

## INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORK

### Annual Update

#### RECOMMENDATION

That the May 30, 2022, Community Services report CS01178, be received for information.

#### Report Purpose

##### Information only.

Community and Public Services Committee is being informed about the progress of the City of Edmonton Indigenous Framework's implementation since its approval on February 17, 2021.

### Executive Summary

- The Indigenous Framework is centered on the building of trust, understanding of kinship in Indigenous worldviews and building relationships between City staff and Indigenous Peoples and Communities.
- Elders, Knowledge Keepers and community partners who were engaged and involved in the co-creation of the Framework continue to support the City in its implementation.
- The three core elements of the Indigenous Framework's foundational year are connection, education and awareness, and action.
- To promote these core elements across the corporation, a multi-sectoral group of staff from each City department was needed to form an implementation structure.
- The four roles and seven commitments of the Framework are intended for all staff to embody within their daily work and to serve as relevant context for each City department team to both create and implement action plans that are unique to their respective service areas.
- A suite of nearly 120 starting point actions have been initiated throughout the year by departments teams.

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- There are a number of critical touch points that are needed to sustain the implementation of the Indigenous Framework post 2022 as presented in this report.

### REPORT

The City of Edmonton Indigenous Framework was designed with the intention of answering the question of how the City of Edmonton can best support and build strong relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Edmonton (Attachment 1) The guiding concepts of wahigicicobi (wah-hee-gee-chee-cho-bee) and wâhkôhtowin (wah-KOH-toh-win), gifted by Elders in ceremony and teachings, speak to interconnected relationships and responsibilities we have to one another. By embodying the four roles of Listener, Advocate, Connector, and Partner, City staff can live out the values of kinship that were shared by Elders.

Since the approval of the Indigenous Framework by City Council on February 17, 2021, there has been considerable progress in year one of its implementation. An initial step in advancing the Framework from its adoption to implementation, was to build a firm organizational foundation consisting of three core elements:

- **Connection:** Center the relationships and guidance of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to inform direction of the Framework. A focus on building connections between City Staff, departments, and community.
- **Education and Awareness:** Create educational toolkits and resources to enable staff from all departments to learn about the Indigenous Framework's four roles and seven commitments, as well as the Indigenous knowledge that guides the Framework.
- **Action:** Put learning to action by identifying and implementing actions within each City department as aligned with the four roles and seven commitments.

The first year of implementation presented opportunities and challenges to learn from that helped to identify how the Indigenous Framework may adapt to a changing corporate and social landscape. Year one of implementation also identified different ways that the Indigenous Framework can be a vehicle of change for City collaboration with Indigenous communities and amongst all City departments. Projects like the Indigenous Housing Strategy, Anti-Racism Strategy, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Action Plan, and responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action call for a higher level of collaboration and partnership, which is aligned with the intention and values of the Indigenous Framework. The position of a Senior Executive Advisor for Indigenous Relations within the Office of the City Manager was also established this year to help connect together these strategies and advance work on reconciliation at a high level across the corporation.

### Indigenous Framework Implementation Structure

The Indigenous Framework is lived, actioned, and leveraged throughout the corporation through the building of relationships between all City departments. In order to implement the Framework, a multi-sectoral group of staff across Administration was needed to form a relationship-building and implementation structure. This structure is outlined in detail in Attachment 3.

Upon formation, Administration began creating a unique action plan to align with each of the

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seven Indigenous Framework commitments and respective policies, programs, and services. While momentum on these initial actions is promising, it is important to underscore that this collective work is not about checking boxes. The Circle of Elders and Knowledge Keepers guiding this work continue state that the foundation of this work is relationships.

### Tracking 2021-2022 Progress

Nearly 120 starting point actions were created by Administration's teams throughout the organization.

Indigenous Framework Commitment	Completed or Underway Year 1 Actions (highlights)
#1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Land Acknowledgement Guide</li> </ul>
#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Toolkit #1 - Indigenous Framework Introduction</li> </ul>
#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create and develop an employee support process that connects Indigenous employees to Elders in their community as requested</li> <li>● Indigenous Framework art display &amp; exhibit in City Hall</li> <li>● City of Edmonton Commemorative Policy in development</li> </ul>
#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Elders and Knowledge Keepers teachings, speaker panels, circle conversations, lunch and learns, video series</li> <li>● Create a Community of Practice - knowledge sharing &amp; dialogue</li> </ul>
#5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● National Day for Truth and Reconciliation / Orange Shirt Day - observed by City of Edmonton</li> <li>● Sacred Fire Ceremony at City Hall Plaza</li> <li>● Indigenous Framework Resources for City Employees online</li> <li>● Elders and Executive Leadership Team (City Manager and Deputy City Managers) sharing opportunities</li> </ul>
#6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reviewing hiring practices and employment requirements for Indigenous peoples</li> <li>● Creating and enhancing hiring marketing materials</li> <li>● Promoting employment opportunities through educational institutions and Indigenous specific publications</li> <li>● GBA+ with specific Indigenous lens on recruitment and development programs</li> <li>● Reviewing hiring practices for Peace Officers and Municipal Enforcement Officers including updating the position description, job postings, interview guides and panel diversity</li> <li>● Training for frontline supervisors and managers on Indigenous-led trauma informed leadership</li> </ul>
#7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planning an inaugural Indigenous Framework Community gathering for 2022</li> </ul>

### Planning for 2022 and beyond

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As the Indigenous Framework is a living document intended to align with, and effectively respond to, the needs of Indigenous community and corporate City priorities, critical steps have been initiated to optimize the Framework's success including:

- Regular check-ins with Elders & Knowledge Keepers and community partners involved with the Framework's implementation and future development;
- Convening an annual Indigenous Framework staff gathering to review the Framework's progress, challenges, learnings, and resources needed for the sustainability of the project;
- Providing additional learning opportunities through lunch and learn events, toolkits, and sharing knowledge about Indigenous community events;
- Nurturing relationships with Indigenous communities and among all staff who work with the Indigenous Framework;
- Developing evaluation metrics and methodologies that are locally centered and culturally responsive; and
- Hosting an annual gathering with Indigenous community partners, youth, Elders, City Council, and Administration to facilitate relationship building, discuss the ongoing progress and emerging challenges of the Framework, and review the lessons learned along the journey.

### Budget/Financial Implications

Current operational budgets are being utilized to support the implementation of the Framework's starting point actions. Resource expenses that are required for the Indigenous Framework's sustainability are unknown at this time.

## COMMUNITY INSIGHT

In January, over 40 community partners involved in the broad engagements for the co-creation of the Indigenous Framework were invited to share their voice on its first year of progress by participating in one of three virtual sessions. The invitation was widely shared with local Indigenous community networks with the intent of reaching community members new to the Framework to have them participate in the sessions.

Three sessions were held in February 2022 with a total of 30 Indigenous Community members, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers participating. The purpose of each check-in session was to connect with community partners to renew relationships, summarize the Indigenous Framework's development and progress made in year one, highlight the next milestones for 2022 and beyond and fulfill the role of City as Listener by creating a safe space for community feedback and questions.

One of the main challenges identified with the Framework by a community partner participant was the coordination and communication across City departments as expressed in this quote:

*"What I see is a major issue with all of this is the City consists of so many silos and arms distant from the Mayor and Council and so the good work we all strive to do only impacts the silos we come in contact with."*

## **Indigenous Framework - Annual Update**

During the March 11, 2022 Indigenous Framework retreat, attended by over 60 staff, additional challenges were raised. These included: the lack of dedicated time and resources to fulfill Framework commitments, staff turnover, unclear support from management, a desire for more Indigenous staff involvement and a collective desire to connect with Elders to build relationships and seek guidance.

### **GBA+**

The goal and approach of the Indigenous Framework inherently addresses GBA+ principles by advising the corporation, from an Indigenous worldview, how to address systemic barriers and be a more inclusive city. The Indigenous Framework was created to support the City of Edmonton in relationship building with Indigenous community members to inform the ways in which the corporation responds and relates to the needs of Indigenous Peoples. This was achieved through community engagement with over 40 Indigenous led and Indigenous serving organizations, Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, community members, and City of Edmonton staff. Through this process, diverse experiences and perspectives provided the context to move forward with the Indigenous Framework in an equitable manner that suited the needs of the community and the City at that time.

The ongoing commitment of the Circle of Elders that guides the Indigenous Framework provides an Indigenous understanding of equity and intersectionality that is rooted in relationality, ceremony, and local understanding of needs. As the actions of the Indigenous Framework will be completed uniquely across the corporation by various diverse departments, it will be the responsibility of the Department Action Teams to provide a GBA+ analysis of work relating to programming and policy development, as per City Council report guidelines.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Indigenous Framework Final Report
2. Indigenous Framework Corporate Action Plan 2021/22
3. Indigenous Framework Structure Overview