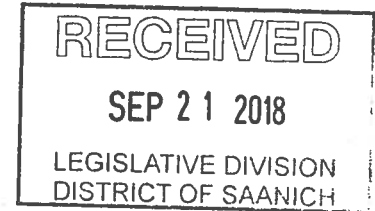


1410-04 Parks;
Xref 1490-20

C Oct 1/18



The Corporation of the District of Saanich



Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks and Recreation
Date: 09/21/2018
Subject: Truth and Reconciliation Inter-department Working Group Update

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information and endorse the outlined recommended actions.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide further information on the work done to date in strengthening relationships with Saanich's neighbouring First Nations governments and to seek Council approval for actions identified by the Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG).

DISCUSSION

At its November 27, 2017 Council meeting, Council endorsed the following First Nation relationship building activities for the District to undertake, recognizing the District of Saanich is located on the traditional territories of the Coast and Straits Salish peoples who have inhabited these lands since time immemorial:

1. Initiate formal government to government relationships with The District of Saanich's neighbouring First Nations governments; the Songhees, Esquimalt, Tseycum (Sigh Come), Tsartlip (Sart lip), Tsawout (Say Out), and Pauquachin (PawKawChin) First Nations by endorsing, in principle, the negotiation of protocol agreements with the above listed First Nations with the objectives of improving communications, clarifying roles and with whom to talk, and developing respectful processes for discussing disputes and issues.
2. Give full authority to staff to implement projects or initiatives that improve relationships with the District's neighbouring First Nations governments that do not involve costs.

3. Direct staff to create an Interdepartmental Working Group to create a staff report outlining a thorough assessment of the June 2015 Truth and Reconciliation's Commission's "94 Calls to Action" report, and identify potential initiatives for the District to explore with neighbouring First Nations governments.

To date, the District has met staff-to-staff with many of Saanich's neighbouring First Nations and continues to reach out to those staff who have not yet been met with. Further, Council has participated in Council to Council dinners with the Songhees and Tsartlip First Nations. Dates continue to be worked on for future meetings.

Staff continue to reach out to Saanich's neighbouring First Nation governments for input and advice on projects and programs, and continue to look for opportunities to involve their staff in District work. For example, this summer the Mount Douglas Park Ambassadors received the benefit of these relationships when two WASÁNEĆ Elders participated in a Mount Douglas knowledge sharing walk.

Over the past year staff have met to discuss the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's June 2015 "94 Calls to Action" report to identify where Saanich may be able to undertake meaningful initiatives with our neighbouring First Nations.

The majority of the Calls to Action are reflective of action that higher levels of government will need to undertake. However, the following list of proposed actions / activities will not only have the greatest impact on the District of Saanich but also assist in creating a welcoming and authentic environment for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

1. Cultural Safety and Humility Training – through discussions with the committee, Indigenous representatives, other governmental agencies and our neighbouring First Nations communities; Council and staff education and training is the key element to building authentic and long term relationships with our neighbouring communities. Knowing and understanding the truth and being better prepared to provide inclusive and welcoming environments for everyone starts with knowledge. The Committee proposes creating a working team that will develop a multi-prong training approach for Council's consideration as part of the 2019 budget deliberations. There isn't a one-type, off the shelf training program or session that is appropriate for everyone. Understanding who requires what training and the best delivery method will be part of the undertaking.
2. Formal Government to Government Relationships – staff will continue to build in-roads with Saanich's neighbouring First Nations governments and create opportunities for Council to Council interactions. The long term goal being the development of communication and protocol agreements. It is hoped that not only will discussions continue with the Nations Saanich has met with, but also expand to include Tseycum and Malahat Nations.
3. Council Awareness – a session outlining Saanich's steps and commitment to Truth and Reconciliation will be included as part of Council's orientation.

4. Website update – working with Corporate Communications, a small working group will assist in updating the District's website to include the story of Saanich with respect to our neighbouring First Nations and to share with our communities the work Saanich continues to undertake. This work will be done in consultation with our neighbouring First Nation's governments. Any budget implications will be included in the 2019 budget discussions.
5. Signage – District recreation facilities have welcome signage in a number of languages. Staff propose including welcome signage at all District of Saanich facilities in both Lkwungen (Lay-kwung-gen) and WASÁNEĆ (weh-saanich) languages. Where possible, costs associated with this item will be covered within existing operating budgets.

District staff and the interdepartmental working group will continue to find opportunities to connect with and further build relationships with our neighbouring First Nation communities and will continue to update Council on those initiatives.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council receive this report for information, and that Council endorse the recommendation(s) as outlined in the staff report.
2. That Council provide alternate direction to staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

With the exception of the welcome script in District of Saanich facilities (which will be covered with existing operating budgets), financial implications for the actions outlined in this report will be included in the 2019 budget process through one-time funding and resource requests.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Creating formal government to government relationships with our neighbouring First Nations governments and answering the Calls to Action are guided by the District's values and supported in the District's Strategic Plan through its vision for community social well-being. Success in these areas supports a healthy community and government-to-government partnership and relationships.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS


Developing formal government to government relationships will require inter-departmental, inter-governmental and regional resources. As relationships develop, the necessary and required government to government dialogue will increase not only for Council but also for all departments. The CRD First Nations Relations Division is a great resource and will be helpful in developing further action plans.

Changes to how the organization approaches engagement and consultation, while likely increasing project timelines, will create a richer process.

CONCLUSIONS

District staff continue to find opportunity to connect with and build relationships with Saanich’s neighbouring First Nations governments. Learning about the true history of Canada, British Columbia and our neighbours will better prepare Council and staff to enter into long-term relationships built on trust and understanding and help create welcoming environments in District facilities and programs.

Building and formalizing relationships takes time and long-term commitment by Council and staff. The conversation and work will continue to evolve with the relationships.


Prepared by 

Suzanne Samborski
Director of Parks and Recreation

SMS/sms

ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Parks and Recreation.



Administrator