

8. Recognition and Action on the International Year of Indigenous Languages

Submitted by: Councillor Boyle

WHEREAS

1. The United Nations has declared 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages;
2. Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons”;
3. Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions”;
4. Vancouver is a City of Reconciliation, with a commitment that: *We will form a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations and the Urban Indigenous community*;
5. The Truth and Reconciliation Report in 2015 acknowledged that residential schools and colonization were primarily responsible for interrupting the intergenerational transmission of Indigenous languages, which has led to approximately only 3.0% of First Nations people from BC being reported as fluent speakers in 2018’s First People’s Cultural Council Report on the Status of BC First Nations Languages;
6. The colonization of what is now called the City of Vancouver displaced and marginalized xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lilwətaʔt̓ (Tseil-Waututh) communities and contributed to the decline of their languages;
7. The xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́lilwətaʔt̓ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations have growing numbers of language learners and speakers due to the determination of their own community’s efforts and growing support from Federal and Provincial governments;
8. Urban Indigenous populations in Vancouver continue to seek ways to connect to their cultural identity and actively participate in the revitalization of their own Indigenous languages in the city as well;

9. The City of Vancouver's reconciliation work so far has included a special "150+ Place Naming Project", and a subsequent "City Asset Renaming Policy" to repatriate Indigenous place names or support the creation of new names, and increase visible Indigenous markers throughout the city;
10. In June, 2018 the City of Vancouver, x^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), S^kw^xwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) announced two new names for prominent public spaces downtown Vancouver: šx^włexən Xwtl'a7shn (formerly known as the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Plaza) and šx^włənəq Xwtl'e7énk Square (formerly the Vancouver Art Gallery north plaza).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT, the City of Vancouver officially recognize 2019 as the Year of Indigenous Languages, including through a proclamation at City Hall, and an invitation to local language speakers to attend and be recognized;

FURTHER THAT this proclamation include that the City of Vancouver recognizes the revitalization and protection of Indigenous languages are required, with specific consideration to the particular circumstances of Indigenous Youth, Women and Elders.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to work with x^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), S^kw^xwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations to determine the City's role in resourcing the creation of educational tools to help with pronunciation and adoption of šx^włexən Xwtl'a7shn Plaza and šx^włənəq Xwtl'e7énk Square.

- C. THAT Council direct staff to work with x^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), S^kw^xwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations and other stakeholders to produce recommendations on concrete and sustainable measures for City programs and services to support, revitalize, and promote local Indigenous languages but also ensuring Indigenous partners are resourced to meaningfully and collaboratively provide input on these recommendations;

FURTHER THAT staff report back to Council on a proposed program and budget by Q4 2019 or earlier, as feasible.

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