

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

2. **Piloting a Culturally Appropriate, Indigenous-led Supportive Housing and Wellness Centre Project in Partnership with Indigenous Peoples**

Submitted by: Councillor Bligh

WHEREAS

1. In July 2014, The City of Vancouver officially became a City of Reconciliation with the formal adoption – on July 8, 2014 – of a Reconciliation Framework pursuant to and resulting from the June 2013 Council declaration of a “Year of Reconciliation in Vancouver”;
2. Since July 2014, the City and successive Councils have created new policies to support Reconciliation efforts. Council continues to explore ways to work toward Reconciliation with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and the urban Indigenous communities and peoples living in Vancouver; ⁱ
3. The City of Vancouver has the third largest urban Indigenous population of any Canadian city, and there is a longstanding recognition of the need for Indigenous-specific programs and services in the city that are able to provide traditional, spiritual, and cultural health and healing supports, notably, but not exclusively, in the Downtown East Side (DTES); ⁱⁱ
4. The Reconciliation goals of the City include establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and to respect the rights of the local First Nations and urban Indigenous peoples; ⁱⁱⁱ
5. The City of Vancouver has an Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee, the mandate of which is to advise Council and City staff on enhancing access and inclusion for urban Indigenous Peoples and enabling their full participation in City services and civic life;
6. The City of Vancouver recognizes that Indigenous populations in Vancouver experience some of the greatest systemic inequities in health and well-being, and that the systems, methods, concepts, and indicators used to understand these inequities must themselves be created and grounded in the knowledge within Indigenous communities, rather than being imposed from outside;
7. The 2016 census estimated that 61,455 Indigenous persons live in Metro Vancouver, with the City of Vancouver having the largest urban Indigenous population in the region with nearly 14,000 people counted in the census (potentially an undercount due to the fact that many census respondents reportedly do not self-identify);
8. Within the City of Vancouver, the largest numbers of Indigenous residents live in central and north-eastern neighbourhoods, with Strathcona and

Grandview-Woodland having the largest percentage of population identifying as Indigenous;

9. Access to traditional, culturally appropriate, and safe health care practices are believed to be equally, if not more important, than access to mainstream non-Indigenous health care. Indigenous concepts of wellness are distinct from western notions of wellness, and are unique to each Indigenous community's respective worldview. As such, there is a growing recognition of the need for indicators – such as those in the City's Healthy City Strategy (HCS) – that reflect Indigenous notions of wellness;
10. The province's First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) has the formal mandate to plan, design, manage, and fund the delivery of First Nations health programs across BC and actively works to transform and reform the way health care is delivered to Indigenous people in BC. The FNHA is committed to supporting Indigenous individuals, families, and communities in achieving the highest level of health and wellness;
11. The FNHA subscribes to the belief that wellness starts with individuals who then influence their families, who then influence their communities, who in turn influence their regions. Each "champion of wellness" has circles of influence through connections in their family, in their work, and in their own communities. Wellness can be championed by sharing the history of Indigenous wellness, sharing one's own stories, persisting through setbacks, and shifting focus from Illness to Wellness;
12. Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) is likewise committed to supporting the journey of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in the region and is committed to improving the health of and access to culturally safe healthcare for the Indigenous people in the health region. The VCH Indigenous Health team collaborates, coordinates, and integrates their health programs and services with FNHA to achieve better health outcomes for Indigenous peoples;
13. The April 2022 "City of Vancouver Housing Needs Report" notes that Indigenous households face unique housing challenges and are disproportionately more likely to be renters than owners, with almost half of Indigenous households spending 30% or more of their income on shelter. Homelessness and housing insecurity remain significant issues in Vancouver, with Indigenous persons overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness. Responses to Indigenous housing needs are reflected in work of local First Nations and groups such as the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) which advocate for partnerships to deliver secure, affordable housing for Indigenous people in Vancouver and the region;
14. The City of Vancouver is committed to strengthening its relationship with urban Indigenous organizations and community groups that offer culturally appropriate services to the urban Indigenous peoples living in Vancouver;
15. The City of Vancouver has an "Indigenous Healing and Wellness Grants" program that supports projects that provide for traditional, spiritual and cultural healing and wellness activities in Vancouver's urban Indigenous community;

16. Culturally appropriate, Indigenous-led supportive housing and wellness project examples in the city that the City of Vancouver has been involved in include the Aboriginal Land Trust project at 52-92 E Hastings, Women Deliver Project, and the UNYA redevelopment project;
17. There are potentially other projects in the city, either being developed by the City or by other organizations, which might offer additional opportunities to deliver culturally appropriate, Indigenous-led supportive housing and wellness centres.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back by the end of Q2 of 2023 with a review of options and opportunities to deliver new culturally appropriate, Indigenous-led supportive housing and wellness centre projects in the city in partnership with Indigenous peoples, including information regarding potential contributions to these projects by the City (e.g., land, funding, other support, etc.), and

FURTHER THAT staff be directed to consult with all relevant stakeholders on the relevant options and opportunities for projects, including but not limited to consultation with the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam Indian Band), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish Nation), sə́lílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), the city's urban Indigenous communities and peoples, the City's Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee, the FNHA, VCH, the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, the Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), and other urban Indigenous organizations and community groups that offer culturally appropriate, Indigenous-led supportive housing and wellness services in the city and region generally.

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ⁱ xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam Indian Band), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish Nation), sə́lílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), and the city's urban Indigenous communities. <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/city-of-reconciliation.aspx>

ⁱⁱ "Ceremony helps people to incorporate healthy values such as respect, love, courage, humility, truth, trust and strength into their daily lives." Traditional Healing Circle of Elders, First Nations Centre, National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2007 (From: Indigenous Health Healing and Wellness in the DTES Study, City of Vancouver, 2017).

ⁱⁱⁱ By way of current practice, the City holds regular joint Council meetings with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh leaders.