

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS
FROM: DIRECTOR INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION
SUBJECT: **2024 INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION – A YEAR IN REVIEW**
PURPOSE: To update Council on the work of the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Division in 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled “2024 Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation – A Year in Review,” dated April 22, 2025, be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Division (IRRD) was created in fall 2023. This past year has been its first year in full operation. The IRRD’s mandate is to build and maintain relationships with the Host Nations on whose unceded territories the City of Burnaby (City) is now located and with Indigenous Peoples who live in Burnaby. The IRRD works to advance reconciliation on behalf of the City and in collaboration with other City staff.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

Building and maintaining relationships with Host Nations and Indigenous Peoples living in Burnaby, and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples is supported by the following Burnaby plans and policies:

- *Connecting Burnaby: Burnaby Transportation Plan (2021)*
 - For example:
 - *In 2019, Council adopted a policy framework that responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action for Local Government that focuses on reconciliation efforts in Burnaby.*
 - *As the original stewards of the territory known as Burnaby, and as knowledge keepers on land use and environmental protection, local First Nations have a unique status and history in Burnaby. The Plan recognizes local First Nations’ traditional knowledge base and the value it brings to future land use and transportation decisions.*
- *Burnaby Community Safety Plan (2020)*

- For example:
 - *Foster and strengthen relationships with local First Nations and urban Indigenous groups to identify ways to enhance Indigenous people's safety and well-being and to ensure programs and services are inclusive and culturally sensitive.*
- *Burnaby Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016)*
 - For example:
 - *Explore ways to develop and nurture partnerships with neighbouring municipalities, other levels of government (regional, provincial, federal, First Nations), community groups, industry and businesses.*
- *Official Community Plan (OCP) (1998)*
 - For example:
 - *To provide opportunities for increased awareness and the conservation of the City's unique natural, cultural, archeological and built heritage.*
- *Equity Policy (1994, Updated 2020)*
 - For example:
 - *The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect.*
- *Social Sustainability Strategy (2011)*
 - For example:
 - *Look for opportunities to provide leadership in reducing all forms of discrimination.*
- *Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy (2024)*
 - For example:
 - *To come to terms with events of the past and to proactively develop respectful and mutually beneficial relationships based on truth, justice, and reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples that will support a prosperous and just future for all.*

This work is also in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (TRC), the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). As well, it responds to the [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Calls to Justice](#) regarding municipal governments.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Although staff at the City have worked to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples for more than a decade, this work has only been formalized since the development of the IRRD. Council gave official direction to staff on August 26, 2024, to implement an interim Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy for moving forward in consultation and cooperation with Host Nations and Indigenous

Peoples living in Burnaby, to understand the truth in Truth and Reconciliation and to support reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The following report outlines work done at the City in 2024 to achieve this mandate. In alignment with the interim framework and strategy, this work is presented under the three (3) posts. The use of posts, versus pillars, is intentional and meant to be respectful of Coast Salish culture.

Using language and symbolism reflective of Coast Salish culture is a first step in a holistic approach to this work. House posts were created for significant or special events, such as a potlatch or the completion of a longhouse, and they can be carved to reflect character and values but were also designed as markers for civic and community spaces.

The *kʷə səliwətaʔ syəwenəʔ ct* - *Our Tsleil-Waututh Ancestors* carving by Jonas Jones, that now stands in the lobby at Burnaby City Hall, is a physical example of these markers. The three proposed posts and strategies within each post are as follows:

- **Post 1:** Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
- **Post 2:** Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
- **Post 3:** Unity

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

Highlighted work completed in 2024 in consultation and in collaboration with other City staff and departments related to these three posts includes the following:

Post 1: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition

- Negotiated Government-to-Government/Council-to-Council Relationships and Agreements
- Engaged with Host Nations to co-develop and update land acknowledgment
- Created and co-planted eco-sculpture gifted by City to Tsleil-Waututh in recognition of the relationship between the City and the Host Nation
- Decolonizing systemic racism through policies and processes, including engaging with Host Nations and Indigenous Peoples living in Burnaby on the Official Community Plan, archives, naming, proclamation and commemoration policies, as well as various guidelines and neighbourhood plans
- Implemented TRC Calls to Action, specifically Call to Action #57 to educate public servants on the history of Indigenous Peoples, including the history of residential schools, by hosting a lunch and learn for staff and sharing information through Staff Connect and through interactive lobby displays
- Supported Indigenous self-determination and advancing economic reconciliation by partnering with the Burnaby Board of Trade (BBOT) to

- coordinate and co-host a panel discussion on Indigenous procurement for BBOT members
- Consulted and collaborated with Host Nations in the identification and management of archaeological and cultural heritage resources through participation in their referral processes
 - Hired a staff Civic Archaeologist to support this work
 - Stood up and fully staffed an internal Referrals Office to facilitate the process
- Partnered with Host Nations to increase visibility of their presence on their territory through creating opportunities to share language and culture at events, like National Indigenous Peoples Day, as well as through creating Host Nations public art opportunities, including in Burnaby parks, as well as supporting placemaking work in Burnaby Public Libraries
 - Connecting community organizations with Host Nations
 - Screened *All Our Father's Relations* at Connect Fest - screening included a panel of Musqueam community members who were featured in the documentary to discuss their connections to their lands and their related family history
- Developed a public reconciliation statement and declaring official commitment to reconciliation through Council approved interim Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy

Post 2: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity

- Cultural competency and capacity training for staff and senior leadership through regular internal presentations by IRRD to share information about the interim strategy and framework
 - *Pre-Contact and Residential School History* presentation to staff and senior leadership
 - Interactive performance, *How Raven Stole the Sun*, presented to staff
 - Orange Shirt Day and Red Dress Day crafts shared with all staff and used in displays in the lobby at City Hall to educate staff about the significance behind these important dates
 - Contributed content to Staff Connect regarding Orange Shirt Day/Truth and Reconciliation Day, Moose Hide Campaign, Red Dress Day, and National Indigenous Peoples Day
- Developing community resources, including investments in programming
 - Partnered with MOSAIC to advocate for including Indigenous Peoples as a priority population at its new clinic in Burnaby
- Hosted large and small-scale community events recognizing Indigenous Peoples, such as National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations and the 2nd Annual Hope and Health Community Camp, and the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts presented the play *Qwalena: The Wild Woman Who Steals Children*
 - The 2nd Annual Hope and Health Community Camp was attended by 250 registered participants and their families. Participants

received a custom orange jersey, soccer ball, participation medal and lunch. The event engages children, youth, and families in reconciliation

- The event is presented in partnership with a number of community partners, including Hope and Health Society, EA Sports, UBC Thunderbirds Women's Soccer Team, SFU Red Leafs Women's Soccer Team, the Vancouver Whitecaps, and Harvest Meats
- The National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration was moved to Civic Square in 2024 and saw increased attendance last year
 - The celebration included a vendor market, a drum circle, storytelling, activities, information booths, and performances by Host Nations and other Indigenous Peoples
- Made grants and contributions to:
 - Tsleil-Waututh Canoe Festival
 - Both Tsleil-Waututh and Hope and Health Christmas hamper and toy drives
 - Spirit of the Children National Day for Truth and Reconciliation event
 - Stream of Dreams Mural Society to support cultural day camps for Indigenous youth in Burnaby
- Updated the City Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation webpage

Post 3: Unity

- Support, celebrate and promote Indigenous public art by creating opportunities for artists from Host Nations on projects of all sizes. For example:
 - Pin designed by Squamish artist in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Distributed internally and externally
 - T-shirt designed by Musqueam artist for staff and volunteers to wear at the National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration
 - Orange jersey designed by Tsleil-Waututh artist in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation given to participants of the annual Hope and Health Community Camp
 - BAG on a Bike prints designed by Kwikwetlem artist for National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration
- Incorporate Indigenous culture and language into community events and celebrations
 - Provided opportunities for Host Nations to offer remarks, share their language, dances, and songs at community events throughout the year, including, but not limited to Canada Day, Pride, Burnaby Blues and Roots Festival, Symphony in the Park, World Rivers Day, and the Sohen Gill Sports Box Opening
- Support and participate in events hosted by or for Indigenous Peoples
 - Representatives from Council and department heads were invited to and attended the Tsleil-Waututh Canoe Festival, Tsleil-Waututh

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Community Event, and
Tsleil-Waututh Indigenous Veterans Day Event

- Representatives from Council and department heads attended the City's National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration, the Hope and Health Community Camp, and the Spirit of the Children National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Day event

3.1 Next Steps

IRRD will continue to consult with and collaborate with Host Nations, Indigenous Peoples living in Burnaby, City staff, and community partners to advance reconciliation on behalf of the City of Burnaby. It is important to note this work is done in partnership - working together with City staff and other departments, and it could not be successful without the support of Council and senior leadership.

Going forward, staff will continue to update Council and seek direction on related work in connection with the interim framework. Work that is being prioritized at this time and proposed timelines to be presented to Council, include the following. Please note, some previously identified work is still in progress due to ongoing engagement or capacity issues both internally and externally:

- Establishing Citywide Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Staff Working Group (Spring 2025)
 - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
 - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
 - Post: Unity
 - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47, 57
- Civic Archaeology Policy (Spring 2025)
 - This work is in response to:
 - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
 - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
 - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47
 - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 3, 11, 12, 13, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 39
- Updated Land Acknowledgment (Spring 2025)
 - This work is in response to:
 - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
 - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47
 - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 11, 15, 26
 - DRIPA Action Plan Items: 1.3
- Qualified Indigenous Vendors Inventory (Summer 2025)
 - This work is in response to:

- Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
 - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
 - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47, 57, 92
 - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 3, 5, 15, 21, 23, 32, 36,
 - DRIPA Action Plan Items: 1.3
- Citywide Archaeological Overview Assessment (Fall 2025)
 - This work is in response to:
 - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
 - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
 - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47
 - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 11, 12, 13, 15, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 39
- Engagement/Co-Management Agreements (Ongoing)
 - This work is in response to:
 - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
 - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47
 - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 26, 27, 29, 32, 39
 - DRIPA Action Plan Items: 1.3
- Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy (Ongoing)
 - This work is in response to:
 - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
 - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
 - Post: Unity
 - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47
 - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 22, 26, 27, 29, 32, 39
 - DRIPA Action Plan Items: 3.1
- Indigenous Awareness Training for Council, Senior Leadership and Staff (Ongoing)
 - This work is in response to:
 - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
 - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47, 57
 - DRIPA Action Plan Items: 3.1

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Communication and engagement with Host Nations and Indigenous Peoples living in Burnaby, where appropriate, is ongoing and led through the IRRD. Information related to work the City is doing to advance reconciliation and support Indigenous relations has

been and will continue to be centralized on the City's Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation webpage to share information and promote important work being led by teams throughout the City.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As per the UNDRIP, Indigenous Peoples have the right to access financial assistance for the enjoyment of the rights contained in the Declaration, including the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, and artifacts. The financial considerations will be provided with each strategic document that comes forward for Council approval.

Respectfully submitted,

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for Noreen Kassam, Deputy CAO and Chief Financial Officer

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Mikelle Sasakamoose, Director, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and reviewed by Noreen Kassam, Deputy CAO and Chief Financial Officer.