



MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Chair Emmerson and Members of Regional Council

From: Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: August 30, 2022

Re: York Region's Progress on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's
Calls to Action

This memorandum provides Council with information regarding York Region's actions to addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action directed at municipalities in the past year since the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation which is also referred to as Orange Shirt Day.

York Region is located on the traditional territory of many Indigenous peoples such as the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Métis peoples and the treaty territories of the Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Williams Treaties First Nations.

York Region falls under the Nanfan Treaty, Treaty 13 and the Williams Treaties. There are also other land claims and treaty rights involving portions of York Region that have not been resolved. The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation is a Williams Treaty First Nation and the closest First Nation community to York Region.

Background

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to create a record of the Residential School System and provide the opportunity for survivors and their families to publicly share their stories, promote healing and encourage reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. The final report of the Commission was published in 2015 with Calls to Action intended to promote reconciliation and changes that could be made by all levels of government, organizations and the public.

Of the 94 Calls to Action, there are [seven Calls to Action directed at municipal governments](#). Some of the matters addressed by these Calls to Action are not capable of being implemented by York Region because they are not within the Region's jurisdiction, the services it provides or

are matters more fully within the authority and capabilities of senior levels of government. As a result, staff have focused on Calls to Action that most directly relate to matters that could be implemented by York Region.

In 2021, the Federal Government proclaimed September 30th as the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, establishing a new statutory holiday for federally regulated employers and employees. The day is meant to help ensure increased public awareness of the harm caused by the Residential School System in our country and unite efforts towards healing and reconciliation. York Regional Council received [a memo](#) September 2021 outlining York Region's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action up to that point.

York Region has a long history of providing services to local Indigenous communities and peoples

Over York Region's 50-year history, staff have worked closely and in partnership with Indigenous communities to provide a variety of services, including ongoing provision of:

- Public Health supports and partnerships including breastfeeding clinics, healthy school programs, vaccine distribution, oral health clinics, beach water monitoring, food handling certification and annual Health Fairs
- Support for managing invasive forest species, water conservation and partnership through the YRDSB Indigenous Learning Program at the Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship and Education Centre
- York Telecom Network extension of fibre optic cable to the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation through the Federal Connect to Innovate Broadband program
- Transit services through Mobility on-Request and Transit Assistance Pilot Program
- Emergency response by York Region Paramedic Services and York Regional Police

York Region responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

Over the past year, York Region continued to work closely and in partnership with Indigenous communities to meet the Calls to Action, making particular progress on Calls to Action #3, #57, and #77.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #3 calls upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle, which seeks to ensure all First Nation children living in Canada can access products, services and supports they need, when they need them. In the past year, York Region:

- Police educators visited Waabgon Gamig School to deliver a safety workshop and hosted Waabgon Gamig School students at the York Region Community Safety Village

- Public Health staff:
 - provided support to implement the Healthy Schools Program, including working with school champions to determine needs and provide support to implement a Healthy Schools Action Plan and provide resources
 - provided resources to Georgina Island Federal Nurse on naloxone and opioid overdose prevention and response. Staff also worked with Island Health Care Centre staff to determine needs, outreach efforts, and understand how to decrease stigma associated with substance use
 - shared opioid and drug bulletins to provide early warnings regarding toxic drugs and substance-harm trends in the community
 - continued the ongoing distribution of publicly funded vaccines to the community and cold chain maintenance inspections of vaccine storage units, including education and training for vaccine storage and transport to ensure cold chain is maintained

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #57 calls 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*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This requires skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism. In the past year, York Region:

- Hosted Indigenous engagement training sessions and an Indigenous visioning exercise for the Region's Senior Management Team, facilitated by an Indigenous Elder and Cultural Advisor from Georgina Island First Nation
- Hosted two education sessions focused on Indigenous history, truth and reconciliation and allyship with more than 500 staff members attending each session, and introduced online Indigenous awareness training for staff that was developed with First Nations University Canada
- Hosted two sharing circles facilitated by an Indigenous elder to provide a space for Indigenous staff to connect, reflect and share their stories
- Created a new internal web page to support staff learning on Indigenous inclusion and engagement, which includes resources for staff to learn and reflect about truth and reconciliation
- Developed a resource guide for managers to support managers and leaders engaging their teams in activities regarding National Truth and Reconciliation

- Conducted an environmental scan and literature review, surveyed 16 Indigenous organizations within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), and conducted interviews with local GTA Indigenous leaders to develop culturally appropriate supports for off-reserve vaccination clinics for York Region Urban Indigenous residents

Finally, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #77 calls 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. In the past year, the Regional Archivist searched the Region's archives database for any residential school system records. No residential school records, Indigenous records, or records donated by Indigenous Peoples were found. A further search of residential school locations did not identify any residential schools located within the geographical boundaries of York Region.

In June 2022, York Region made changes to its organizational structure to establish the People, Equity and Culture Branch (formerly Human Resources Branch). This branch reports into the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer and will include an Indigenous Relations portfolio along with leading human resources practices, attracting and retaining talent, and fostering inclusion, diversity, anti-racism and accessibility within the organization. This branch will focus on engaging an Indigenous Advisor for York Region through the 2023 Budget to serve as a Council liaison and support intergovernmental responsibilities. It will also seek to establish resources to lead indigenous engagement strategies, indigenous training and education, focus on reconciliation activities, and provide advice to staff regarding relationship-building.

York Region remains committed to creating welcoming and inclusive communities by learning from the mistakes of the past. We continue to move forward in partnership with Indigenous peoples by intentionally listening and learning from the past while supporting ongoing, sustained and meaningful relationships.



Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer