planning Committee and the Community Heritage Commission for information.



E.W. Kozak, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RM:sa

cc: City Manager  
Director Corporate Services  
Director Engineering  
Director Public Safety and Community Services

Chief Librarian  
City Solicitor  
City Clerk  
Director Human Resources