

# STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



<b>Report to:</b>	Mayor and Council Members	<b>Priority:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Yasmyn Belle, Accessibility and EDI Coordinator, Legislative Services Division, <a href="mailto:ybelle@cobourg.ca">ybelle@cobourg.ca</a>	<b>Meeting Type:</b>	Open Session <input type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>September 5, 2023</b>		
<b>Report No.:</b>	Legislative Services-119-23		
<a href="#">Submit comments to Council</a>			

**Subject/Title: National Day of Truth and Reconciliation (2023)**

## RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) recommendations, as outlined in its comprehensive report, aim to address the historical injustices and ongoing impacts of colonization, residential schools, and other systemic issues faced by Indigenous peoples;

WHEREAS, acknowledging and addressing these recommendations is essential for promoting healing, understanding, and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities;

WHEREAS, the Town of Cobourg Council recognizes the importance of taking concrete actions to support the implementation of the TRC recommendations within our community;

WHEREAS The Town of Cobourg Council acknowledges the significant emphasis placed within the 2022-2026 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan on creating and increasing avenues for engagement with Indigenous residents and collaborators which aligns with our commitment to fostering constructive relationships and promoting heightened understanding of Indigenous matters among the residents of Cobourg.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council approve the recommended items and actions outlined in this report ahead of the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, which falls on **Saturday, September 30th, 2023** and Council allocates necessary resources and supports policy revisions to ensure the successful execution of the initiatives in the Town of Cobourg.

Cobourg maintains its innovative leadership role within Northumberland County by consistently championing equitable, diverse, and inclusive best practices. A significant milestone in this trajectory is the Council endorsement of the 2022 – 2026 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan.

This strategic blueprint distinctly emphasizes the cultivation of substantive relationships with Indigenous communities situated in and around Cobourg. Integral to this commitment is the recognition that Truth and Reconciliation endeavors within a municipal organization encompass a multitude of important tasks. They encompass the acknowledgement, redress, and rectification of historical injustices and systemic inequalities that have perpetuated the marginalization and adversity faced by Indigenous communities across the span of Canadian history.

Essentially, Cobourg's proactive efforts align with the goal of promoting inclusivity, respect, and understanding, while also enacting tangible systemic changes in support of the reconciliation journey.

## 2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The actions outlined in this report have been developed through extensive research and the insights of Alderville First Nation's Former Chief Dave Mowat and Council (as of July 2023) as well as the current Council lead by Chief Taynar Simpson. Furthermore, this process has been facilitated with the support of Northumberland County and external municipalities that share comparable action plans.

This engagement is designed to ensure that these actions remain congruent with the authentic pursuits of truth and reconciliation, creating mutual benefits upon both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community in Cobourg and the Alderville community.

It is imperative to highlight that all forthcoming events are inclusive and open to residents, encompassing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, throughout the entirety of Northumberland County.

## 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this proclamation and endorsement of community events and staff recommendations directly aligns with our 2022-2026 EDI strategic plan efforts as well as our commitment to the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities. Both initiatives require benchmarks such as:

### **2022 – 2026 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Goal(s):**

- Goal #3 to engage our diverse communities in a meaningful way in the 2022-2026 EDI Strategic Plan

### **UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities Commitment(s):**

- Common Commitment #9 to challenge discrimination and promoting diversity and equal opportunities in education and other forms of learning in the Canadian Commission of UNESCO for the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities
- Common Commitment #10 to promote the respect, knowledge and appreciation of cultural diversity and the inclusion of Indigenous and racialized communities in the cultural fabric of the community

#### 4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

**On October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Town Council approved the following resolution:**

**WHEREAS** at the Committee of the Whole Meeting on October 25, 2021, Council considered a Memo from the Accessibility Coordinator regarding the Endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the Town of Cobourg;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** Council endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for the Town to use in its on-going process of reconciliation with local First Nations and urban Indigenous peoples in the Town of Cobourg.

#### **The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration) provides us with a road map to advance lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. It shows us that further steps must be taken to respect, recognize and protect the human rights of Indigenous peoples and to address the wrongs of the past. In 2016, the Government of Canada endorsed the Declaration without qualification and committed to its full and effective implementation. In December 2020, the Government of Canada introduced legislation to implement the Declaration. On June 21, 2021, Bill C-15, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act received Royal Assent. This Act will provide a road map for the Government and Indigenous peoples to work together to fully implement the Declaration. Legislation to advance federal implementation of the Declaration is an important step in moving Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples forward. It is a key building block in fully recognizing, respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the rights of Indigenous peoples. Further, both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls called on the federal government to implement the Declaration as the framework for reconciliation. Implementing the Declaration is about building a better Canada for Indigenous peoples and all Canadians today, and into our future.

#### **Bill C-5**

The establishment of this federal statutory holiday was accomplished through legislative modifications enacted by the Parliament. On June 3, 2021, Royal

Assent was granted to Bill C-5, formally titled "An Act to amend the Bills of Exchange Act, the Interpretation Act, and the Canada Labour Code (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation).

## **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada**

The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) emerged from the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, a culmination of negotiations involving survivors of the Indian Residential School system, churches managing the schools, the federal government, and various Indigenous organizations. Tasked with a comprehensive mandate, the TRC was responsible for documenting the historical trajectory and ramifications of the Indian Residential School system. Moreover, it assumed the roles of facilitating healing and reconciliation and disseminating awareness about this somber facet of Canadian history.

Contained within the TRC's conclusive report, unveiled in 2015, are the "94 Calls to Action." This compilation of recommendations possesses a directive role, guiding governmental bodies, institutions, and the entire Canadian population in grappling with the enduring legacy of the Indian Residential School system. Through these Calls to Action, a wide range of topics are covered, spanning domains such as child welfare, education, linguistic and cultural preservation, healthcare, justice, among others.

Its intent encompasses the rectification of historical injustices as well as the improvement of contemporary challenges faced by Indigenous communities. Notably, within the comprehensive set of 94 Calls, 9 specifically pertain to municipal entities, as outlined in the attached documentation.

The underlying objective of these recommendations is to improve the repercussions of colonization, fostering a climate of healing, comprehension, and inclusivity. The aim is the creation of an equitable and harmonious societal fabric. The endeavors of the TRC, which encompass the pivotal "94 Calls to Action," underscore the significance of acknowledging historical veracity, forging reconciliation with Indigenous communities, and advancing collectively in a framework of collaboration and mutual respect.

## **5. BACKGROUND**

Over the preceding two (2) years, the Town of Cobourg's staff and Council have diligently engaged in a series of educational initiatives encompassing cultural competence, Indigenous historical education and allyship. These efforts have played a pivotal role in strengthening our internal framework and fortifying the foundation of our organization. They have been particularly effective in dismantling conscious and unconscious systemic biases. In essence, these efforts have worked to reinforce our organizational structure from within, fostering a more inclusive and equitable environment that is aligned with our commitment to combatting racism and oppression in all their forms.

Amidst the work being done internally, the Town of Cobourg has also effectively orchestrated insightful community events centered on Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation to ensure the community is also able to access this education including lunch and learns and creating space for knowledge sharing.

The actions planned for implementation in commemoration of the 2023 National Day of Truth and Reconciliation signify a pivotal stride forward, aiming to generate systemic change within both Cobourg and the surrounding municipalities. These endeavors have been facilitated in close collaboration with Alderville First Nations with support from Town of Cobourg staff, Northumberland County, and the Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA).

## 6. ANALYSIS

Through policy remediation and implementation, internal training and community engagement, EDI initiatives aim to impact the community on a variety of levels. The following initiatives and events are proposed to take place leading up to and on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in recognition of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

1. The permanent flying of Every Child Matters flag on the currently vacant flagpole in Peace Park or Rotary Park accompanied by an official proclamation of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation from the CAO, Mayor and Council.
2. An invitation to the Cobourg community and surrounding municipalities endorsed by CAO and Council for residents of Cobourg and surrounding municipalities to access a shuttle that brings them to and from Alderville to participate in their annual Truth and Reconciliation Day ceremony.
3. A special screening of the film 'Bones of Crow', on Friday September 29<sup>th</sup> 2023 in collaboration with the Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA).
4. The seasonal art installation of local Indigenous art banners at the Cobourg Marina and Harbour. These banners will also prominently feature the names of the seven treaties encompassed within the William Treaties, paying homage to the historical agreements. This installation not only celebrates Indigenous culture but also serves as a significant educational and commemorative initiative.
5. A recommitment to ongoing procedural and policy refinement through the deliberate inclusion of Indigenous consultation wherever feasible. This includes a reintroduction of optimal practices aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) to foster a comprehensive framework that respects and integrates the Duty to Consult into Town policy and procedures.

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

The County of Northumberland has agreed to assist in the responsibility of coordinating a shuttle service between Cobourg and Alderville First Nations on the 30th of September 2023. This collaborative effort is aimed at facilitating accessible attendance of an Indigenous community event by residents from Cobourg and surrounding municipalities.

Additionally, Staff is looking for Council to approve the reallocation of funds in the EDI Budget from EDI Speaker in the amount of \$2,000 to support the hosting of the "Bones of Crow" Movie in the Downtown Cobourg on King Street from Division to Third/George Street. This initiative serves as an additional avenue to engage members of the community in the pursuit of education and comprehension surrounding Canadian history, particularly the context of the residential school system and its profound intergenerational impact.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

The 2022-2026 EDI Strategic Plan's principal objective is to showcase enhanced organizational performance in alignment with principles of inclusion and diversity, with a distinct focus on combatting racism, discrimination, exclusion, and intolerance.

The recommendations presented for Council's approval for National Day of Truth and Reconciliation serve as a valuable conduit to emphasize the ongoing efforts, both within our internal organization and within the broader community.

## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Proclamation of National Day of Truth and Reconciliation - Legislative Services-119-23.docx
Attachments:	- T.O.C. Calls to Action.pdf - 450-21 Endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.pdf - UNDRIP_E_web.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Aug 31, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**No Signature - Task assigned to Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer was completed by workflow administrator Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk / Director of Legislative Services**

**Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Aug 31, 2023 - 3:58 PM**