



**Council Member Motion  
For the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting of October 8, 2015**

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**To:** Governance and Priorities Committee      **Date:** October 8, 2015  
**From:** Councillors Alto and Thornton-Joe  
**Subject:** Municipal Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action

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**Background:**

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created as part of the settlement agreement between the Federal Government, the churches and survivor parties to the Indian Residential Schools Class Action Settlement Agreement to determine the truth about Canada's Indian residential schools and establish a reconciliation process.

As the TRC has undertaken its work over the course of the last six years, the TRC researched official records and visited communities across Canada to hear from thousands of residential school survivors and their families about the impacts of residential schools and colonization.

The findings of these investigations are summarized in the TRC's Final Report, released June 2, 2015, and include 94 recommendations for action by all levels of government. Among those 'calls for action' are many which require governments to undertake a commitment 'that knowing the truth about what happened in residential schools in and of itself does not necessarily lead to reconciliation'. In particular, five of the recommendations in the TRC final report are actionable by local and/or municipal governments.

The TRC 'Calls to Action' for local governments, that the TRC believes are within the authority of a municipal government, are:

*#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.*

*#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.*

*#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.*

*#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 honour the deceased children.*

#77: We call upon provincial, territorial, municipal, and community archives to work collaboratively with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation 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 National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

The City of Victoria has begun this journey towards reconciliation. To recognize his efforts at relationship building, Chiefs of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations presented a former Mayor with a hand-made personal drum. Spindle whorls are scattered throughout the city marking important places in Lekwungen territory, recognizing the economic trading history of the First Nations in this region. Spirit Square, honouring local First Nations' history, occupies the western half of city hall's Centennial Square precinct.

For the first time, Songhees and Esquimalt Chiefs met with City Council at an official Council meeting. Public meetings at City Hall now begin by recognizing that Council deliberations take place on the traditional territories of the Songhees and Esquimalt People. Meeting rooms in City Hall bear the names of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. The language of all City Proclamations has been amended to recognize the City of Victoria in the traditional territories of the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations.

Land for re-burial of First Nations remains has been set aside on traditional lands of the Lekwungen People, in what is now Beacon Hill Park. The whole of City Council witnessed the signing of an Agreement in Principle that foreshadows the first local modern agreement since the Douglas Treaty.

Victoria City Hall hosted the first public showing of the 'Witness Blanket', made out of hundreds of items reclaimed from Residential Schools, churches, government buildings and traditional and cultural structures from across Canada, created as a national monument to recognize the atrocities of the Indian Residential School era, honour the children, and symbolize ongoing reconciliation.

We are ready to take the next steps.

#### **Relevance to Strategic Plan 2015/2018**

Objective 2: Engage and Empower the Community  
2015 OUTCOME:

- Improved relationship with nearby First Nations. (Ongoing)

Objective 7: Facilitate Social Inclusion and Community Wellness

#### **More information:**

The TRC's Final Report

[http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring the Truth Reconciling for the Future July 23 2015.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring%20the%20Truth%20Reconciling%20for%20the%20Future%20July%2023%202015.pdf)

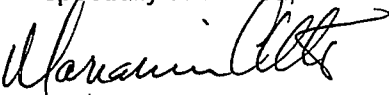
The 94 recommendations for action by all levels of government

[http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls to Action English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls%20to%20Action%20English2.pdf)

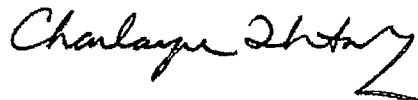
#### **Motion:**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council ask the city manager to consider the 'calls to action' in the Truth and Reconciliation final report, and report back to Council, before December 17, 2015, with recommendations on how to move forward on the actions recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that are within the City's jurisdiction to act.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Marianne Alto



Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe