

Report to Council



Date: January 30, 2017
File: 0705-30
To: City Manager
From: Sandra Kochan, Cultural Services Manager
Subject: Response to Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report dated January 30, 2017 from the Cultural Services Manager, providing an overview of the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the importance of reconciliation, and examples of how other communities and agencies have embarked on reconciliation work;

AND THAT Council supports in principle a proposal for staff to work with the En'owkin Centre and the Institute for Community Engaged Research at the University of British Columbia Okanagan to develop a framework and educational resources for the City of Kelowna's approach to reconciliation;

AND FURTHER THAT Council directs staff to report back with an update regarding the work with the En'owkin Centre and the Institute for Community Engaged Research.

Purpose:

To provide Council with background information about the report and Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and share examples of reconciliation initiatives from other agencies and communities.

Background:

A current Council Service Request directs staff to 'review the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and report back to Council with respect to which Calls to Action staff recommend the City of Kelowna commit to.'

The work of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) culminated in the release of its findings and calls to action on June 2, 2015. This marked the close of a six-year process during which three Commissioners heard more than 6,750 survivor and witness statements from across the country. The testimony of these individuals forms a record of over a century of abuse at Indian Residential

Schools, and a resulting legacy of injustice, inequity and familial trauma which extends over seven generations.

According to the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, TRC Chair, the 94 Calls to Action represent the first step toward redressing the legacy of Indian Residential Schools and advancing the process of reconciliation. The Calls to Action highlight the role that all levels of government, the child welfare system, education, healthcare, justice, media, community organizations and others can and will play in healing the wounds of the past and becoming a more just, fair and caring society.

Canadian communities responding to the Calls to Action:

Organizations such as Union of BC Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities have demonstrated leadership in calling upon their members to respond. Local governments across Canada are responding in many different ways, ranging from modest recognition monuments at important sites, to large-scale integration of reconciliation principles within civic planning and operations. The City of Vancouver, for example, proclaimed a Year of Reconciliation starting in 2013, and has now become a City of Reconciliation, with a multi-year plan, cultural competency training for hundreds of managers and employees, and the hiring of its first Manager of Aboriginal Relations.

In all communities, the first step on the path to reconciliation is education and awareness. Local agencies such as Interior Health and School District 23 have already implemented agency-wide educational programs which convey the historical truths revealed by the TRC and aid staff in integrating reconciliation into their core programs and services.

Kelowna's response to the Calls to Action:

In addition to continuing dialogue with local First Nations governments, the City of Kelowna's response to the TRC report and Calls to Action should also include education and awareness for Council and staff. With the assistance of the En'owkin Centre and UBC Okanagan's Institute for Community Engaged Research, staff will develop a framework within which Council and all City of Kelowna staff will have the opportunity to learn about, and engage with, reconciliation in their work.

Reconciliation is a journey, not a project with a definable start and end. The opportunities for reconciliation in the work of City staff will emerge in many different ways over time as mindsets and relationships evolve. It is anticipated that every department, equipped with knowledge and awareness, will discover ways in which its work will change in response to the reconciliation calls to action. These discoveries, large and small, will all contribute to a larger vision of a City and community which understands the past and is building a better future which recognizes, respects and includes the Okanagan nation and Canada's First Nations peoples.

Internal Circulation:

Communications Supervisor
Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture
Divisional Director, Human Resources & Corporate Performance
Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

As the next step, development of a Project Charter will identify potential financial and budgetary considerations which may need to be brought forward as part of the 2018 budget. Once created,

educational materials and methods regarding reconciliation may be integrated into the City's current staff training and development programs.

External Agency/Public Comments:

Westbank First Nation and the Okanagan Indian Band are aware of this report. City staff propose to continue dialogue with Westbank First Nation and the Okanagan Indian Band as reconciliation work proceeds.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
Existing Policy
Personnel Implications
Communications Comments
Alternate Recommendation

Submitted by:

S. Kochan, Cultural Services Manager

Approved for inclusion: J. Gabriel, Division Director, Active Living & Culture

cc: Communications Supervisor
Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture
Divisional Director, Human Resources & Corporate Performance
Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate