



## Council Member Motion

For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of July 25, 2024

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**To:** Committee of the Whole

**Date:** July 18, 2024

**From:** Mayor Alto

**Subject:** Support for 2024 Truth and Reconciliation Day Ceremonial Event

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### BACKGROUND

September 30, 2021, was the first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation recognized by federal government legislation.

On September 30, 2022, Songhees Nation hosted a cultural celebration and Powwow to mark that national day. More than 8,000 people from around the region, plus visiting Nations' members and dignitaries, attended the one-day event, which took place at Royal Athletic Park. On September 30, 2023, more than 12,000 people attended ceremonies throughout the day.

Songhees Nation Council has advised the City of Victoria that the Nation will once again observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in a significant, meaningful way. This major cultural and ceremonial event will honour former Indian Residential School students and intergenerational survivors, in memory of those children who died while at these institutions.

Songhees Nation has once again invited the City to co-host the Powwow, requested financial and organizational assistance from the city, and help in seeking additional financial contributions from other south island municipalities, to help defray costs associated with this ceremony. A letter from Songhees Chief Ron Sam is attached.

In 2022 and in 2023, Council approved up to \$50,000 in support of those years' events, and Council members and city staff helped organize, and participated in, the Powwow in both years. Council welcomed these opportunities to nurture the city's relationships with local Nations, and help facilitate learning and observation of local protocols, with other municipalities. This opportunity for collaboration continues our journeys on the paths of reconciliation.

This year, the Songhees Nation is again proposing to organize and host the 2024 September 30th cultural celebration and Powwow at Royal Athletic Park, a venue large enough to hold such a celebration safely and respectfully. It is expected that this event will once again draw substantial interest from Vancouver Island First Nations and visiting Indigenous Peoples, the general public and all orders of government.


To organize the event, the Nation has established an Indigenous coordinating committee, chaired by Songhees Nation and made up of representatives from Songhees and neighbouring Nations. Once again, the Nation has honoured the city by inviting city staff to join this committee.

The recommendations below would secure Royal Athletic Park for the use of the event, allow a financial contribution from the city of up to \$50,000 plus in-kind contributions, request the mayor to invite contributions from other south island municipalities, and forward this recommendation to a daytime Council meeting before the Council summer meeting hiatus, to ensure that support and preparations for the event will unfold in a timely manner.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Council approve up to \$50,000 to support an event to mark Truth and Reconciliation Day 2024, including in-kind support and the waiving of fees for use of the Royal Athletic Park on September 30, 2024, to be funded through remaining 2024 contingency funds and/or the Protocol budget, as needed and available.
2. That Council request the mayor contact mayors from other south island municipalities to invite other municipal financial contributions to support this event.
3. That Council forward this Motion for consideration at a daytime Council meeting before August 2, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Mayor Alto.