

DATE OF MEETING November 10, 2021
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SUBJECT RECONCILIATION EVENTS 2022

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide Council with an update on Snuneymuxw-led reconciliation events for 2022. This includes National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and National Indigenous Peoples Day.

BACKGROUND

On 2019-JUN-17, Council passed the following motion implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Call to Action¹ #57:

"It was moved and seconded that Council support the proposed Intercultural Competency Implementation Plan to support City of Nanaimo Staff learning about local, provincial, and national histories of Indigenous Peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations."

Since this time, City Staff have been provided with internal opportunities to learn more about Canada's historical relationship with Indigenous peoples as well as receiving training that supports cultural competency. This includes opportunities since 2019 to learn directly from members of Snuneymuxw and Snaw-Naw-As² during National Indigenous History Month and Orange-Shirt Day, as well as Diversity and Inclusion training.

On 2021-SEP-30, the City of Nanaimo in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) recognized and commemorated the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation³ at Sway-a-Lana/Maffeo Sutton Park. This event led by Snuneymuxw First Nation involved close collaboration and support from the City of Nanaimo and NLPS. The event was well attended and live streamed by several thousand people,

¹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was mandated in 2008 to shed light on the truth behind residential schools. On 2015-JUN-02, the TRC released its findings and 94 Calls to Action in their report titled *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling the Future*.

² Snaw-Naw-As, also known as Nanoose First Nation

³ This year's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation reflects the Federal Government's implementation of one of the 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Action #80 calls upon... "the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process."

marking its significance for both Indigenous⁴ and non-Indigenous community members and leaders. |

Extending support for community wide learning through reconciliation events is consistent with Council's support for TRC#57, as well as as the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)⁵. It also recognizes the City's broader capacity to work with First Nations Governments, and other partners to provide opportunities for wider community reconciliation actions.

DISCUSSION

A key outcome of the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation event at Sway-a-Lana was the development of successful partnerships, and the collaborative work leading up to it making this event happen. This involved respecting the guidance of Snuneymuxw First Nation leadership to ensure protocols were followed, and the needs of Snuneymuxw mustimuxw (people) and other Indigenous community were met in a culturally safe way. Reconciliation events done the right way can have lasting effects on learning, and cultural competency development for community members and organizations. They have the potential to support better community outcomes and relationships that are fundamental to achieving meaningful reconciliation.

The findings at the 215 children's graves Tk'emlups te Secwépemc people at the former Kamloops Indian Residential Schools site highlighted the reality of Canada's Indian Residential School System and triggered a greater need for change and increasing ways to honour those lost and impacted in our own communities. The new National Day for Truth and Reconciliation provides an annual public opportunity for the City to support community reconciliation, healing, and hope.

The success of the joint planning and outcomes of 2021-SEP-30 establishes a foundation to build on future events to commemorate National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. It also sets the stage to collaborate on other days of significance including National Indigenous Peoples Day, celebrated annually on June 21 during National Indigenous History Month. National Indigenous Peoples Day provides opportunity to celebrate, enjoy, and respect the cultural richness and resiliency of Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, and other Indigenous Peoples who have made Snuneymuxw and Snaw-Naw-As Territories their home.

Based on the resources allocated by the City for this year's initial event (that included in kind support from NLPS and SFN), approximately \$60,000 would provide sufficient funding for another partnership event for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (2022-SEP-30), as well as supporting an event on National Indigenous People's Day (2022-JUN-21).

There is also potential to consider two additional smaller events in the downtown to celebrate and honour Indigenous culture and history for up to an additional \$40,000 (\$20,000 each)

⁴ 'Indigenous Peoples' or 'Aboriginal Peoples' are collective terms used to describe the original inhabitants of North America and their descendants. In Canada these terms refer to people of First Nations, Inuit and Métis ancestry.

⁵ UNDRIP Article 15.2: "States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society."

however, details on what these could look like would need to be explored further for inclusion in the 2023 budget.

CONCLUSION

Allocating \$60,000 a year in the 2022-2026 Financial Plan will support two annual Snuneymuxw-led reconciliation events, including National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and National Indigenous Peoples Day.

This work is consistent with Council's commitments to TRC#57 to educate City Staff and expands that to the wider community. By providing opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members to gather and share experiences, these events support conditions for a more compassionate and equitable community.

Planning and resourcing these two significant days, shows proactive City leadership to support, honour, and respect First Nations Governments and Indigenous peoples. It also shows respect and support for Snuneymuxw's direction on how reconciliation is publically demonstrated. These initiatives will ultimately strengthen the City's cultural competency to work effectively on ongoing government-to-government projects.

SUMMARY POINTS

- On 2021-SEP-30 the City of Nanaimo in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) recognized and commemorated the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation.
- During 2022, there is an opportunity to plan for another joint commemoration event for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (2022-SEP-30), as well as an event to celebrate National Indigenous People's Day (2022-JUN-21).
- An estimated budget of \$60,000 will be allocated in the 2022-2026 Financial Plan to support these annual events.
- Supporting these Snuneymuxw-led events reflects the City's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as they relate to learning the truth about Residential Schools, honouring those lost, providing healing and hope for survivors, and celebrating the richness and resiliency of Indigenous cultures.
- Reconciliation events done the right way have the potential to support better community outcomes and relationships that are fundamental to achieving meaningful reconciliation.

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