



Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action Plan

2022 Annual Report
September 13, 2022



We acknowledge that Strathcona County is located on Treaty Six Territory and the homeland of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region Two and Four. Strathcona County honours the First Peoples of this land. We recognize that we stand upon land that carries the footsteps of Cree, Métis, and Blackfoot amongst many other Nations, who have been here for thousands of years. Therefore, Strathcona County has an inherent responsibility to foster healthier relationships with First Peoples and further the Calls to Action as outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Overview

Strathcona County is committed to addressing and implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). As an organization, we recognize that doing this is an important first step on the shared journey towards reconciliation and renewed relations with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. While the TRC Calls to Action serve as a starting point, the work of reconciliation and relationship building go beyond.

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This report outlines Strathcona County's current approach and the progress-to-date on the implementation of the TRC Calls to Action. It highlights key information about each of these calls, any completed actions, and a roadmap of how the County intends to address these calls moving forward. This report also includes additional information on other important initiatives the County has undertaken to further reconciliation and relationship-building.

While this report outlines Strathcona County's proposed path forward, our approach to these calls will require flexibility, and we remain committed to adapting this plan through collaboration with Indigenous people.

Background

In July 2021, Council passed the following series of motions, among others, aimed at bolstering the County's Indigenous Relations work and addressing the TRC Calls to Action:

THAT Administration review the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action to identify all that are related to municipalities and to develop an action plan that ensures Strathcona County has a plan in place to implement each of these Actions; and

THAT Administration provide a report to Council or Priorities Committee outlining the proposed action plan on or before September 14, 2021.

Based on this direction, Administration identified nine initial TRC Calls to Action to address, focusing on those that were either directed toward municipalities, within the County's jurisdiction, or were something the County was already working to implement. For each of the calls, Administration then outlined a series of proposed short, medium, and long-term initiatives that would lead to the implementation of these calls in Strathcona County.

Over the course of the year, Intergovernmental Affairs (IA) coordinated the response to the calls, coordinating and facilitating Indigenous relations initiatives across the organization. This included recruiting a full-time Indigenous Relations Advisor position and ongoing facilitation of a County-wide Indigenous Relations Working Group. IA's role is intended to serve as a convener and catalyzer, creating opportunities for staff to share best practices and to coordinate cross-department initiatives, including the implementation of the TRC Action Plan.

Calls to Action Progress

For each call, Administration has identified completed actions, and short, medium, and long-term steps to full implement these calls.

#3) We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.

Jordan's Principle is a legal rule and federal program that aims to ensure all First Nations children have access to the products, services and supports they need, regardless of red tape or jurisdictional disputes. This "Child First" principle is intended to ensure First Nations children do not experience gaps in accessing health, social and educational programs, and services.

Given the limited instances of jurisdictional disputes in County services, Administration is ensuring all necessary staff are aware of and understand Jordan's Principle. This includes ensuring a child-first approach to service provision wherever applicable. Information on the principle will also be including in upcoming all-staff training.

Completed Actions

- Staff participated in Indigenous awareness programs which covered a variety of topics including Jordan's Principle

Short-Term

- Information regarding Jordan's Principle will be shared with all staff through internal communication channels.
- Information regarding the principle will be included in the Indigenous Peoples, History, and Intercultural Relations Training

Medium-Term

- Continue to implement Jordans Principle by taking a child-first approach to service delivery

Long-Term

- Continue to implement Jordans Principle and evaluate as necessary

#40) We call on all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal people, to create adequately funded and accessible Aboriginal-specific victim programs and services with appropriate evaluation mechanisms.

The intent of this call to action is to address and support Indigenous victims of crime and to ensure the programs that exist are adequately monitored and improved. In Strathcona County, these services are delivered through a partnership with the RCMP, in addition to a County led, volunteer run support program.

The County intends to recruit new members to the RCMP & Enforcement Services Community Advisory Committee with the aim to increase Indigenous representation on the committee. RCMP & Enforcement Services also intends to meet with the new Indigenous Advisory committee to solicit input on the program while they also identify overall opportunities to strengthen feedback mechanisms.

Completed Actions

- Victim Services staff have participated in the RCMP & Enforcement Services Indigenous Canadians and Reconciliation Orientation course

Short-Term

- Engage with the Indigenous Advisory Committee and community leaders to identify ways to strengthen victim services partnerships
- Aim to improve Indigenous representation on the RCMP/Enforcement Services Community Advisory Committee

Medium-Term

- Recruit more Indigenous volunteers for the victim services program
- Identify effective mechanisms for receiving feedback on Victim Services programs
- Incorporate Indigenous perspectives in the Community Safety and Well-being Strategy

Long-Term

- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness and inclusivity of the Victim Services Program

#43) We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the United Nations in 2007, and Canada later endorsed the declaration in 2016. UNDRIP is a legally non-binding international resolution which outlines both collective and individual rights of Indigenous peoples as they relate to culture, language, religion, employment, health, and education, among other topics.

The County conducted a legal analysis to better understand implications of this international agreement in a municipal context and is currently reviewing other municipal approaches to UNDRIP. The County will develop its approach to honour the principles of UNDRIP and ensure the principles inform the development of a broader framework for reconciliation and Indigenous relations. The County will also monitor the federal government's work on UNDRIP and implementation of Bill C-15: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Completed Actions

- Legislative and Legal Services completed a detailed analysis of UNDRIP to understand the legal implications and identified potential next steps
- Recruited an administrative Indigenous Advisory Committee

Short-Term

- Identify the broader, corporate approach to honour UNDRIP in alignment with any future reconciliation framework/policy and legislative reviews

Medium-Term

- Develop a reconciliation framework/policy in collaboration with the Indigenous Advisory Committee that honours principles of UNDRIP

Long-Term

- Implement the reconciliation framework/policy
- Respond to the federal government's UNDRIP National Action Plan in 2023

#47) We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.

The Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius were both concepts used as justification in the occupation, colonialization, and ongoing violence towards Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world. Both concepts have been fundamental in past relations with Indigenous peoples in Canada, including the dispossession of Indigenous lands, the development of the Indian Act, and the establishment of residential schools. These concepts are also fundamental in the Government of Canada's claim to land title and is pervasive in legal precedent. Fundamentally, these concepts fail to recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous groups and ignores the long existence of many Indigenous peoples who have occupied this land.

At a municipal level, Strathcona County is striving to ensure these concepts are discredited and do not inform our relations with Indigenous Peoples. In addressing this call, the County's focus has been on affirming the long and continued existence of Indigenous peoples

on this land through things like recognizing Indigenous days of significance and sharing Indigenous histories. This has included continued implementation of the territorial acknowledgement policy and proclamations from the mayor.

Following the development of a broader County reconciliation framework, Administration will explore mechanisms to review bylaws, policies, procedures, and directives to ensure these concepts are not informing the County's work. The County will also continue to affirm and raise awareness of the long history of Indigenous peoples in the region.

Completed Actions

- Indigenous days of significance including National Indigenous Peoples Day have been recognized by Council and the County hosted related events
- Many staff have been given September 30th off to engage in the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

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Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proclaim the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, giving employees the day to reflect - Incorporate Indigenous Days of Significance in the Flag & Lighting Protocol, and host related programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research Indigenous histories in the County - Incorporate Indigenous history into the County website and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a process to review County bylaws, policies, and directives for these issues as part of the broader reconciliation framework

#57) We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

This call to action calls on all governments to develop a stand-alone training that focuses on the history and experience of Indigenous peoples, as well as additional ongoing educational opportunities.

Strathcona County has been prioritizing learning opportunities for all staff as a first step in the reconciliation journey. Senior Leadership and various departments have participated in several Indigenous awareness education workshops and training sessions. Strathcona County

Completed Actions

- SLT took part in an introductory Indigenous Awareness workshop
- Council attended a Métis 101 session at Métis Crossing
- RCMP & Enforcement Services took part in Indigenous cultural awareness training
- County Lawyers completed the Law Society of Alberta training
- FCS organized a territorial acknowledgement workshop
- Established an internal resource website for staff

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Council also attended an educational retreat at Métis Crossing in July 2022.

Administration has identified a training provider to deliver the Indigenous Peoples, History, and Intercultural Relations Training and is finalizing contract negotiations. The County intends to begin piloting the course in late 2022 with a broader roll out to all staff early in 2023. Beyond County organized training, all staff have been encouraged to explore training opportunities through places like the University of Alberta and Norquest College as part of their own professional development plans.

Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilot and soft launch the Indigenous Peoples, History, and Intercultural Relations Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roll out the Indigenous Peoples, History, and Intercultural Relations Training to all staff - Identify added experiential learning opportunities for County staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore opportunities for more advanced training for staff and leadership

#75) We call upon the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, churches, Aboriginal communities, former residential school students, and current landowners to develop and implement strategies and procedures for the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried. This is to include the provision of appropriate memorial ceremonies and commemorative markers to honor the deceased children.

This call to action is directed primarily to the federal government, however, Strathcona County is a partner to the call as a municipality. While there were no federally funded residential school sites within the current boundaries of the County, children were removed from their communities across the country to attend schools in more centralized locations.

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Former regional residential school sites included Edmonton Indian Residential School (St. Albert), Youville (St. Albert), Blue Quills (St. Paul) and Assumption (Hay Lakes).

Given there are no known residential schools cemeteries or sites where residential school children were buried in the County, coupled with direction from Council, the County is working on creating spaces to reflect on the legacy and impact of residential schools. Administration is working with Indigenous artists to install temporary visual art exhibits in the short-term while a more robust process can take place to determine an appropriate permanent memorial. Two temporary visual art displays will be installed in Fall 2022 and Spring 2023.

Completed Actions

- Struck an advisory circle of Indigenous artists and an Elder to define project approach and scope
- Issued a call to artists and identified 2 artists to install temporary visual art projects

Short-Term

- Heather Shillinglaw art installation to be installed in September 2022
- Alex Janvier exhibit will open in September
- Discussion with the Indigenous Advisory Committee to determine best way to proceed with permanent memorial project

Medium-Term

- Eugene Alexis mural to be installed in Spring 2023
- Identify preferred medium for permanent memorial and procure an artist/s

Long-Term

- Install the permanent memorial informed by Indigenous community engagements

#77) We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) to identify and collect copies of all records relevant to the history and legacy of the residential school system, and to provide these to the NCTR.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is a national archive which holds all the records collected during the TRC Commission and is tasked with recording the complete history and legacy of the residential school system.

Administration conducted an initial scan of County records and did not find any records relevant to the history or legacy of the Residential School System. Intergovernmental Affairs has since contacted the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and received additional information on the types of records they collect and how to share them. This information will be shared with all staff and partners, including the County Museum & Archive. Additional information on the NCTR's archival process will be posted online for residents to share their own records.

Completed Actions

- Conducted an initial scan of County records and did not identify any relevant records
- Contacted the NCTR to understand more specifically what records they collect

Short-Term

- Communicate the types of records to all staff
- Share information online for residents seeking to share their own records

Medium-Term

- Continue to monitor for relevant records and share with NCTR as needed

Long-Term

- Continue to monitor for relevant records and share with NCTR as needed

#87) We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.

This call to action serves to elevate the history and profile of Indigenous athletes in Canadian sports. Nationally, Sport Canada and the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame have been working with the Aboriginal Sport Circle to tell this story. Strathcona County currently recognizes athletes and other influential sports builders through initiatives like the Millennium Place Sports Wall of Recognition.

Administration will work to identify historically significant and influential Indigenous athletes at a national level to highlight through the County website and communications. Further, as the County continues to learn and explore the history of Indigenous peoples in the region, Administration will highlight more local athletes. The County will also work to identify Indigenous athletes and others in sport to be nominated for the Millennium Place Sports Wall of Recognition.

Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural services will identify influential Indigenous athletes to highlight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify athletes or other builders to nominate for the Millennium Place Sports Wall of Recognition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Through the broader history project, explore the history of Indigenous athletes in the County - Continue to highlight Indigenous athletes and others in sport when possible

#88) We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.

The intent of this call to action is to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of Indigenous athletes in Canada. This includes increasing access for Indigenous youth to participate in sports, providing the resources and support for professional athletes to mature and opportunities to showcase this talent.

In Canada there are several national and regional organizations that represent Indigenous people in sport. The Indigenous Sport Council of Alberta promotes recreation and sport programs at all levels and supports athletes that move on to higher level of competition. Nationally, the Aboriginal Sports Circle supports the well-being of Indigenous peoples through recreation and sports activity. Across Canada, many Indigenous peoples also take part in the North American Indigenous Games, with the next games set to take place in Halifax in 2023.

The County is actively exploring opportunities to empower and support Indigenous youth in sport. As part of this, Administration will work to build a relationship with provincial and national Indigenous sports organizations and identify opportunities to support those groups. The County will also communicate existing funding opportunities available to youth and will explore creating additional granting opportunities. The County will also identify opportunities to support Indigenous sport development through the Sport and Tourism Strategy, while exploring opportunities to host events for athletes like the North American Indigenous Games.

Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish relationships with Indigenous sports organizations like the Indigenous Sports Council of Alberta - Communicate current funding opportunities for athletes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure current grant opportunities for competitive Indigenous athletes are available and shared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify opportunities to align Indigenous sport initiatives with the Sport and Tourism Strategy - Explore hosting the North American Indigenous Games

Other Initiatives

Strathcona County's commitment to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation also goes beyond the TRC Calls to Action. Other initiatives include:

- Recruiting an Indigenous Advisory Committee composed of Indigenous residents and community members.
- Exploring the development of an Indigenous Framework to guide the County's approach to reconciliation, in collaboration with the Indigenous Advisory Committee.
- Continuing relationship development with First Nation communities and representative organizations (e.g. Métis Nation of Alberta).
- Reviewing the Territorial Acknowledgement policy and introducing acknowledgements in email signatures and important document templates.
- Continued engagement with Indigenous communities on County projects, including the Strathcona County Regional Park Master Plan, the Edmonton-Strathcona County Footbridge, and the Astotin Creek Resiliency Study.
- Reviewing the public engagement policy and process through a reconciliation lens.
- Distributing moose hide pins to staff for the national Moose Hide Campaign Day.
- Hosting a variety of activities for National Indigenous Peoples Day including:
 - o An Alberta Wild Rose-inspired collage artwork lesson led by artist Heather Shillinglaw which taught participants about healing wildflowers and plants and connect to a deeper understanding of the natural world
 - o A free concert at Festival Place by Matthew Cardinal, an amiskwaciy (Edmonton) based musician, composer, and sound designer known for his work with Polaris Short List nominee group nêhiyawak.
 - o The Métis Nation of Alberta's Regional Youth Coordinator, Bailey Oster, hosted a dandelion-themed program at the Ardrossan Farmers' Market where participants tasted dandelion tea and learned about traditional uses of dandelions.
- Expanding Indigenous programming through County events, including Festival Place's Indigenous Music Series and performances for events like Canada Day.
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation programming at Broadmoor Lake Park will feature activities by Métis Alive, musical entertainment, and Indigenous Food. The Indigenous Advisory Committee will also be introduced, and Heather Shillinglaw will do a presentation of her artwork and healing journey.
- Gallery 501 is presenting an exhibition entitled "The Healing Language of Alex Janvier" by artist Alex Janvier, from Cold Lake First Nations, Treaty 6 Territory.
- RCMP and Enforcement Services hosted a land acknowledgement ceremony for Métis Week, including prayers from an Elder and performances from an Indigenous artist.