

C2.

Communication

Anti-Hate, Diversity and Inclusion

Advisory Committee – September 23, 2024

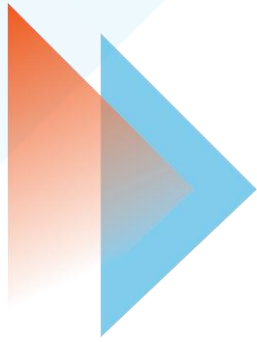
Item No. 2

Indigenous Relations at the City of Vaughan

Advancing Reconciliation



Agenda



1. Overview
2. Recent Initiatives & Engagement
3. Proposed Future Initiatives
4. Next Steps



Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge that the City of Vaughan is situated in the Territory and Treaty 13 lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee. The City of Vaughan is currently home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people today. As representatives of the people of the City of Vaughan, we are grateful to have the opportunity to work and live in this territory.

TRC Calls to Action

Role of Vaughan in Reconciliation

- ▶ In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issued 94 Calls to Action to address the legacy of residential schools and promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
- ▶ Municipalities are encouraged to actively implement these recommendations.
- ▶ Several TRC Calls to Action focus on municipal initiatives, underscoring the critical role of local governments in reconciliation.
- ▶ Calls 43-47 highlight how municipalities can:
 - Support Indigenous rights
 - Build meaningful partnerships
 - Integrate Indigenous perspectives into governance and planning

City of Vaughan's Commitment

- ▶ Focus on building strong relationships with Indigenous communities and addressing anti-Indigenous racism.
- ▶ Committed to integrating Indigenous priorities into city programs and services, guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- ▶ Vaughan is located on Treaty 13 lands, home to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), who hold exclusive rights within the city.
- ▶ The Term of Council Strategic Plan (2022-2026) and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan (2022-2026) outline the City's commitment to advancing reconciliation and strengthening Indigenous relations.

Indigenous Presence

▶ Diverse Indigenous Communities

- Vaughan is home to a rich tapestry of Indigenous cultures, including the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. These groups bring unique languages, traditions, and worldviews that are integral to Canada's cultural heritage.

▶ Historical and Ongoing Systemic Injustices

- Indigenous peoples in Vaughan and across Canada have faced centuries of systemic injustices, including the impact of residential schools, forced displacement from traditional lands, and the ongoing marginalization in policy and social systems.

Challenges and Reconciliation

► Key Challenges

- **Cultural Identity:** The struggle to preserve Indigenous languages, traditions, and identity in the face of assimilation efforts.
- **Land Rights:** Restoring access to and stewardship of traditional lands remains a central issue.
- **Census Underreporting:** Due to historical distrust in government institutions, Indigenous populations may be underrepresented in census data, making it difficult to address their needs effectively.

► Path to Reconciliation

- **Acknowledgment of History:** A critical first step is recognizing and educating about the historical injustices faced by Indigenous peoples.
- **Policy and Partnership:** Collaboration between Indigenous communities and government is essential to creating policies that address inequalities.
- **Community Initiatives:** Local efforts in Vaughan, including land acknowledgments, cultural education, and community engagement, are helping to build bridges toward reconciliation.

Core Priorities – Informing City Building

- ▶ **Consultation and Engagement:** Foster genuine, ongoing dialogue with Indigenous communities regarding decisions impacting their lands and rights.
- ▶ **Cultural Competency:** Enhance understanding and respect for Indigenous cultures and histories through targeted training and educational initiatives.
- ▶ **Reconciliation Efforts:** Advance reconciliation by addressing historical injustices and integrating equity principles into municipal policies.
- ▶ **Policy Development:** Develop and implement policies that incorporate Indigenous rights and perspectives within the municipality.

Recent Initiatives & Engagements

Collaboration with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN)

- ▶ Ongoing work with the MCFN Department of Consultation and Accommodation and Vaughan's Policy Planning and Special Programs department continues to focus on land use, planning, and environmental assessments
- ▶ **Past Initiatives**
 - Updates to land acknowledgments
 - Recognizing National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day
 - Installation of 'Every Child Matters' crosswalks
 - Hosting the Sisters in Spirit Day vigil, reflecting a shared commitment to awareness, reconciliation, and healing

Exhibit on the War of 1812

First Nations Perspective

- ▶ In honour of National Indigenous History Month in June 2024, this exhibit, loaned by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), was hosted at Vaughan City Hall and showcased the War of 1812 from a First Nations perspective.
- ▶ **Impact**
 - Fostered deeper understanding, reconciliation, and respect for Indigenous cultures
 - Provided Vaughan residents and city staff with meaningful insights into MCFN traditions and history
- ▶ **Alignment with TRC Calls to Action**
 - **Action 45iii:** Promoted respect for treaty relationships
 - **Action 57:** Supported professional development and training through advocacy



Outcome of the War of 1812: First Nations Betrayed

Relationship Guide

Advancing Reconciliation and Indigenous Partnership

- ▶ To advance regional reconciliation and Indigenous partnership in line with Canada's Constitution Act, 1982, which recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights.
- ▶ **Purpose**
 - Develop a Relationship Guide between Indigenous communities and the City of Vaughan.
 - Establish clear, respectful, and mutually beneficial guidelines for positive collaboration, cultural understanding, and effective communication.
 - Identify Indigenous Rights-Holders and Internal Stakeholders.
 - Offer training to staff on respectful and culturally sensitive engagement and ensure integration of these practices into organizational processes
- ▶ **Role of the Guide**
 - Serve as an internal foundational document to promote collaboration, respect, and inclusivity.
 - Cultivate a harmonious and mutually beneficial partnership.

Upcoming Corporate Initiatives

Week of Monday, September 30th – Friday, October 4th

▶ **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: September 30th**

- Encourage all City staff, the Mayor, and Members of Council to wear orange.
- Release of a special video by the Mayor.
- Provision of educational resources, including informative videos, to staff.
- Raise the 'Every Child Matters' flag to half-mast at City Hall, which will be illuminated in orange.

▶ **Lunchtime Learning Session: October 2nd**

- Staff are invited to an in-person learning session with Darin Wybenga, Heritage Interpreter for the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

▶ **Sisters in Spirit: October 4th**

- A solemn occasion to remember and honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2-Spirit people across Canada.
- Provide staff with resources on violence against Indigenous women and girls and the MMIWG Inquiry.

Potential Future Initiatives

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- ▶ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the City and the MCFN
- ▶ Educational Initiative: The Canadian Library Project
- ▶ Educational Initiative: The Moccasin Project
- ▶ Cultural Initiative: Regional Powwow at North Maple Regional Park

Next Steps

- ▶ Advancing the Development of the Relationship Guide
- ▶ Continue Exploring Opportunities to Advance Reconciliation
- ▶ Engage with Local Indigenous Community Groups, Members, and Organizations



Thank you!

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