

**For Information**

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**REPORT TITLE:**     **Truth and Reconciliation Update**

**FROM:**             Gary Kent, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide the Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism committee with an update on the Region's efforts to address truth and reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous communities.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) produced a report outlining 94 Calls to Action (available at: <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>) to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the work toward reconciliation.
  - The Region of Peel is actively working to fulfil these calls to action and advance truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.
  - the Region of Peel has a responsibility to support truth and reconciliation and to provide anti-racism education to its employees about Indigenous-settler relations in Canada.
  - The Region of Peel must act swiftly to follow through with its fulfillment on municipality-specific calls to action.
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**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was created to inform all Canadians about what happened in residential schools. It was created through a legal settlement between Residential Schools Survivors, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives and the federal government and church bodies.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action**

In 2015, the TRC produced a report outlining 94 Calls to Action (available at: <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>) to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the work toward reconciliation. The following calls to action impact municipal level government:

- **Action 43:** We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People as the framework for reconciliation.
  - The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is an international human rights instrument that affirms the minimum standards for

## Truth and Reconciliation Update

the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples throughout the world

- **Action 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.
- **Action 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.

## 2. Regional Efforts to Advance Truth and Reconciliation

The Region is actively working to fulfil these calls to action and move forward towards truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Actions to date include but are not limited to:

### a) National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Event

On September 30, 2021, a learning event is being planned to increase education and understanding about Canada's Indigenous history, its role in the Residential School System and impacts to Indigenous communities. Indigenous speakers will share their truth, how events of the past have affected their communities and what work is needed to ensure a brighter future. This learning event is open to Regional employees, Regional Council and community partners.

### b) Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Practices

Regional Council approved and endorsed the Region of Peel's current Indigenous Land Acknowledgment on December 12, 2019 (Resolution 2019-1090). Since then, all Regional Council meetings have opened with this land acknowledgement to show respect to the Indigenous Peoples who first inhabited lands in the Region of Peel. Going forward, this practice will now extend to all Diversity, Equity and Anti-Racism Committee meetings.

### c) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Learning Framework

The Region is currently developing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Learning Framework to increase the knowledge and skill of its employees. Content will include a focus on Indigenous culture and history. We will continue to work with Indigenous leaders/professionals to create a relevant training program, placing intentional emphasis on building and maintaining meaningful relationships within our indigenous communities.

### d) Peel Arts, Museum and Archives and (PAMA)

PAMA includes Indigenous art, culture and history as part of its ongoing curriculum and programming. This includes but is not limited to exhibitions, education programs and community events. This Fall PAMA has plans to facilitate a series of engagement sessions with diverse Indigenous communities to develop sustainable relationships and

## Truth and Reconciliation Update

guide future content development, staying true to their philosophy of '*nothing about us without us*'.

## RISK CONSIDERATIONS

With the TRC report and 94 calls to action being released in 2015, the Region of Peel must act swiftly to follow through with its fulfillment on municipality-specific calls to action. Further, with the recent discoveries of unmarked graves found at former residential school sites across Canada, there is great expectation of public sector organizations to demonstrate leadership to advance truth and reconciliation efforts.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Event on September 30, 2021 is \$10,000 and will be funded from within the existing 2021 approved operating budget of the Office of Culture and Inclusion. Additional costs are anticipated as part of developing an organization wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion learning and education program, which will include a focus on colonialism, indigenous cultural awareness and history.

## CONCLUSION

The Region of Peel has a responsibility to act on the truth and reconciliation calls to action. Understanding that colonialism is an ongoing lived reality, not a historical past, and acknowledging that we are complicit as an arm of government is only the first step. The Region of Peel has an opportunity to work towards reconciliation by educating employees and our community about oppression, privilege and colonization. Through learning about and reflecting on the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, we increase our ability to take action and reduce the inequities experienced by Indigenous populations.

## APPENDICES

Appendix I - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

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*For further information regarding this report, please contact Juliet Jackson, Director, Culture and Inclusion, Ext. 6741, [juliet.jackson@peelregion.ca](mailto:juliet.jackson@peelregion.ca).*

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***Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:***

Department Commissioner, Division Director, Financial Support Unit and Legal Services.