

NO: **R198**

COUNCIL DATE: **September 28, 2015**

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **September 28, 2015**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development**

FILE: **5080-01**

SUBJECT: **Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Strategy**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to update Council on a new initiative to develop a Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Strategy (the "Strategy"). The Strategy will identify issues, needs, and priorities of Surrey's Urban Aboriginal community, and will assist in leveraging investments for Aboriginal organizations in Surrey.

The City of Surrey has received funds from the British Columbia Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres ("BCAAFC") to develop the Strategy. A Leadership Committee, composed of representatives of Aboriginal agencies in Surrey, has been established to guide the project. Guerin Tetreault Governance Consulting Inc. has been contracted to facilitate the planning process.

## BACKGROUND

This new initiative involves a partnership between the City of Surrey and the Aboriginal agencies that serve Urban Aboriginal residents in Surrey. It will support the implementation of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada ("TRC")**

In June 2015, after six years of hearings and testimony, the TRC released its final report. The report includes 94 broadly-based 'Calls to Action', several of which are directed toward local governments.

In recognition of the TRC's work, on June 1, 2015, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Big City Mayors' Caucus released a Statement of Reconciliation. The Mayors acknowledged the traumatic impact of Canada's Indian Residential schools, including the consequences that continue to be felt by Aboriginal people in Canada's largest cities. The Mayors committed to:

*"learning from the lessons of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and taking action to ensure the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people are fully acknowledged in policy, and in the great cities we seek to build .... (and) committing to a new equal partnership with Aboriginal people in Canada; one based on truth, dignity, and mutual respect".*

### **Surrey's Response to the TRC**

On February 4, 2015, inspired by the work of the TRC, the Social Planning Advisory Committee ("SPAC") identified Aboriginal issues and the development of an Aboriginal Strategy as a priority focus area for the SPAC and Social Planning in 2015-2016.

In mid-February, the BCAAFC issued a call for applications for Urban Partnerships program funding. The BCAAFC administers the Urban Partnerships program in BC, on behalf of the federal government. One of the key thematic areas of this program is social innovation. The City of Surrey was supported by Aboriginal agencies in Surrey in submitting an application.

In July 2015, the City of Surrey was awarded \$90,979. to convene the Aboriginal agencies in Surrey to develop a social innovation Strategy. The project must be completed by March 31, 2016.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Aboriginal population in Surrey is growing. According to 2011 census data, there were 10,955 Aboriginal people living in Surrey, up from 7,630 Aboriginal residents in 2006.

Surrey's Aboriginal population is young. In 2013/2014, there were 3,492 Aboriginal students enrolled in the Surrey School District in K-12. The Surrey School District has the highest number of Aboriginal students in Metro Vancouver. In comparison, the Vancouver School District had 2,227 Aboriginal students in 2013/2014.

### **Project Team**

A Leadership Committee has been established to guide the project. Chaired by Councillor LeFranc, Vice-Chair of the SPAC, the Leadership Committee includes Executive Directors and Board members from the following Aboriginal agencies:

- Aboriginal Community Career Employment Service Society (ACCESS);
- Cwenengitel Aboriginal Society;
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA);
- Kekinow Native Housing Society; and
- Metis Family Services.

Guerin Tetreault Governance Consulting Inc. has been contracted to facilitate the Leadership Committee, conduct research and consultations, and develop the Strategy. Michele Guerin and Sheldon Tetreault have extensive experience in facilitation, strategic planning and working with Aboriginal communities.

Social Planning staff is responsible for managing the contract with the BCAAFC.

### **Development of the Strategy**

The overall goals of the Strategy are to:

- Increase Aboriginal residents' participation in the economy;
- Increase Aboriginal residents' participation and achievement in education; and
- Promote healthy Aboriginal individuals, families, children and youth.

### **Activities**

The Leadership Committee, stakeholders and Aboriginal community members will be engaged in the development of the Strategy, which will include:

#### ***Research***

Existing data and information on the Aboriginal population in Surrey will be compiled. This will include information from the census, school district, health authority and other available sources. In addition, an inventory of Aboriginal services in Surrey will be compiled.

#### ***Stakeholder Interviews***

Interviews with key stakeholders from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies will be conducted. Interview questions will focus on issues, needs, gaps and solutions related to Aboriginals' participation in education and employment, and the health and well-being of Urban Aboriginal individuals and families in Surrey.

#### ***Community Consultation***

The Aboriginal community in Surrey will also be consulted. This process will involve either a variety of small focus groups or a large all-ages community event.

The research and input from the consultations will form the basis of the Strategy. The "made in Surrey" Strategy will provide a blueprint for collective action over the next five years.

At the completion of the project in March 2016, a final report and the Strategy document will be forwarded to Council for consideration.

#### **Leaders' Celebration**

When the Strategy is completed in late March 2016, a celebration will be held at Surrey City Hall. The reception will bring together the leaders from Surrey's Aboriginal agencies, Mayor and Council, and other community leaders to confirm the community's collective commitment to its implementation.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Strategy will assist in achieving the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter, more particularly the following action items:

- SC4: Cultural Awareness in the Community; and
- SC5: Plan for the Social Well Being of Surrey Residents.

## **CONCLUSION**

The TRC's findings demonstrate the need for building new partnerships with Aboriginal people in Canada based on truth, dignity, and mutual respect. This initiative, the development of a Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Strategy, represents a new partnership between the City of Surrey and Aboriginal agencies. The goal of this initiative is to work collaboratively to strengthen the Aboriginal community in Surrey.

*Original signed by*

Jean Lamontagne  
General Manager,  
Planning and Development

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