

A COLLABORATIVE PATHWAY FORWARD





Teachings

About the Artist

Frederick R. McDonald is an artist and a member of the Fort McKay First Nation. Frederick was born in Fort McMurray and raised in the bush along the Athabasca River and was brought up in the traditional hunting and trapping lifestyle of his parents. A way of life that still lives inside him.

Frederick followed his dream to be an artist by attending the University of Calgary, graduating with a Master of Fine Arts degree in 2001. While in university, he took on many challenges, such as president of the First Nations Student Association and by participating in other organizations like the Rainforest Action Group and the Committee Against Racism, giving him insights to different ways of seeing.

About the Cover Art: Teachings

Our youth learn about our culture through modern methods, like searching the world-wide web, while Elders continue to teach through proven methods of the drum and the stories that accompany their songs. The student

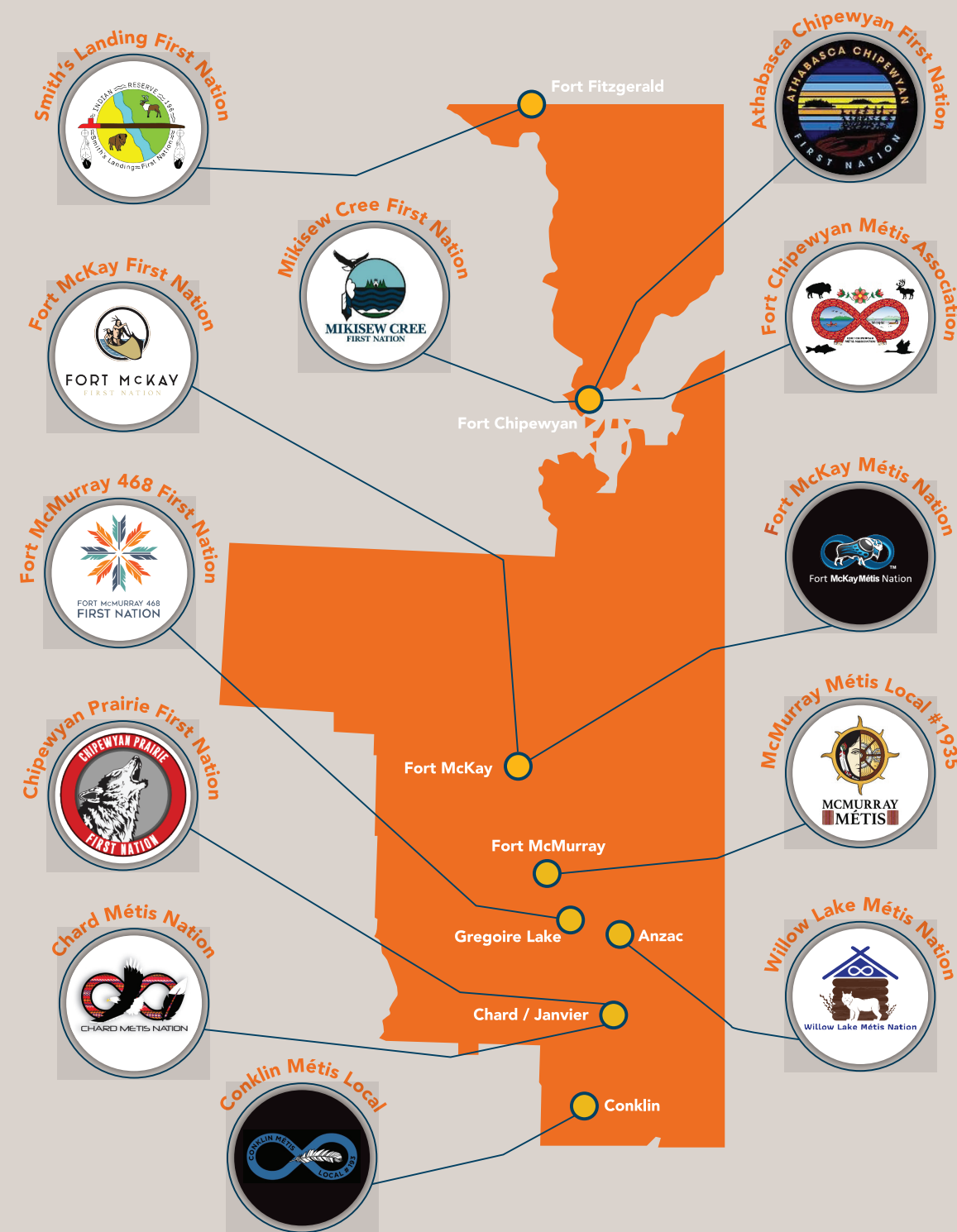
reads about the residential school beside a picture of how some of our people utilized the train to go from their trap lines into town and in the middle background, there is a reference to our past mode of transportation. All these parts speak of our shared histories. The Thunderbird is our connection to the spirit world, painted stylistically with a red dress symbolizing our murdered and missing women and girls. But, in spite of it all and of all the generations of colonial pressures we are still strong peoples - growing stronger through understanding!

Look closely at the birchbark, and you'll see Teachings also features the Seven Sacred Teachings: Love, honesty, humility, courage, wisdom, truth, and respect.

For more about Indigenous Reconciliation Artworks in Council Chambers, follow the QR code:



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



With gratitude, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo acknowledges this land is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Métis people.

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None of the work in this report would have been possible without the guidance and trust of the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, communities, and nations in the region, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is deeply grateful. As an organization, we don't always get things right, but by taking the time to listen and learn, we are able to set ourselves on the right path towards reconciliation. Thank you to everyone who has shared knowledge and time with us; the wisdom and teachings are immensely valuable to not only making change in our organization, but to the wider community of Wood Buffalo.

Kinanâskomitin.
Marsi cho.



About the **2022 Annual Report**

In 2021, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo issued *A Collaborative Pathway Forward*, its response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action. The report was introduced as the formal foundation for the Municipality's efforts and initiatives to reconcile and renew relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities in Wood Buffalo, using the TRC's 94 Calls to Action as a roadmap. In presenting the report to Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) Council, the Municipality also committed to providing a yearly update, as well as subsequent Reports every four years, to align with each Council term.

By 2021, the Municipality had identified 29 Calls to Action, areas the organization could either act on or help influence through advocacy to higher levels of government or collaboration. Please refer to page six for the list of identified Calls to Action. A comprehensive list of all 94 Calls to Action can be found at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's website (nctr.ca), as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's reports.

Please refer to *A Collaborative Pathway Forward* for a note on terminology, as well as more comprehensive information regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the Residential School System, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and a detailed timeline of the Municipality's ongoing response to Truth and Reconciliation.

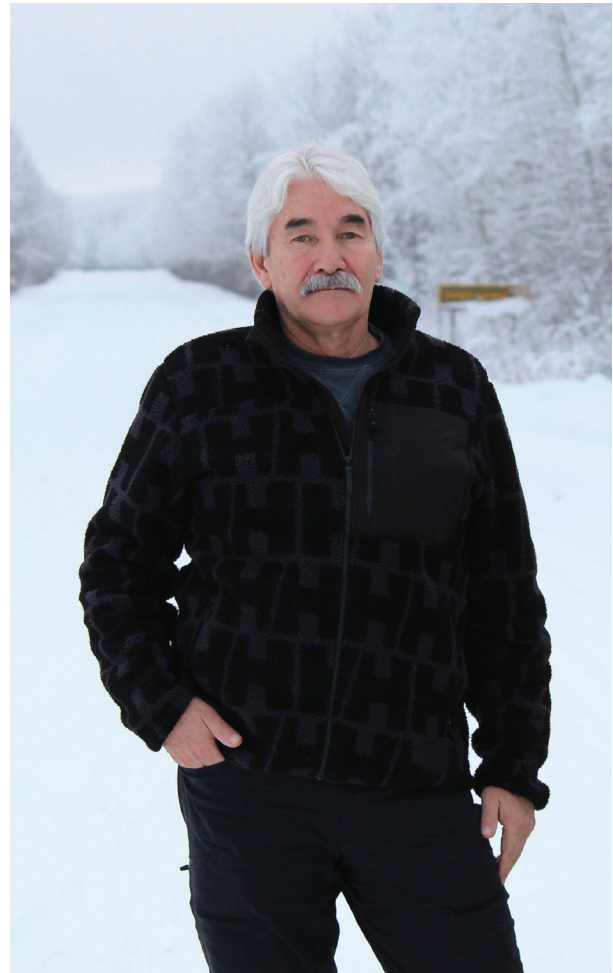
Message from Dennis Fraser, Director of Indigenous and Rural Relations

I am pleased to be introducing this first annual update to *A Collaborative Pathway Forward*, the Municipality's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. This update will detail the work the Indigenous and Rural Relations (IRR) department has done in collaboration with not only other Municipal departments, but also Indigenous partners and communities, to advance these priorities.

A clear example of this is the inclusion of Rural and Indigenous Communities and Relationships as a Value in Councils' 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. Continuing to advance the Municipality's response to the TRC is identified as an action item within that Value. It is heartening to have the support of the Mayor and Councillors as we work to make reconciliation a reality in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo, and it demonstrates that truth and reconciliation continues to be a priority of local leaders and decision makers. This is also evident to others. For example, this year, Communities in Bloom judges visited and evaluated the region ahead of selecting an international winner. They noted how "First Nations play an essential role in the history of Wood Buffalo" and how the RMWB has "demonstrated a prime example of a positive Truth and Reconciliation process."

While the truest testament of our work can only come from Indigenous Peoples, communities, and partners in the region, it's important to look at the work being done across the country, to know how the RMWB is performing in comparison to other municipalities. What are other municipalities focusing on that the RMWB could incorporate into its work? Are there any areas we're leading in? Areas to improve upon?

To get a sense of how the RMWB was performing among other jurisdictions, IRR



Dennis Fraser

contracted an independent consultant to conduct benchmarking. It was encouraging to see that the RMWB's commitment to TRC is one of the most clearly formalized in the country. Out of the 57 Canadian municipalities examined, the RMWB had identified the most TRC Calls to Action for a population of its size, second in Canada to the city of Edmonton, and was one of the few to formalize a commitment to reconciliation through the implementation of a reconciliation framework. IRR has made significant efforts that have resulted in the RMWB becoming a municipality that exceeds the efforts of most municipalities

within Canada, and one that exceeds efforts for all municipalities within similar population sizes. Reflecting on the time I've been in the organization; it is encouraging that the RMWB is a leader among Canadian municipalities in formalizing reconciliation efforts through policy and practice. The benchmarking report has been included as an appendix following the update for more highlights and reflection of reconciliation across Canada.

There is still much work to be done, work that will take generations. Reconciliation is a process, not a destination. That said, I am grateful for the work the department has done, from the tangible items that fit into this update to the intangible – the relationships they've fostered, the difference they've made in individual lives. Some of that work can never be measured, it can only be felt. You can feel it – and see it – with the presence of Kiyām Park in downtown Fort McMurray. Not only is the park named with an Indigenous word (Cree for "let it be"), but it also features traditional teachings, such as a Medicine Wheel and a tipi. We look forward to continuing this work and making meaningful change.

Kinanâskomitin. Marsi cho. Thank you,
Dennis Fraser



Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Adopted Calls to Action

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| 1. | <p><i>We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.</i> <i>ii. Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.</i> <i>iii. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.</i> <i>iv. Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.</i> <i>v. Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school.</i> |
| 3. | <i>We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.</i> |
| 5. | <i>We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.</i> |
| 7. | <i>We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.</i> |
| 8. | <i>We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.</i> |
| 11. | <i>We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.</i> |
| 12. | <i>We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.</i> |
| 13. | <i>We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.</i> |

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| 14. | <p><i>We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.</i> <i>ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.</i> <i>iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.</i> <i>iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.</i> <i>v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.</i> |
| 16. | <i>We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.</i> |
| 17. | <i>We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.</i> |
| 22. | <i>We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health-care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.</i> |
| 23. | <p><i>We call upon all levels of government to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the health-care field.</i> <i>ii. Ensure the retention of Aboriginal health-care providers in Aboriginal communities.</i> <i>iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.</i> |
| 31. | <i>We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide sufficient and stable funding to implement and evaluate community sanctions that will provide realistic alternatives to imprisonment for Aboriginal offenders and respond to the underlying causes of offending.</i> |
| 40. | <i>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.</i> |

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| 43. | <i>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.</i> |
| 47. | <i>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.</i> |
| 53. | <p><i>We call upon the Parliament of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to enact legislation to establish a National Council for Reconciliation. The legislation would establish the council as an independent, national, oversight body with membership jointly appointed by the Government of Canada and national Aboriginal organizations, and consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members. Its mandate would include, but not be limited to, the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Monitor, evaluate, and report annually to Parliament and the people of Canada on the Government of Canada's post-apology progress on reconciliation to ensure that government accountability for reconciling the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown is maintained in the coming years.</i> <i>ii. Monitor, evaluate, and report to Parliament and the people of Canada on reconciliation progress across all levels and sectors of Canadian society, including the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.</i> <i>iii. Develop and implement a multi-year National Action Plan for Reconciliation, which includes research and policy development, public education programs, and resources.</i> <i>iv. Promote public dialogue, public/private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation.</i> |



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| 55. | <p><i>We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation. The reports or data would include, but not be limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. The number of Aboriginal children—including Métis and Inuit children—in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, the reasons for apprehension, and the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies.</i> <i>ii. Comparative funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves.</i> <i>iii. The educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.</i> <i>iv. Progress on closing the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in a number of health indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.</i> <i>v. Progress on eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in youth custody over the next decade.</i> <i>vi. Progress on reducing the rate of criminal victimization of Aboriginal people, including data related to homicide and family violence victimization and other crimes.</i> <i>vii. Progress on reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice and correctional systems.</i> |
| 57. | <p><i>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.</i></p> |
| 64. | <p><i>We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.</i></p> |
| 66. | <p><i>We call upon the federal government to establish multiyear funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.</i></p> |

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| 75. | <i>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.</i> |
| 77. | <i>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.</i> |
| 79. | <i>We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.</i> <i>ii. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.</i> <i>iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada's history.</i> |
| 82. | <i>We call upon provincial and territorial governments, in collaboration with Survivors and their organizations, and other parties to the Settlement Agreement, to commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools Monument in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.</i> |
| 87. | <i>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.</i> |
| 88. | <i>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.</i> |

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| 92. | <p><i>We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.</i> <i>ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.</i> <i>iii. Provide education for management and staff 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.</i> |
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Annual **Update**

Using *A Collaborative Pathway Forward* as a guiding document, the Municipality continues to advance its response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action. Twenty-nine Calls to Action have been identified by the Municipality to date. In some areas, great strides have been made and tangible progress can be easily measured. In others, more time and attention are needed to further progress. Overall, there is room for improvement in all areas. The Municipality continues working with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and partners in advancing all adopted Calls to Action and reconciliation.

Calls to Action 1, 3, and 5 (Child Welfare)

Over the past year, RMWB Council has advocated to the Government of Alberta's Minister of Children's Services to ensure rural and Indigenous communities in the region have the appropriate childcare staffing and resources available to support the needs of each community. Council remains committed to raising these concerns with the provincial government to stress the importance of childcare support staff being available in remote and rural communities. Local support services are necessary to the overall wellbeing of a community; they promote keeping families together and identify solutions that best suit their individual and cultural needs.

The Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program promotes and enhances the well-being of families and communities. FCSS programs are intended to help individuals adopt healthy lifestyles, improve their quality of life, and build capacity

to prevent and deal with crisis situations should they arise. FCSS funding is provided to municipalities based on per capita allocation. The FCSS funding is comprised of 80 percent of funds being provided by the provincial government and 20 percent of that total being matched by the RMWB. FCSS funding is granted to community organizations across the region through the Community Investment Program (CIP) to support preventative social programming, community events and initiatives.

In recent years, the CIP application process has adopted a reconciliation lens. During the application process, there are several questions put forth to organizations to get insight into how they are or plan to address the TRC Calls to Action, how they are working with Indigenous communities in the region, and how those communities are involved in the planning and execution of those programs. This was a deliberate addition to the program, intended to ensure applicants remained mindful of their responsibility to reconciliation by way of encouraging programming that was inclusive and equitable. According to data from the six-month reporting, more than half of organizations receiving CIP funding identified actions that addressed advancing reconciliation, while more than 60 percent identified actions that demonstrated how their organization meaningfully engaged Indigenous Peoples and communities in developing and implementing their programming. Indigenous and Rural Relations (IRR) and Community and Protective Services departments continue to collaborate to strengthen the reconciliation framework within the Municipality's grant streams so programs such as CIP can better serve as a mechanism to support the advancement of truth and reconciliation in Wood Buffalo. This is something that can also be presented to the Rural Sharing Network, a group of

25 plus social profit agencies who meet monthly to share and collaborate on community needs and services. Many Rural Sharing Network agencies provide services and are funded through the RMWB's CIP.

The Family and Community Support Services Act is the legal basis for a municipal/provincial funding partnership through which municipalities may design and develop preventive social services, provided at the earliest opportunity, to promote and enhance well-being among individuals, families, and communities. The Act predates the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the subsequent Calls to Action. The Municipality should seek to advocate for a review of the Act through a truth and reconciliation lens, ensuring that culturally appropriate and Indigenous led programming are prioritized.

Calls to Action 7, 8, 11, and 12 (Education)

Call to Action 7 calls for the elimination of educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Through its CIP grant stream, the Municipality has indirectly supported

this call by funding the Wood Buffalo Regional Library, including their Tech on Wheels program that helps bring the library's mobile technology collection out to the rural communities. Tech on Wheels provides patrons with laptops, tablets, data hubs, portable printing and scanning, and other software at no charge, as well as staff to support things like resume writing and software support. The library also offers Tech to Go, a circulating technology collection of laptops, tablets, and various accessories, as well as Internet to Go, which are data hubs that can be borrowed to instantly provide internet access wherever. This program will continue in 2023.

The Municipality has also invested in rural broadband connectivity in the region. In partnership with TELUS Communications, \$21 million has been invested in fibre optic services for the southern hamlets and Fort McKay. The TELUS PureFibre project began construction in Fort McKay, Draper, Gregoire Lake Estates, Fort McMurray 468 First Nation, Anzac, Conklin, and Janvier in 2022. This is an important investment to improve the quality of life in the rural hamlets and Indigenous communities in Wood Buffalo.



TELUS PureFibre Project

Calls to Action 13, 14, 16, and 17 (Language and Culture)

With 2022 initiating the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL), the Municipality acted on its commitment to work with Indigenous communities to strengthen local Indigenous languages. On Jan. 11, 2022, Mayor Sandy Bowman read a proclamation for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages in Cree, Dene, and English – a first in the Municipality's history. Mayor Bowman continues his bi-weekly Cree and Dene lessons with language leaders Elder Rita Marten of Mikisew Cree First Nation and Elder Patrice Mercredi of Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. Plans are currently underway to offer Municipal employees language lessons from Elder Marten and Elder Mercredi.

An IDIL working group of community partners and Municipal staff came together in 2022. The working group has undertaken several initiatives, including creating a toolkit of Cree and Dene language resources, such as flashcards, colouring sheets, and a calendar. The working group's toolkits were used in Fort Chipewyan on March 31, 2022, for an event hosted by Mikisew Cree First Nation in honour of the National Day of Indigenous Languages.

Many of these resources have been digitized, including videos from local Language Leaders, and offered as key components of National Indigenous History Month and Truth and Reconciliation Challenge initiatives. Indigenous storytelling, culture, and language have been identified as key components and there is a noticeable shift in the consideration of them in the onset of Municipal projects. One example of this is the Wayfinding strategy engagement, which has sought continued input from Indigenous partners and collaboration with IRR to ensure wayfinding reflects the Indigenous history and culture of the region through language and traditional knowledge.

These initiatives support Calls to Action 13, 14, and 16, which call upon the federal government and post-secondary institutions to acknowledge and uphold Indigenous language rights, including the preservation and revitalization by Indigenous Peoples and communities. The Municipality is dedicated to advancing these Calls to Action within a local context and could not do so without the dedication and strength of local language leaders and Elders. We are deeply grateful for their knowledge, time, and passion.

In addition to the ongoing work around strengthening Indigenous languages, the RMWB also supported the 2022 Athabasca Tribal Council Cultural Festival, which took place in Fort McMurray Sept. 8 – 11, 2022. The four-day event showcased, celebrated, and fostered the development of First Nations arts and culture. To advance reconciliation, the TRC recognized the need for permanent funding to support cultural revitalization and continuity, and supporting the Cultural Festival was an opportunity for the Municipality to reaffirm its commitment to reconciliation.

Calls to Action 22 and 23 (Health)

Call to Action 22 calls for the inclusion and value of Indigenous healing practices in the Canadian health-care system, and for those practices to be used in the treatment of Indigenous patients in collaboration with Indigenous healers and Elders where requested by Indigenous patients. In recognition of this Call to Action, the Health and Safety branch of the Human Resources department worked with IRR in developing internal staff workshops with local Knowledge Keepers.

This special workshop shares cultural teachings of the Medicine Wheel, an elemental teaching in many Indigenous cultures, and how to incorporate this



In many Indigenous cultures, the Medicine Wheel is a teaching that encompasses all aspects of life – from health and wellness, to the stages of life, and elements of nature. Find balance and be well at Kiyām Community Park, which officially opened in January 2023.

traditional knowledge to support mental health and wellness. As it is also open to non-Indigenous employees, this initiative also supports Call to Action 57, professional development and training for public servants.

Administration recently adopted Council's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, which identifies reconciliation spaces as a priority. In February of this year, a motion was put forward that directed Administration to undertake a feasibility study for cultural grounds throughout the region. The study is budgeted for in 2023 and will support the need to make culturally appropriate space for ceremony available for staff, as well as Indigenous Peoples and communities throughout the region. This will better allow ceremonial and traditional practices that contribute to the betterment of health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Calls to Action 31 and 40 (Justice)

The Municipality partners with Wood Buffalo RCMP on Annual Policing Priorities (APP) in the region, which are formed in part through the RCMP's annual Policing Priorities Survey. Results of this year's survey identify missing, murdered, and exploited Indigenous Peoples as a priority concern. Missing, murdered, and exploited Indigenous Peoples was also identified as a provincial priority for RCMP.

Restorative justice was introduced into Wood Buffalo in 2022. Restorative justice prioritizes forgiveness and understanding over retribution, with a focus on the victim's well-being. While available for youth in the region since 2015, it was introduced for adults in April, with 19 total referrals for adults from either the Crown or RCMP lead

investigator in 2022. More than 40 people in the region have been trained as facilitators and are used to help support getting to the root cause.

Call to Action 40 calls on all levels of government, in collaboration with Indigenous People, to create adequately funded and accessible Indigenous-specific victim programs and services. In February 2022, Council unanimously passed a motion for Administration to investigate how to support the National Inquiry for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's call for prevention programs and education and awareness campaigns. On June 28, 2022, Council unanimously passed a subsequent motion, approving \$230,000 to partner with Indigenous experts and organizations on the development and implementation of prevention programs, education and awareness campaigns, and a local action plan inclusive of Missing or Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples. Funds will be used to support the work of the taskforce, and to help host commemoration events on significant dates like the National Day of Awareness on May 5 and the Sisters in Spirit on Oct. 4. A billboard dedicated to raising awareness of Missing or Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples was also placed along Highway 63 to bring additional attention and advocacy to this national crisis.

This motion also resulted in IRR working closely with the Missing or Murdered and Exploited Indigenous Peoples taskforce in 2022. The taskforce, made up of local experts and community advocates has met seven times since the passing of the motion. They currently are focused on support, prevention, and response and will look to implement a local action plan in 2023. This plan will provide supports to Indigenous Peoples in Wood Buffalo that are directly impacted by missing, murdered, or exploited loved ones. It will also advocate for the safety and support of Indigenous

Peoples and help the community to better prepare for an emergency response to missing people.

Call to Action 43 (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

The Municipality has adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, often known simply as the UN Declaration, as the framework for reconciliation. To implement this as per the Call to Action, the Municipality has begun collaborating with Indigenous communities in developing community-specific Protocol Agreements that identify implementing the UN Declaration as a joint priority. By year end, three First Nation communities and four Métis communities signed Protocol Agreements.

The Protocol Agreements are intended to be the foundation for the Municipality to implement the UN Declaration as a framework for ongoing reconciliatory efforts. It is also believed that finalizing community-specific Protocol Agreements will define, renew, and strengthen the Municipality's existing relationships with Indigenous Communities, as well as help identify mutual priorities, establish a dedicated engagement process, and advance reconciliation. The Protocol Agreement is part of the Indigenous Community Capacity Program (ICCP), which provides eligible Indigenous Communities with grant funding to financially support the implementation of the Protocol Agreements and to provide greater participation in engagement regarding municipal projects, programs, and policies.

While negotiations are still ongoing in several communities, the Municipality is eager to continue to develop relationships through a formalized agreement that will help to establish a method to quantify what is often harder to quantify: relationships.

Call to Action 47 (Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius)

Call to Action 47 calls upon all levels of government, including municipal governments, to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous Peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius (vacant land), and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.

The Municipality will systematically analyze its existing policies, plans, and procedures to identify how it can make positive and meaningful changes to existing processes and better meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples and communities. For example, reconciliation is a key component of the RMWB Municipal Development Plan (MDP), which is currently in draft form. Once finalized, the MDP will guide the next 20 years of municipal policy and is another way to solidify reconciliation as a priority in everything the Municipality does.

To begin to right the colonial concepts of the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, it's important organizations like the Municipality acknowledge the impacts of settlement and economic development on Indigenous land. Municipal growth and economic development have increased the value of land, but Indigenous communities, the original inhabitants of this land since time immemorial, are not fairly benefitting.

The Protocol Agreements also respond to Call to Action 47, as they formalize respecting traditional and Treaty 8 territory, and the need for engaging Indigenous Peoples on matters that impact their communities and traditional lands.

Recognizing Indigenous engagement is vitally important, both legally and in terms of relationships, the Municipality has shifted

how it engages with Indigenous Peoples and communities, beginning prior to the finalization and implementation of Protocol Agreements. For example, Indigenous Sharing Circles were a focal part of engagement when discussing Waterfront Park Revitalization. Several sharing circles were conducted with Indigenous Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers representing storytelling and the history of the land, language, and traditional plants and medicines. While the project was put on hold in 2022, the Sharing Circles denote an important shift in the organization's perspective. Another example is engagement for the Heritage Resources Management Plan. Indigenous engagement was central to the development of this plan, including working in close partnership with the Nistawoyou Association Friendship Centre on an engagement at Heritage Village in Fort McMurray. The immersive engagement used traditional oral storytelling practices to discuss heritage in Fort McMurray from time immemorial, to the fur trade and oil boom, through to today.

As mentioned in an earlier Call to Action, the Municipality's Wayfinding engagement has sought continued input from Indigenous partners to ensure wayfinding reflects the true Indigenous history and culture of Wood Buffalo through language and traditional language. This is another way to repudiate the colonial concepts of the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius. Actions such as using Indigenous language and traditional names are ways to bring Indigenous knowledge, culture, and tradition back onto the land. Land acknowledgements are another way to combat the harmful belief that European colonizers discovered these lands.

Call to Action 53 and 55 (National Council for Reconciliation)

Call to Action 55 calls upon all levels of government to provide annual reports on progress towards reconciliation. Upon formalizing its response to the TRC in the inaugural Pathways report, the Municipality also committed to providing annual updates on progress in addressing identified Calls to Action, including how all departments are contributing to reconciliation efforts. There will also be subsequent Reports to Council published every four years that will report on the Municipality's responses to actions. In 2023, IRR will seek to broaden the organizational response to truth and reconciliation by looking to implement an interdepartmental truth and reconciliation working group. This group should meet quarterly at a minimum and actively seek out ways to implement the Calls to Action within daily Municipal operations, projects, and policies.

Call to Action 57 (Professional Development and Training for Public Servants)

An area of continued growth for the Municipality continues to be investing in authentic training and development for employees from local leaders in Indigenous Awareness Training and facilitation. By ensuring providers have roots in Wood Buffalo, staff can learn the truth of Canada's history and how it directly impacted Indigenous Peoples and communities in the region. Examples of training opportunities provided in 2022 include Indigenous awareness training, as well as the Legacy of Residential Schools and Indigenous Allyship, and the Medicine Wheel workshops mentioned under Call to Action 22. IRR also collaborated with an Indigenous facilitators to share a lived experience of residential school for staff for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Sept. 30, 2022.



National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21

This is all in addition to the online learning modules the Municipality first launched in 2020, which are open to the public in addition to being mandatory for all municipal staff. These modules continue to be exemplary, with other jurisdictions including Prince Edward Island and Grande Prairie reaching out for assistance in developing similar programs.

IRR has been working closely with Communications and Engagement and the Human Resources department to increase employee participation of these vital training and development opportunities. Plans also include land-based learning opportunities, provided by local Indigenous Knowledge Keepers.

Call to Action 64 (Education for Reconciliation)

Call to Action 64 calls upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders. Administration recommends working with the Reconciliation Advisory Circle to make an inquiry to the Fort McMurray Catholic School District about the inclusion of Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices in the current curriculum.

While Call to Action 64 specifies denominational schools, it is also recommended IRR brings forward a motion requesting the Mayor send a letter on behalf of Council to the Minister of Education and two Fort McMurray school boards to advocate for increased inclusion of Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices, traditional knowledge, and Ways of Knowing, and increased support for Indigenous students.

It is evident that reconciliation will make the greatest strides through our youth. In 2021, when IRR launched its inaugural Truth and Reconciliation Challenge, several schools participated through their teachers. Those teachers would then take what they learned through the challenge into the classroom. One school that excelled at this was Good Shepherd Catholic School. IRR visited the elementary school to thank them for their participation and learned the ripple effect that reaching students can have. These students take the information home to their families, affecting the deepest change.

Call to Action 66 (Youth Programs)

The Municipality supported the advancement of Call to Action 66 through its Community Investment Grant stream. That specific Call to Action was identified by the Anzac Family Community Support Society as something its program worked towards. Janvier Sekweha Youth Centre was also funded through 2022.

Call to Action 75 and 77 (Missing Children and Burial Information and National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation)

In March 2022, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Mikisew Cree First Nation, and Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation came together to identify potential burial and grave sites at the former Holy Angels Indian Residential School in Fort Chipewyan. This ongoing search consists of gathering testimonials from Elders and survivors, aerial photography, and ground-penetrating radar to reveal any additional burial sites and graves that have not been confirmed or reported by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

The communities are also working closely with Elders and survivors to address the

intergenerational trauma that the residential school system has left for generations of Indigenous Peoples in the region.

The organizations have held gatherings to support Elders, survivors, and community members through this process. Representatives from IRR have attended the gatherings, supporting this initiative through assisting with culture camps, which provides Elders and survivors a quiet place to have a meal, tea, or enjoy the company of others during an emotional and difficult time. IRR has been invited to attend the next gathering in 2023.

The Municipality remains committed to supporting this Indigenous-led effort and any outcomes or findings of truth scanning in Fort Chipewyan at the former site of the Holy Angels Indian Residential School. The Municipality is also committed to working with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, providing all available records in usable formats to its Archives and Collections division, to support reconciliation and healing for residential school survivors and their families in Wood Buffalo.

Calls to Action 79 and 82 (Commemoration)

The Municipality continues to commemorate and show respect for residential school survivors, their families, communities, and the many who tragically never made it home from residential school. On Sept. 30, 2022, in collaboration with partner organizations, the Municipality hosted a memorial walk. Hundreds attended the event, which began with a blessing, drumming, and a moving speech from Chief Allan Adam of Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and President of Athabasca Tribal Council. The walk concluded at Shell Place with refreshments. Later that day, luncheons were hosted at MacDonald Island and rural venues for residential school survivors and their families to honour survivors and ensure they were

supported on an emotional and difficult day.

The Municipality continues to include commemoration throughout the organization, including in public art. In March 2022, the Municipality hired the first-ever Indigenous Arts Curator. This position works with Public Art Wood Buffalo to assist in decolonizing the Municipality's public art practices to better align with and respect Indigenous protocols and perspectives.

Similarly, Indigenous Reconciliation Artwork was revealed in Council Chambers in April in a special ceremony, stemming originally from a Council motion in 2019. The art represents the Municipality's ongoing commitment to truth and reconciliation and acknowledges Indigenous Peoples as the original stewards of the land. The art was created by renowned Fort McKay First Nation artist Frederick R. McDonald. McDonald was selected as lead artist for the project by the Circle of Knowledge and Artistic Expression, a group of local Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, many of whom are residential and day school survivors, who guided the process. The process also represents the first time a sharing circle was used by the Municipality to achieve consensus, and featured a talking stick created by Elder Shirley Arthurs to honour the sharing circle process.

The Municipality continues to strive to improve inclusion of Indigenous Ways of Knowing, including through art. At an event in honour of National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, 2022, IRR revealed the Municipality's new ceremonial tipi. The tipi was crafted by local Métis company, Tapway Contracting Inc., and painted beautifully by Mohawk artist Amy Keller-Rempp. Since its unveiling, the tipi has been blessed by an Elder and has been present at events throughout the region, from Treaty Days in Fort Chipewyan to the Athabasca Tribal Council Cultural Festival, representing the spirit of reconciliation.



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30

Calls to Action 87 and 88 (Sports and Reconciliation)

In the spirit of Call to Action 87, the Wood Buffalo 2023 Arctic Winter Games Host Society is developing an Indigenous Sports Gallery exhibit to be displayed across the region throughout the Arctic Winter Games and leading up to the event. On Nov. 4, 2022, 87 days out from the Games, 35 Indigenous athletes were named to be celebrated for their contributions to sport in Wood Buffalo and recognized for their balance of well-being within their lives and communities. Three categories were developed: Athlete, Community Builder, and Local Legend. The exhibit will be roving and displayed in various venues during the Games and at rural hamlet wrap-up events for the Torch Relay. The Host Society is also working on a Legacy Plan for the Indigenous Sport Gallery so it can remain a physical and digital asset post-Games to ensure the stories continue to be shared throughout the region.

The Arctic Winter Games also remain an example of Call to Action 88, which calls for long-term development and growth of Indigenous athletes, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games. As a result of surplus monies from hosting

previous Games, the Municipality created the Games Legacy Grant. This grant supports athletes, performers, artists, teams, coaches, and instructors from Wood Buffalo to develop their skills, participate in provincial or higher-level competitions, and promote and develop future talent. This includes funding travel for the North American Indigenous Games.

Call to Action 92 (Business and Reconciliation)

A working group, comprised of membership from each of the Indigenous community-owned businesses or social entities and representation from the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA), has been formed to advance the development of a framework incorporate Indigenous Procurement opportunities into the procurement practices of the Municipality.

Tremendous progress has been made in advancing this framework through collaboration and consensus. The draft strategy is currently being shared with each community Chief or President and Council and NAABA's Board of Directors for review and feedback.

The Pathway Forward: **2023**

The Municipality recommends the adoption of Call to Action 91, which calls upon officials and host countries of international sporting events, such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games, to ensure that local Indigenous Peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events. As evidenced in this report, the Wood Buffalo 2023 Arctic Winter Games Host Society has put in significant efforts in supporting reconciliation through the Games.

The Municipality believes that the existing 29 Calls to Action require ongoing effort and action from all departments across the organization – whether that be advocacy work, a review of existing procedures, or an update to existing policies – the RMWB remains committed to ensuring reconciliation continues progressing in Wood Buffalo.



Kiyām Community Park

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Calls to Action Benchmarking

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, and the unceded territory of the Métis.

In October 2022, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB), through the Indigenous and Rural Relations (IRR) department, engaged the services of an external, third-party consultant to undertake a benchmarking exercise. The information was collected to assist the RMWB to understand its progress in relation to other municipalities in Canada to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action. The results of this exercise are presented within this report.

Project Context

The Calls to Action, the TRC's Ten Principles of Reconciliation, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) form the core of the Municipality's efforts and initiatives to reconcile and renew relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo.

The RMWB has formally identified 29 Calls to Action and has been actively developing initiatives to advance these Calls to Action forward. While these efforts to address the Calls to Action are substantive, the Municipality does not have qualitative or quantitative data to assess its performance relative to other Canadian municipalities. The RMWB identified that a benchmarking exercise to collect data on the performance of other Canadian municipalities would help to understand the broader reconciliatory actions taking place across Canada. This would help to assess its own performance and any opportunities for improvements.

Project Methods & Objective

The Project scope included an online desktop review with the objective to benchmark up to 100 municipalities representative of a range of population centre sizes and geographic regions within Canada.

The following benchmarking questions were applied to this Project:

Benchmark #1: how many Calls to Action has the municipality identified as priorities?

Benchmark #2: does the municipality have a reconciliation framework?

Benchmark #3: is reconciliation part of the municipality's formalized organizational priorities?

Benchmark #4: has the municipality implemented or taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration, beyond identifying Call to Action 43?

Benchmark #5: does the municipality commemorate key dates related to Indigenous history or culture? For the purposes of this project, key dates include:

- March 31: National Indigenous Languages Day
- May 5: National Day of Awareness for MMIWG2S+
- June: National Indigenous History Month
- June 21: National Indigenous Peoples Day
- September 30: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- October 4: Sisters in Spirit Day
- November 16: Louis Riel Day

Benchmark #6: what activities/policies/programs are directed toward reconciliation?

Benchmark #7: does the municipality have an Indigenous Relations department?

Benchmark #8: does the municipality have employees solely dedicated to reconciliation? If yes, how many?

These questions were provided at the outset of the Project. Minor changes to the wording of some of the benchmarking questions were made, early in the Project, to create additional clarity and so that the most accurate results could be achieved. For example, the word “solely” was added to Benchmark #8 to articulate the intention of the benchmarking question more clearly.

Early in the Project, it was identified that the information required to fully answer benchmarking questions could not be found by only reviewing a municipal webpage. Online information was often dated, and important information was challenging to locate online. As a result, each municipality was contacted directly via email or telephone to pose the benchmarking questions. This provided each municipality with the opportunity to provide up-to-date and accurate information. Direct engagement greatly improved the quality of the Projects data.

Project Results

A total of 57 municipalities were benchmarked for this Project. Appendix 1 presents a table of the Project results. Figure 1 provides the number of municipalities that were benchmarked by province/territory and population centre size. The number of municipalities that were benchmarked for each province/territory were randomly selected and not pre-determined.

| Province / Territory | >750,000 | 750,000-200,000 | 200,000-50,000 | <50,000 | TOTAL |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| BC | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 8 |
| AB | 1 | | 3 | 3 | 7 |
| SK | | 2 | | 3 | 5 |
| MB | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| ON | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| QC | | | | | 0 |
| NB | | | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| NS | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| PE | | | | 2 | 2 |
| NL | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| YT | | | | 2 | 2 |
| NT | | | | 3 | 3 |
| NU | | | | 3 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 4 | 6 | 14 | 33 | 57 |
| There are no cities within this population range for the province. | | | | | |
| There are no additional cities within this population range for the province. | | | | | |

Figure 1: Number of Municipalities Benchmarked by Province and Population Centre Size

Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data is presented in this section. Analyses are organized and presented on benchmark-by-benchmark basis.

Benchmark #1

How many Calls to Action has the municipality identified as priorities?

Quantitative Analysis

Of the 57 municipalities that were benchmarked, 22 (39%) identified multiple Calls to Action as priorities to address directly or indirectly (Figure 2). The data indicates a low correlation between the number of Calls to Action identified and the population centre size. However, a strong correlation exists for municipalities with a population size greater than 750,000.

| Municipality | >750,000 | 750,000-200,000 | 200,000-50,000 | <50,000 |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|---------|
| Vancouver, BC | 27 | | | |
| Victoria, BC | | 5 | | |
| Kamloops, BC | | | 13 | |
| Nanaimo, BC | | | 1 | |
| Prince George, BC | | | 1 | |
| Edmonton, AB | 37 | | | |
| Lethbridge, AB | | | 18 | |
| Strathcona County, AB | | | 9 | |
| Fort Saskatchewan, AB | | | | 13 |
| Saskatoon, SK | | 13 | | |
| Prince Albert, SK | | | | 15 |
| Winnipeg, MB | 5 | | | |
| Thompson, MB | | | | 3 |
| Toronto, ON | 8 | | | |
| Kingston, ON | | | 3 | |
| Timmins, ON | | | | 9 |
| Midland, ON | | | | 4 |
| Saint John, NB | | | 5 | |
| Fredricton, NB | | | 14 | |
| Whitehorse, YT | | | | 10 |
| Yellowknife, NT | | | | 6 |
| Inuvik, NT | | | | 12 |
| Average | 19.25 | 9 | 8 | 9 |

Figure 2: Number of Calls to Action Identified as Priorities by Municipality and Population Centre Size

Qualitative Analysis

There is a significant range of number of Calls to Action identified as priorities by municipalities. This reflects the uniquely individual reconciliatory efforts of municipalities across Canada.

- A municipality's size (and presumably resourcing available) is not a determinate of the number of Calls to Action that are determined to be a priority.
- A jurisdiction's location (e.g., "Prairies", "Atlantic", "North") is not correlated to the number of Calls to Action that are determined to be a priority.

The RMWB has identified 29 Calls to Action as priorities which is the second highest number of Calls to Action of the municipalities that were surveyed for this project. Although the RMWB's population centre size category is 200,000 – 50,000, the number of Calls to Action that the RMWB has identified as priorities is more consistent with population centre size categories of >750,000. This reflects the priority that the RMWB has placed on advancing reconciliation efforts in the Wood Buffalo region.

Benchmark #2

Does the municipality have a reconciliation framework?

Quantitative Analysis

Of the 57 municipalities that were benchmarked, 15 (26%) have a reconciliation framework (Figure 3). The data indicates that there is no correlation between whether a municipality has a reconciliation framework and population centre size, except population centres with a size of 750,000-200,000.

| Municipality | >750,000 | 750,000-200,000 | 200,000-50,000 | <50,000 |
|-------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|----------|
| Vancouver, BC | ✓ | | | |
| Kamloops, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Nanaimo, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Prince George, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Edmonton, AB | ✓ | | | |
| Lethbridge, AB | | | ✓ | |
| Winnipeg, MB | ✓ | | | |
| Thompson, MB | | | | ✓ |
| Toronto, ON | ✓ | | | |
| Kingston, ON | | | ✓ | |
| Pickering, ON | | | ✓ | |
| Timmins, ON | | | | ✓ |
| Saint John, NB | | | ✓ | |
| Whitehorse, YT | | | | ✓ |
| Yellowknife, NT | | | | ✓ |
| Total | 4 | 0 | 7 | 4 |

Figure 3: Reconciliation Framework by Municipality and Population Centre Size

Qualitative Analysis

The data demonstrates that although over 50% of municipalities surveyed are pursuing activities, policies and/or programs to advance reconciliation (see Benchmark #6, below), far fewer municipalities have established a reconciliation framework to formalize commitments and actions. The low rate of reconciliation frameworks coupled with the high rate of actions and activities indicates that while most municipalities value reconciliation, most municipalities are not formalizing their commitments and plans.

The RMWB has established a reconciliation framework to guide its activities, policies and programs to advance reconciliation.

Benchmark #3

Is reconciliation part of the municipality's formalized organizational priorities?

Quantitative Analysis

Of the 57 municipalities that were benchmarked, 19 (33%) municipalities identify reconciliation as an organizational priority (Figure 4). The data indicates that there is no correlation between whether a municipality has identified reconciliation as an organizational priority and population centre size. Fourteen municipalities that reported having a reconciliation framework also reported that reconciliation is part of their organizational priorities. Six municipalities that identified reconciliation as an organizational priority did not have a reconciliation framework. Two municipalities that identified having a reconciliation framework did not identify that reconciliation is an organizational priority.

| Municipality | >750,000 | 750,000-200,000 | 200,000-50,000 | <50,000 |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|----------|
| Vancouver, BC | ✓ | | | |
| Victoria, BC | | ✓ | | |
| Kamloops, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Nanaimo, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Prince George, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Edmonton, AB | ✓ | | | |
| Lethbridge, AB | | | ✓ | |
| Red Deer, AB | | | ✓ | |
| Strathcona County, AB | | | ✓ | |
| Saskatoon, SK | | ✓ | | |
| Prince Albert, SK | | | | ✓ |
| Winnipeg, MB | ✓ | | | |
| Thompson, MB | | | | ✓ |
| Toronto, ON | ✓ | | | |
| Kingston, ON | | | ✓ | |
| Pickering, ON | | | ✓ | |
| Charlottetown, PE | | | | ✓ |
| Whitehorse, YT | | | | ✓ |
| Yellowknife, NT | | | | ✓ |
| Total | 4 | 2 | 8 | 5 |

Figure 4: Reconciliation as an Organizational Priority by Municipality and Population Centre Size

Qualitative Analysis

The data demonstrates a strong correlation between a municipality having a reconciliation framework and identifying reconciliation as an organizational priority. This means that once a municipality has identified reconciliation as a priority, steps are typically taken to outline the way that a municipality will advance its reconciliation objectives.

The RMWB has identified reconciliation as an organizational priority. The RMWB follows the trend identified in this report that once a municipality has identified reconciliation as a priority that the municipality also takes steps to outline the way that a municipality will advance its reconciliation objectives.

Benchmark #4

Has the municipality implemented or taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration, beyond identifying Call to Action 43?

Quantitative Analysis

Of the 57 municipalities that were benchmarked, 10 (17.5%) municipalities have implemented or have taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration, beyond identifying Call to Action 43 (Figure 5). Seven of these municipalities identified having a reconciliation framework and that reconciliation is an organizational priority.

| Municipality | >750,000 | 750,000-200,000 | 200,000-50,000 | <50,000 |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|----------|
| Vancouver, BC | ✓ | | | |
| Kamloops, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Nanaimo, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Prince George, BC | | | ✓ | |
| Edmonton, AB | ✓ | | | |
| Fort Saskatchewan, AB | | | | ✓ |
| Saskatoon, SK | | ✓ | | |
| Kingston, ON | | | ✓ | |
| Fredricton, NB | | | ✓ | |
| Yellowknife, NT | | | | ✓ |
| Total | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 |

Figure 5: Implementation of UN Declaration by Municipality and Population Centre Size

Qualitative Analysis

The data indicates that there is no correlation between population centre size and whether a municipality has implemented or has taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration, beyond identifying Call to Action 43. There is a strong correlation (70%) between municipalities that have implemented or taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration and having both a reconciliation framework and having identified reconciliation as an organizational priority. This means that municipalities that are taking concrete steps toward implementing the UN Declaration have well-established policies and practices that formalize their efforts to advance their reconciliation objectives.

The RMWB has taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration, beyond identifying Call to Action 43. Further, the RMWB follows the trend identified in this report that when a municipality has implemented or taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration that they also have a reconciliation framework and that they have identified reconciliation as an organizational priority.

Benchmark #5

Does the municipality commemorate key dates? If yes, which dates?

Quantitative Analysis

Of the 57 municipalities that were benchmarked, 41 (72%) municipalities commemorate key dates. The most common date that is commemorated is September 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) (12, or 21%). Ten (17.5%) municipalities commemorated other key dates, in addition to September 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation).

| Key Dates | >750,000 | 750,000-200,000 | 200,000-50,000 | <50,000 | Total |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| June 21 | | | | 3 | 3 |
| September 30 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 12 |
| June 21 & September 30 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 16 |
| June 21 and/or September 30 & Other | 1 | 2 | 7 | | 10 |
| Total | 4 | 5 | 11 | 21 | 41 |

Figure 6: Commemoration of Key Dates by Key Date(s) and Population Centre Size

Qualitative Analysis

The data indicates that most Canadian municipalities commemorate key dates related to Indigenous history or culture. The data further indicates that when a municipality commemorates September 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) that it also commemorates June 21 (National Indigenous Peoples Day). With over half of the municipalities commemorating key dates, it appears that Indigenous culture and history is forming part of the organizational dialogue, however, it is difficult to say, with confidence, that this is improving or becoming a more frequent practice without a comparative timeframe.

The RMWB commemorates all key dates related to Indigenous history or culture that were scoped in for the purposes of this project. As such, the RMWB is consistent with other municipalities of the same population centre size in that it commemorates additional dates to the most popular days of September 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) and June 21 (National Indigenous Peoples Day).

Benchmark #6

What activities/policies/programs are directed toward reconciliation?

Quantitative Analysis

Of the 57 municipalities that were benchmarked, 30 (53%) municipalities have activities, policies and/or programs directed toward reconciliation. The following provides a percent figure of municipalities that have activities, policies and/or programs, by population centre size:

- 100% of municipalities with a population centre size >750,000
- 67% of municipalities with a population centre size 750,000-200,000
- 78.5% of municipalities with a population centre size 200,000-50,000
- 33% of municipalities with a population centre size <50,000

Qualitative Analysis

Municipalities that have activities, policies and/or programs directed toward reconciliation are engaged in reconciliation in wide variety of ways, often in unique and creative ways. Common types of municipal activities, policies and/or programs include:

- Formalized agreements with Indigenous Nations
- Committees and working groups to address and action specific issues (i.e., MMIWG action plans)
- Anti-racism and cultural awareness training for municipal staff and leadership
- Placemaking and place-naming initiatives
- Public art projects
- Campaigning on Indigenous issues
- Facilitating dialogue with Indigenous community members and organizations
- Flag protocol, installation of flags of Indigenous Nations/Federations at City/Town Hall
- Resourcing directed to addressing socio-economic barriers
- Implementing land acknowledgements

The RMWB follows the trend identified which is that most municipalities of the same population centre size have activities, policies and/or programs directed toward reconciliation. The activities, policies and/or programs that the RMWB is advancing is consistent with the nature and scope of activities, policies and/or programs being pursued by other Canadian municipalities. For example, the RMWB pursues public art projects, undertakes placemaking and place-naming initiatives, has implemented a land acknowledgement practice and has established a Reconciliation Advisory Circle, to name a few.

Benchmark #7

Does the municipality have an Indigenous Relations department?

Quantitative Analysis

Of the 57 municipalities that were benchmarked, 9 (16%) municipalities have an Indigenous Relations department (or equivalent in title – i.e., “Indigenous Relations Office”). The following provides a percent figure of municipalities that have an Indigenous Relations department, by population centre size:

- 100% of municipalities with a population centre size >750,000
- 33% of municipalities with a population centre size 750,000-200,000
- 14% municipalities with a population centre size 200,000-50,000
- 3% of municipalities with a population centre size <50,000

Qualitative Analysis

The data demonstrates a strong correlation between the population centre size of a municipality and the likelihood that a municipality has an Indigenous Relations department. None of the benchmarking questions provided the opportunity to fully understand this trend, however, availability of resourcing within larger population centres coupled with the number of citizens and organizations that a municipality serves are likely contributing factors.

The RMWB has an Indigenous Relations department, which is a step out from the trend that most Canadian municipalities with a population centre size of 200,000-50,000 do not have an Indigenous Relations department. This demonstrates the RMWB’s strong commitment to ensure that the infrastructure and resourcing required to meaningfully advance its reconciliation efforts are in place and supported.

Benchmark #8

Does the municipality have employees solely dedicated to reconciliation? If yes, how many?

Quantitative Analysis

Of the 57 municipalities that were benchmarked, 1 (2%) municipality (Saskatoon, SK) has employees dedicated to reconciliation. This municipality has one employee dedicated to reconciliation. This employee holds the position title of Truth & Reconciliation Coordinator.

Qualitative Analysis

The data indicates that while many municipalities are engaged in advancing reconciliation, it is unlikely that a municipality has a position(s) dedicated to reconciliation. None of the benchmarking questions provided the opportunity to fully understand this trend.

The RMWB has two positions solely dedicated to reconciliation (Reconciliation Advisor). No other municipality within the RMWB's population centre size category has a position solely dedicated to reconciliation. As such, the RMWB is an outlier within its population size centre cohort and with respect to all Canadian municipalities.

Conclusion

The purpose of the benchmarking exercise presented within this report is to understand the RMWB's progress in relation to other municipalities in Canada to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action. This section presents a snapshot of how the RMWB compares to each of the outcomes presented in this report.

Benchmark #1: how many Calls to Action has the municipality identified as priorities?

The RMWB has formally identified 29 calls to action, which exceeds the number of calls to action of other municipalities within the same population centre size as the RMWB. In fact, only population centres with sizes of >750,000 identify more than 20 calls to action as priorities.

Benchmark #2: does the municipality have a reconciliation framework?

The RMWB has a reconciliation framework. As described in the report, although over 50% of municipalities surveyed are pursuing activities, policies and/or programs to advance reconciliation, far fewer municipalities have established a reconciliation framework to formalize commitments and actions. The RMWB is among the minority of municipalities that have formalized reconciliation commitments and actions.

Benchmark #3: is reconciliation part of the municipality's formalized organizational priorities?

Reconciliation is a formalized organizational priority for the RMWB. The RMWB is within the one-third of municipalities that have identified that reconciliation is an organizational priority. The RMWB follows the trend identified in this report that once a municipality has identified reconciliation as a priority, steps are typically taken to outline the way that a municipality will advance its reconciliation objectives.

Benchmark #4: has the municipality implemented or taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration, beyond identifying Call to Action 43?

The RMWB has taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration, beyond identifying Call to Action 43. Less than 20% of municipalities surveyed have also implemented or are taking steps to implementing the UN Declaration. As such, the RMWB is within a minority of municipalities undertaking specific work with respect to the UN Declaration.

The RMWB follows the trend identified in this report that when a municipality has implemented or taken steps toward implementing the UN Declaration that it is likely that they also have both a reconciliation framework and have identified reconciliation as an organizational priority. This small cohort of municipalities that are taking concrete steps toward implementing the UN Declaration have well-established policies and practices that guide their efforts to advance their reconciliation objectives.

Benchmark #5: does the municipality commemorate key dates related to Indigenous history or culture?

The RMWB commemorates all key dates related to Indigenous history or culture that were scoped in for the purposes of this project. As such, the RMWB is consistent with other municipalities of the same population centre size in that it commemorates additional dates to the most popular days of September 30 (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation) and June 21 (National Indigenous Peoples Day).

Benchmark #6: what activities/policies/programs are directed toward reconciliation?

The RMWB is like most municipalities in Canada in that the RMWB is pursuing activities, policies and programs that are directed toward reconciliation. Although the RMWB's efforts are unique to the RMWB's reconciliation journey, the RMWB is engaged in several activities, policies and programs that are common to several other municipalities (e.g., land acknowledgement, public art projects, committees, etc.).

Benchmark #7: does the municipality have an Indigenous Relations department?

The RMWB has an Indigenous Relations department (Indigenous and Rural Relations). Only 14% of municipalities within the RMWB's population centre size category have an Indigenous Relations department. Only 16% of all Canadian municipalities have an Indigenous Relations department. As such, the RMWB is an outlier within its population size centre cohort and with respect to all Canadian municipalities.

Benchmark #8: does the municipality have employees solely dedicated to reconciliation? If yes, how many?

The RMWB has two positions solely dedicated to reconciliation (Reconciliation Advisor). Only one other municipality that was selected for this project had a position solely dedicated to reconciliation. No other municipality within the RMWB's population centre size category had a position solely dedicated to reconciliation. As such, the RMWB is an outlier within its population size centre cohort and with respect to all Canadian municipalities.

In conclusion, this report identifies that the RMWB's efforts with respect to advancing the TRC Calls to Action are exceeding efforts of most municipalities within Canada and are exceeding efforts of all municipalities within the RMWB's population size centre cohort. The RMWB is a leader among Canadian municipalities with respect to the extent to which its reconciliation efforts are formalized, both in terms of policy and practice.



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