



**Committee of the Whole Report
For the Meeting of July 25, 2019**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 17, 2019
From: Alison James, Head of Strategic Operations, Mayor's Office
Subject: Victoria Reconciliation Dialogues Project Update

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive the report for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Victoria Reconciliation Dialogues series, a 2019 strategic plan item.

BACKGROUND

The Victoria Reconciliation Dialogues is a program of six dialogue events to be held between September 2019 and July 2020, as per the City's Strategic Plan, Strategic Objective #2: Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations; 2019 Action 1: Create the Victoria Reconciliation Dialogues.

The project also draws on Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action 43 (*We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the UNDRIP as the framework for reconciliation*); 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*); and 57 (*We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, & municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history & legacy of residential schools*). Further, the project supports existing federal and provincial priorities.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The Victoria Reconciliation Dialogues will build on the Witness Reconciliation Program, which aims through an agile and evolving process, to work together to make the culture, history, and modern reality of local Indigenous Peoples become present and apparent throughout the city, and valued in our residents' everyday lives. We will build and nurture strong relationships with the Songhees and Esquimalt Peoples that thrive in times of harmony and endure in times of strife. The Witness Reconciliation Program brings together Indigenous representatives from both

the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations' as well as urban Indigenous Peoples, the Mayor of Victoria, and representatives from Council and Staff, forming a group called the City Family.

Through partnerships with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, the Victoria Urban Reconciliation Dialogues, and others, the project will also engage urban Indigenous perspectives from outside the two Nations on whose territory the City of Victoria sits.

The Dialogues will be co-facilitated by Mayor Helps and members of the City Family. The timing and descriptions are as follows:

Sept 2019- Elders, Knowledge and the Land

- The first workshop will open the conversation about reconciliation in Victoria by drawing on the guidance and knowledge of elders about the land on which we meet

Nov 2019 – The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and the City (to coincide with the Indigenous Arts Symposium)

- This workshop will provide an overview of the UNDRIP, and will engage participants in reflecting on the UNDRIP as it relates to their own work and every day lives, as well as to the work of the City in reconciliation with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and urban Indigenous Peoples

Jan 2020 – Newcomers to Canada and Reconciliation

- This workshop will focus on what reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples means to newcomers to Canada, and will ask participants to consider their own responsibilities around reconciliation

Mar 2020 – Community response to the Victoria Urban Reconciliation Dialogues Event

- In February 2020, the Victoria Urban Reconciliation Dialogues will hold a regional gathering to discuss reconciliation. The March workshop will debrief and reflect on the VURD event

May 2020 – Sir John A. Macdonald in Conversation

- This workshop will address the complex life and work of Sir John A. Macdonald. Participants will be asked to consider the politics of and appropriate context for monuments to controversial historical figures, including the City of Victoria's John A. Macdonald statue

TBD (June or July 2020) - Our Shared Future

- The final, youth-led, workshop will ask participants to place Canada Day in conversation with reconciliation, and to think about a shared future from the perspective of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. The session will also be forward-looking, identifying community-generated collaborative reconciliation activities in which residents and the City of Victoria might engage in future.

Respectfully submitted,



Alison James
Head of Strategic Operations

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


