

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry

Recommendation

That the February 17, 2021, Citizen Services report CR_8386, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the June 22/23, 2020, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration return with a report outlining potential options for implementing the 231 Calls to Justice outlined in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry Final Report, including short, medium, and long term action within the scope of City of Edmonton municipal jurisdiction.

Executive Summary

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls identifies 231 Calls for Justice which are a result of the investigation on “systemic causes of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls, including sexual violence.” Causes or sources of that violence were examined including social, economic, cultural, institutional and historical factors.

Administration identified 120 Calls for Justice directed at municipalities. Short-, medium- and long-term actions to respond to the Calls for Justice will require coordination across jurisdictions to achieve a collective impact. The City has many programs and initiatives that are already contributing to addressing the issues outlined in the Calls for Justice. In addition to those efforts, one of the short-term actions will be for Administration to begin the development of an implementation plan. Medium-term actions include implementation, evaluation and monitoring and providing updates to stakeholders. Long-term actions could see the implementation of complex, systemic changes that may include policy development or amendments, funding programs established and innovative programming or service solutions.

Report

The 2016 federal census indicated that there were 76,205 Indigenous peoples living in Edmonton, which was the second-largest urban Indigenous population in Canada.

Edmonton's urban Indigenous population increased by almost 50 percent between 2006 and 2016. As the urban Indigenous population grows, opportunities and challenges will need to be addressed to ensure a safe and healthy city for Indigenous peoples, especially women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual) people.

In 2015, the Government of Canada launched a national inquiry as a result of calls for an inquiry and increasing pressure from family members and survivors, Indigenous organizations, human rights organizations, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to investigate and report on the disproportionate levels of violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was published on June 3, 2019. The final report identified 231 Calls for Justice based on the participation of almost 2,400 individuals and organizations, representing survivors, families, advocates and subject matter experts. These Calls for Justice are directed at governments, institutions, social service providers, industries and Canadians. The report indicates that it is a pressing priority to restore and respect human rights as well as address significant historical rights violations which include the right to culture, health, security and justice. Responding to these issues will contribute to overall progress in addressing the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. In May 2020, the federal government delayed the release of their formal response and action plan due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been no indication of when the response will be released.

Administration conducted a preliminary review of the Calls for Justice and identified 120 that are directed at municipal governments (Attachment 1). Most of the Calls for Justice directed at municipalities are not prescriptive in nature. At the municipal level, the report advises that local solutions be co-developed with Indigenous communities, as well as institutional, governmental, and community organizations. The Calls for Justice are broad and will require collaboration, partnerships, and analysis across multiple sectors to assess progress and impact. The Calls for Justice are intended to address systemic and social change; some may take significant time before an impact is realized.

Strategic Alignment

There is significant alignment between the final report and the City's strategic planning framework, especially within three key documents: Connect Edmonton, The City Plan, and the Corporate Business Plan (Attachment 2). The City's Indigenous Framework and Edmonton: Safe City (The Community Response to Preventing and Addressing Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Public Spaces) will also support the City's response to the Calls for Justice.

Roles of Government

The majority of the Calls for Justice directed at governments require collective effort to achieve the changes identified in the final report.

- Federal – Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada is working with provinces, territories, Indigenous organizations and communities to create a national action plan.
- Provincial – The Alberta Joint Working Group on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will provide advice, direction and input to the Alberta government's proposed action plan to address the Calls for Justice.
- Municipal – Municipalities have an important role in supporting and implementing programs and policies that respond to the Calls for Justice by providing leadership to address these issues and to ensure systemic and social change at the local level.
- Indigenous – Indigenous governments will work with the other orders of government and other partners to ensure self-determination and self-governance are respected and that solutions stem from Indigenous communities and nations. Indigenous governments will take measures to ensure Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people are represented in governance and their political rights are respected and upheld.

Implementation Considerations

The City's collaboration with Indigenous communities and key partners and stakeholders has created a valuable foundation for the City to address the Calls for Justice. Key elements of this foundation include Indigenous community relationships and engagement strategies, memorandums of understanding, and partnership agreements. Building upon existing collaborations and community initiatives or programs such as those addressing systemic racism, the safety of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, poverty elimination, housing, and support services for survivors of violence will also be instrumental in responding to the Calls for Justice.

Some of the City's current efforts address relationship-building, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA representation in governance and decision making, community safety, preventative social services, gender-based violence, racism, education and awareness programs, cultural knowledge, health and well-being, and economic development (Attachment 3).

The City, in collaboration with Indigenous communities and key stakeholders, will develop an implementation plan that determines which Calls for Justice can be addressed in the short, medium and long term and the resource considerations for implementing these actions. The City will develop local solutions by working with Indigenous women and other partners so Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people in Edmonton feel safe and valued.

Some of the Calls for Justice are currently being addressed through existing work. The Calls for Justice that are more complex and focused on systemic challenges will require more time to produce solutions and change.

- Short-term Actions - The City will continue to collaborate with Indigenous communities and partners on current initiatives and to develop an implementation plan that includes measurements of success and progress goals and identifies resource requirements. These initiatives will build on the commitments and priorities identified by the community as part of the City's Indigenous Framework.
- Medium-term Actions - Implementation of Calls for Justice within the municipal scope and available resources, tracking and evaluation of implementation, and reporting to City Council, communities, partners, and other stakeholders.
- Long-term Actions - Calls requiring additional resources, policy development and/or amendments, the establishment of funding programs, and implementation of complex systemic changes.

Financial Considerations

Implementation of some of the Calls for Justice could result in financial implications to the City. Operational budgets currently support efforts aligned with some of the Calls for Justice such as the Anti-racism Advisory Committee, Gender-based Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention initiative, Indigenous Framework, EndPovertyEdmonton, Recover, and the Community Safety and Well-being Task Force.

The City may receive funding requests from local Indigenous organizations to support efforts related to implementing the Calls for Justice. One of the challenges and priorities identified in the final report is the need for long-term funding to support activities such as program and service development and delivery (safety, prevention, treatment, cultural), knowledge preservation, health and wellness, and economic development.

Next Steps

Administration will continue collaborating with other orders of government, Edmonton Police Service, Indigenous governments and organizations, other institutional partners and communities regarding the implementation of the Calls for Justice.

Current City work can serve as a starting place to address the Calls for Justice and includes implementing the Indigenous Framework, continued support for the Safe Cities initiative, gender-based violence prevention, recommendations from the Community Safety and Well-being Task Force, anti-racism initiatives, as well as support for housing, poverty elimination, food security and economic development.

Administration will provide Council with an update on the City's response to the Calls for Justice and the development of an implementation plan in fall 2021.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is a safe city			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Ensure a safe and healthy city for Indigenous peoples, especially women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people	Number of Calls for Justice within City responsibility completed	N/A	120

Attachments

1. Calls for Justice - Municipal Role in Implementation
2. Calls for Justice - Alignment with the City’s Strategic Planning Framework
3. Examples of City of Edmonton Activities That Support the Calls for Justice

Others Reviewing this Report

- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- K. Armstrong, Deputy City Manager, Employee Services
- M. Persson, Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer, Financial and Corporate Services
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor, Office of the City Manager