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Date December 10, 2024 **Report No.** 2024-649
To Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole – Planning and Administration
From Aaron Wallace
Director, Strategic Initiatives

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item
Item For Consideration

2.0 Topic **Brantford Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan – Recommended Next Steps [Financial Impact: None]**

3.0 Recommendation

- A. THAT Report 2024-649 Brantford Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan – Recommended Next Steps BE RECEIVED; and
- B. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to undertake the development of a Brantford Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan; and
- C. THAT Council ENDORSE ‘Truth and Reconciliation’ as a Priority Area within the 2025-2028 Community Safety and Well-being Plan.

4.0 Executive Summary

This report recommends that the City of Brantford undertake the development of a Brantford Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan, in support of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action*.

Based on a review of other communities, these plans can take between 2-3 years to complete. This report outlines the first phase in the development process, which will focus on engagement and consultation with Indigenous and community stakeholders.

To achieve this, staff will procure a consultant with Indigenous expertise, and previous experience in developing municipal Truth and Reconciliation Action Plans. This first phase is expected to be completed in June 2026, at which time staff will provide recommendations and suggested next steps to City Council.

In June 2023, City Council adopted the [Inclusive Community Plan 2023-2026](#) with three guiding principles 1) Learn from Each Other 2) Stand up for Each Other and 3) Celebrate Each Other. Since that time, the City has supported a number of inclusion-focused projects and initiatives, with many of these being led and developed by Indigenous stakeholders (See Report 2024-217, Inclusive Community Plan Annual Report).

While the proposed Brantford Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan will be complementary to the Inclusive Community Plan, it will closely align with the Calls to Action recommended by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, and specifically address the unique responsibilities of the municipality to collaborate and engage with Indigenous peoples.

In April 2024, the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* was amended to require all municipalities to update their Community Safety and Well-being Plan (CSWB) prior to July 2025. Staff are recommending that City Council endorse the addition of Truth and Reconciliation as a *Priority* within the updated CSWB Plan. The full Community Safety and Well-being Plan will be brought to Council for final approval in Q2 2025.

5.0 Purpose and Overview

This report recommends the development of a Brantford Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan, beginning with engagement and consultation with Indigenous and community stakeholders.

6.0 Background

6.1 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

In 2007, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established as one of the outcomes of the Indian Residential Schools

Settlement Agreement between the Government of Canada, the churches, the survivors of the residential schools system, and various Indigenous organizations. The purpose of the TRC was to rectify the legacy of residential schools and support reconciliation in Canada. Over six years, the TRC recorded testimonies from over 6,000 survivors and their families and created a historical record of the residential schools system.

6.2 Calls to Action for Municipal Government

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada presented the 94 “Calls to Action” to redress the legacy of residential schools. As a result, municipal governments across Canada are implementing various responses to the TRC recommendations, noting that the role of municipalities in these Calls to Action can vary based on local context.

Of these 94 calls, there are 10 related to municipal governance:

1. We call upon all levels of government to fully implement [Jordan’s Principle](#).
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 (UNDRIP), 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.

6. 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.
7. We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.
8. 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.
9. 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.

The following Call to Action is most relevant to municipalities, such as Brantford, located near a former residential school site:

10. 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.

6.3 Identifying Truth and Reconciliation as a Municipal Priority

In April 2024, the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* was amended to require all municipalities to update their Community Safety and Well-being Plan (CSWB) prior to July 2025.

This plan serves as a guide for the City to work collaboratively to create positive outcomes within identified priority areas; each of which are connected to a community-based plan that further details specific targets and deliverables. The seven priorities within Brantford's current [Community Safety and Well-being Plan 2021-2025](#) are:

- Affordable Housing
- Children and Youth
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Older Adults
- Safe and Vibrant Neighbourhoods
- Substance Use
- Intimate Partner & Gender-Based Violence (added at the direction of Council - March 2024)

Staff recommend that City Council endorse Truth and Reconciliation as a *Priority* within the updated CSWB Plan. The full Community Safety and Well-being Plan will be brought to Council for final approval in Q2 2025.

As noted in *2024-2027 City Grants Program* (Report No. 2024-445), organizations applying for grants will be asked to identify which CSWB priority their project or program will support. While this process will not impact the grant selection process, it will provide the opportunity to highlight City investment within these priorities.

7.0 Corporate Policy Context

2023-2026 Council Priorities:

Strategic Theme #2: Focus on Productive and Collaborative Partnerships

8.0 Input From Other Sources

Office of the Mayor / CAO

Human Resources Department

Communications, Community Engagement and Customer Service

9.0 Analysis

9.1 Training and Awareness Activities

Creating greater awareness and engagement of Indigenous matters within the municipal corporation is a critical first step in developing readiness for a reconciliation-focused plan. Staff training also responds to the 57th Call to Action: provide education to public servants on the history of Indigenous peoples, residential schools, treaties and the importance of reconciliation.

In 2022, Council approved the Indigenous Competency Training Implementation Plan (Report No. 2022-463) to provide mandatory training to City of Brantford employees, elected officials and Advisory Board/Committee members. The training was to be separated into four (4) main categories with different programs recommended for each group that would provide an appropriate level of understanding regarding Indigenous culture and relationships.

To date, Indigenous competency training has been provided to approximately 450 staff, consisting primarily of full-time employees. Training was facilitated by subject matter experts within the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) and Conestoga College's Awareness of Indigenous Values, Identity, and Spirit Micro-credential Program.

Efforts continue to be made on sourcing appropriate training for two of the categories. Once all current staff have been trained, the City will need to create a sustainable plan/approach to train new employees/individuals in each of these categories. Staff are currently exploring options to provide a consistent online training module for all new Part-Time, Seasonal and Temporary Employees, as well as Advisory Board and Committee Members.

9.2 Next Steps

The first phase in the development of an Action Plan is expected to be complete in June 2026, in accordance with the following timeline:

Outcome 1: Research and Procurement of Consultant (January – April 2025)

Activity: Conduct a review of comparator municipalities, academic literature and other sources to establish best practices for plan development.

Activity: Procure a consultant with subject matter expertise to lead consultation.

Outcome 2: Stakeholder and Community Consultation (April – December 2025)

Activity: Consultant leads a community engagement process with Indigenous stakeholders, allies, municipal staff and residents to invite feedback. These approaches could include, but are not limited to, surveys, focus groups, community forums and key informant interviews, with a particular focus on engaging local First Nations individuals, groups and Indigenous-led service providers.

Outcome 3: Review of Findings and Analysis (January 2025 – March 2026)

Activity: Consultant reviews stakeholder and community consultation data with local Indigenous-led services providers, local subject matter experts and other stakeholders to develop recommendations and suggested next steps.

Outcome 4: Recommended Next Steps presented to City Council (April 2026 – June 2026)

Activity: City staff work with the consultant to finalize recommendations and next steps to City Council.

10.0 Financial Implications

This report does not have any direct Financial Implications.

In 2021, City Council approved the creation of an Indigenous Affairs Advisor position. This position supported relationship building with Indigenous

stakeholders, developed City training for staff to increase awareness of Indigenous culture and context, and assisted with community-based projects such as Indigenous History Month Programming and Regional Indigenous Education and Reflection Month.

In February 2024, the position was removed from the budget, with a dedicated amount left within the multi-year budget in the following amounts \$50,000 (2024), \$51,000 (2025), \$52,020 (2026), \$53,060 (2027) to be used for Indigenous Relations.

A portion of these funds will be used to procure a consultant to support the development of a Brantford Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan.

11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

This report does not have any direct climate and environmental implications.

12.0 Conclusion

This report provides a project plan for the first phase of a Brantford Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan. This phase will focus on engagement with Indigenous and community stakeholders. Recommended next steps will be presented to City Council in June 2026.



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Attachments (if applicable)

NA.

Copy to:

NA.

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required yes no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk yes no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? yes no