



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: September 18, 2014  
Contact: Wendy Au / Ginger Gosnell-Myers  
Contact No.: 604.871.6639 / 604.873.7209  
RTS No.: 10681  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: October 28, 2014

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: City Manager  
SUBJECT: Framework for City of Reconciliation

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council adopt the proposed framework focusing on Cultural Competency, Strengthening Relations, and Effective Decision-Making within the City's service provision and ongoing relationships with Vancouver's host First Nations, the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and urban Aboriginal community.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to develop a four year work program with report back every two years on progress and outcomes.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report builds upon the accomplishments of the Year of Reconciliation and outlines a proposed framework for Vancouver to become the world's first City of Reconciliation. The long term commitment will move forward the City's continuing work on raising awareness, creating partnerships, and addressing capacity for the betterment of the City of Vancouver, focussing on the significant relations with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, and with the urban Aboriginal community.

The report outlines the first step to embrace the proposed framework to strengthen understanding and relationships with First Nations and urban Aboriginal peoples with the long term vision of an inclusive city that embraces all cultures and facilitates opportunities for communities to live, work and play together in a harmonious city.

## ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

At its meeting on February 26, 2013, Vancouver City Council passed the motion to proclaim June 21, 2013, to June 20, 2014, as the Year of Reconciliation in Vancouver. On June 20, 2013, Council officially announced the Proclamation in an intercultural celebration and dialogue event attended by local and provincial First Nation and multicultural leaders.

On July 8, 2014, after a successful year of engaging the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to participate in City's services and programs during the 'Year of Reconciliation', Vancouver City Council passed the motion to reaffirm its commitment to designate Vancouver as a City of Reconciliation. Council also requested staff to bring back a report on next steps to continue the work of healing from the past, and finding a new pathway forward together.

## ***CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

June 2014 marked a significant commitment to strengthen Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationships with the Year of Reconciliation and a new beginning progressing towards a City of Reconciliation.

Reconciliation is not limited to one community. Instead it reaches into aspects of all of our histories and current environments and because of that a City of Reconciliation will look to ways that it can cultivate connections with First Nations, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups for whom meaningful engagement and understanding can create a healthier, supportive city. Moving forward as a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver will look for ways to enhance opportunities and understanding for all communities and will incorporate these efforts into the City of Reconciliation work program.

City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

## ***REPORT***

### ***Background/Context***

Vancouver has the third largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada with 52,375 people. Vancouver's Aboriginal population is extremely diverse and includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from all across Canada. The population is young and growing; close to half of all Aboriginal people in Canada are under the age of 25. Aboriginal people move to Vancouver to take advantage of the amenities that city life has to offer, to pursue their education, for employment, and to raise a family.

The impact of residential schools has left a legacy of tragic injustice, affecting generation after generation of Aboriginal people. Canadians' growing awareness of the devastating effects of colonization and the residential schools, including racism, poverty, and poor health outcomes, is the result of courageous and vocal residential school survivors who have long advocated for this history to be told. The majority of Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. It is the acknowledgement of these stories, along with the recognition of First Nations and Aboriginal people's strengths and contributions to the social, economic and

cultural development of Canada that has helped to create the conditions for reconciliation and healing.

At the Aboriginal Reconciliation Summit in June 2013, hosted by the City of Vancouver and Reconciliation Canada, participants from Aboriginal and multicultural communities came together to discuss the need to improve understanding, by working together. Participants agreed that strengthening intercultural relationships would have a lasting positive impact on children and future generations.

Between July 2013 and June 2014 City departments implemented over 30 different initiatives in support of the Year of Reconciliation, focusing on:

- improving municipal services
- supporting housing and shelter needs
- increasing employment
- enhancing staff and public awareness
- promoting arts and culture
- focussing on health and wellness strategies and investments
- supporting youth, and providing funding for departmental reconciliation projects

The Mayor also issued a “Call to Action” urging other municipalities to join Vancouver’s proclamation. UBCM, FCM, the Cities of Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto, are just a few that have responded by declaring a ‘Year of Reconciliation’ within their organizations.

### ***Strategic Analysis***

The focus on First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities through a City of Reconciliation is a commitment to supporting the progress that will be made through improved relations. First Nations have gained recognition from both the Provincial and Federal governments of their inherent rights afforded through the Canadian Constitution, through current and emerging legal precedence and policies.

Vancouver City Council has established an on-going relationship with the three local First Nations - Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh - in a Council to Council structure whereby members discuss government to government issues and other policy matters of mutual interest. Vancouver City Council also passed a motion to formally acknowledge that the City of Vancouver is on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. Both Service and Protocol Agreements have been signed with First Nations establishing partnerships and relationships that respect the traditions, culture and acknowledgement of the territory.

City Council has also recognized First Nations rights by honouring their cultural significance through identification of historical midden and preservation of important archaeological sites and ensured processes are in place in the City to appropriately protect such sites.

The efforts made towards becoming a City of Reconciliation with a focus on First Nations is an important first step, and the lessons learned from these experiences will, with time and understanding, be expanded to encompass all of Vancouver’s diverse populations.

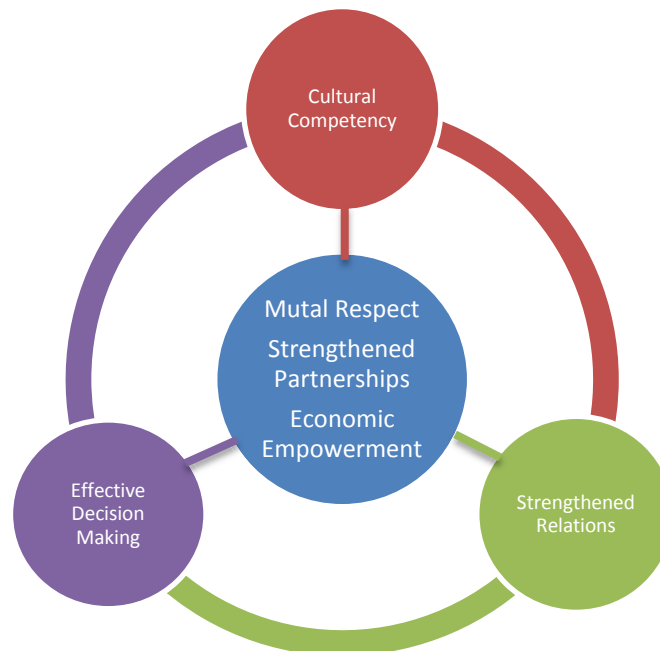
City Council has established an Urban Aboriginal Peoples Advisory Committee to formally provide advice, direction, and decision making support to Mayor and Council with regards to local urban Aboriginal issues and initiatives. Twelve members of the urban Aboriginal community have been appointed to a three year term and work with City staff in mobilizing their efforts.

The City of Vancouver is in the process of developing a memorandum of understanding with the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) to better align City priorities with the work of the urban Aboriginal community, such as the Healthy City Strategy and the Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions. MVAEC is an organization comprised of Executive Directors from diverse urban off-reserve Aboriginal organizations serving youth, children & families in such areas as justice, health, housing, women and family violence.

In order to facilitate work between the First Nations, Urban Aboriginal groups and City staff, an internal interdepartmental Aboriginal Committee was established. The committee supported activities during the Year of Reconciliation with the goals of promoting understanding of the historical events that have shaped current conditions and experiences for Aboriginal peoples, promoting cultural bonds in building a more inclusive future, and improving city services for the Aboriginal population.

Becoming a City of Reconciliation is a long term commitment. In moving this stated commitment forward staff proposes a framework that will initially guide the work of the City to best serve First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities. It also recognizes that these efforts towards reconciliation are a work in progress towards the ultimate goal of broader inclusion of all cultural communities. These initial efforts provide an opportunity to reflect on the learning's and accomplishments and to maintain relevancy.

The proposed framework supports better understanding of matters of cultural significance and priorities of First Nation and urban Aboriginal communities. Deepening this understanding will no doubt strengthen and continue to improve relationships between the City and the Aboriginal communities. Having strong relationships will support the City to make thoughtful decisions, as well as any necessary adjustments to normal processes where necessary. Conducting work in a different way will be considered as a way to achieve positive outcomes for all.



There are three foundational components to the framework with the goal of mutual respect, strengthened partnerships, and economic empowerment:

1. **Cultural Competency:** All City staff should have an opportunity to learn and work with local First Nation and urban Aboriginal communities. Staff should strive to create opportunities for Aboriginal Vancouverites to engage in partnerships with the City, supporting learning opportunities for both.
2. **Strengthened Relations:** Strengthening our relationships starts with acknowledging the history of residential schools and the impact of harm from the loss of land and culture. Continuing to build and strengthen relationships with Reconciliation Canada, the three Host First Nations of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, as well as with urban Aboriginal community (MVAEC), is critical. Above all it is important to recognise the history, heritage and protocols of the three Host First Nations, their presence, and achievements with respect.
3. **Effective Decision-making:** Our work with First Nations requires a unique approach and understanding of our goals. Achieving mutual respect, strong relationships and economic empowerment requires flexibility, thoughtfulness and a principled and transparent approach in our work together.

Staff will develop a four year work plan within this framework and report back to Council every two years on progress and outcomes. A Steering group comprised of the City Manager and other senior staff within the Corporate Management Team has been created to provide leadership and guidance on the work program, specifically in dealing with matters that require effective decision making to create and enhance better outcomes for Aboriginal and First Nations residents. The interdepartmental staff team will continue to champion the work of implementing the framework within their departments, assisting in the development of the work plan and working collaboratively on emerging issues and projects.

Some elements of the four year work program that are already under discussion include the following:

- Development of protocols with the three Host First Nations that enhance the relationship between the City and First Nations governments
- Continued support for the ongoing work between Aboriginal communities and City departments
- The creation of opportunities for cultural competency training for staff
- Creation of an Aboriginal mentorship program for the City of Vancouver
- Engagement with other municipalities to share reconciliation experiences and initiatives, such as the Year of Reconciliation and City of Reconciliation
- Support and facilitation of opportunities that bring together Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal communities with the goal of improving understanding, finding common ground and strengthening dialogue
- Creation of linkages to other City initiatives such as the Healthy City Strategy, Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions, Welcoming Communities.

### ***Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)***

#### ***Financial***

There are no financial implications.

#### ***Legal***

There are no legal implications.

### ***CONCLUSION***

Improving relations with Aboriginal communities and enhancing public awareness of Aboriginal history, including the experience of residential schools, has been a long-standing issue across Canada. Mayor and Council have made it a priority to improve relations between the City and local First Nations and Aboriginal communities, and to act as a leader in furthering the long-term work of promoting reconciliation. Council supports "Reconciliation" as a way to help all cultures within our community foster new relationships, heal from the past, and move forward with shared understanding and respect.

According to Reconciliation Canada, "Reconciliation is an opportunity for all Canadians to renew relationships, based on a shared understanding of our histories and our cultures and walk a path together for a shared tomorrow. To 'reconcile' is to weave a stronger and more vibrant social fabric, supported by the unique and diverse strengths of Canadians and their communities."

During the past year Vancouver has been witness to extraordinary moments that speak to the possibility of reconciliation; the re-establishment of protocol with the welcome ceremony by the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations in the All Nations Canoe Gathering, the witnessing of the testimony of residential school survivors at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's BC National Event, the rain-drenched commitment of more than 70,000 people walking in a September downpour to stand together and celebrate reconciliation, and the

extraordinary work the City is undertaking in collaboration with our urban Aboriginal communities.

These events, actions and partnerships have brought Vancouverites together to work, learn, sew, drum, weave, sing, carve, eat, connect and share the truth about the past.

The City of Vancouver recognizes that reconciliation with the Aboriginal communities is more than a priority. By building Aboriginal inclusion into its operations, the City ensures that not only Aboriginal Peoples have a voice, but that staff gain a greater cultural understanding of the community. Our belief is by collaborating with a common purpose, and ensuring efforts from the inside out, together we will pave a new way of living and working together for present and future generations. Council's long term vision of building a City of Reconciliation is an inclusive approach to engage all citizens to share our histories, cultures and understanding, to include our children and future generations for a shared tomorrow.

\* \* \* \* \*