



Committee Report

To: Warden Chris Peabody and
Members of the Executive Committee

From: Derrick Thomson
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: September 7, 2023

Re: Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Planning Initiative - An Update

Staff Recommendation:

The Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Planning Initiative - An Update is for information.

Background:

In 2015, the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada \(TRC\)](#) – which was set up to document the effects of residential schools on Indigenous peoples – defined reconciliation as the process of “establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country.”

All Canadians and all orders of government have a role to play in reconciliation. The [TRC's 94 Calls to Action](#) are addressed primarily to the federal, provincial, and territorial governments but also to municipal governments. They cover a wide range of government responsibilities, including child welfare, education, language and culture, health, justice, commemoration, museums and archives, training for public servants, and a few specific initiatives related to reconciliation.

In Ontario, over 85 percent of Indigenous people live in municipalities. Strengthening relations with Indigenous people is important for Bruce County as our work is often directly with Indigenous people living in our communities. This is amplified by our shared history and geography - the traditional territories of two First Nations encompass Bruce County. This initiative represents a critical next step, further enabling Municipal government leaders and staff to be part of the healing, learning, and restoration needed to support reconciliation with Indigenous friends, neighbours, and communities.

Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Planning Initiative:

This initiative aims to build Indigenous cultural awareness and intercultural capacity and competency across the County, leading to the collaborative development of Bruce County's own Indigenous Reconciliation Plan. Our objectives/outcomes are two-fold:

1. Education/Training - Build a common foundation for reconciliation through increased Indigenous cultural understanding and awareness across Bruce County as an organization. A phased approach with all staff receiving foundational Indigenous cultural awareness training; and those individuals with a more direct role/engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities receiving additional training to further build intercultural capacity and competency for those roles most in need.
2. Indigenous Reconciliation Plan - Develop, including through appropriate levels of collaboration with Indigenous people, a Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Plan that is:
 - unique to Bruce County,
 - helps the County achieve its more specific goals and objectives for reconciliation (which will be determined through the planning process), and
 - establishes actionable items that can be implemented within specified time horizons, moving Bruce County along the pathway towards reconciliation and renewed relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities in the County.

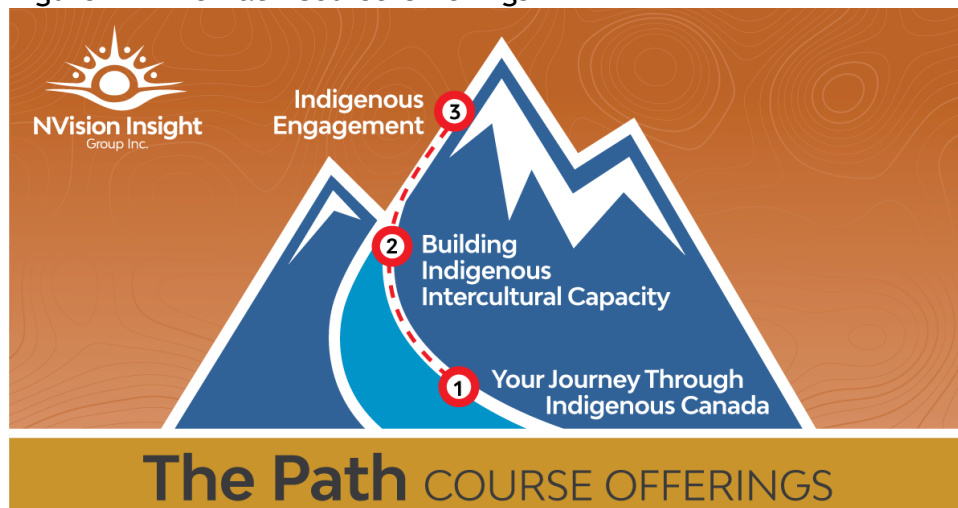
Update:

The planned approach has seen this delivered in phases, beginning in January 2022, following a successful Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Supporting our efforts is the chosen consultant, NVision Insight Group Inc., a majority Indigenous-owned consulting company, whose assistance has been instrumental in the ongoing realization of this initiative.

1. Education/Training

Within their educational suite known as "The Path," NVision presents three distinct learning opportunities focused on Truth and Reconciliation, with each successive course building upon the foundations of the preceding - see Figure 1.

Figure 1 - The Path Course Offerings



Our goal is for the entire organization (i.e., staff, Bruce County Council, Library Board members) to have completed Course #1 "Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada";

and those individuals with a more direct role/engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities to complete Course #2 “Building Indigenous Intercultural Capacity” - see Figure 2.

Figure 2 - The Path - Phased Approach



Course #1 - Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada

This training is an online, self-paced course, on the history and contemporary realities of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada.

318 participants (or about half of our goal) have successfully completed Course #1. We continue to work towards and support those work groups with logistical challenges (i.e., non-computer based, shift schedules, significant existing legislated training requirements, etc.) to successful completion.

Course #2 - Building Indigenous Intercultural Capacity

This course builds on the learnings of Course 1 and is intended to further build intercultural capacity and competency for those roles most in need. Topics include defining race, racism, culture; challenging stereotypes; understanding affinity/unconscious/cultural bias; and how to become inter-culturally intelligent.

In October 2022, select participants were provided with the option of choosing between two one full-day in-person sessions. 40 individuals successfully completed Course #2.

Feedback received to date indicates that this training has been well received by those who have completed it.

New/future participants will be invited to complete this training, using the same phased cohort approach.

2. Indigenous Reconciliation Plan

Beginning at the end of 2022, the Reconciliation Plan is progressing through its phases with a comprehensive approach. Presently, the initiative is actively engaged in Phase 2.

Phase 1 - Mapping the Landscape for Reconciliation in Bruce County

The objective of this first phase was to establish the overall context and landscape in which Bruce County's Indigenous Reconciliation Plan would be both developed and ultimately implemented.

This phase of work includes:

- Announcing Bruce County's commitment,
- Establishment of a dedicated working group,
- Increasing cultural awareness through training,
- An Environmental Scan, including:
 - Conducting local historical research,
 - Identifying key stakeholders,
 - Assessing the current relationship,
 - Revealing gaps that needed addressing; and,
- Culminating in the "Landscape for Reconciliation in Bruce County Report."

Phase 2 - Engagement Strategy

The objective of this phase is to establish an Engagement Strategy as a key part of the planned process guiding collaborative development of the Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Plan. The Engagement Strategy will identify specifically how Bruce County will engage Indigenous communities, leaders, and knowledge holders in the process to develop the Indigenous Reconciliation Plan, as well as other stakeholders, partners, and interested/affected parties.

This phase of work includes:

- Relationship development,
- Engaging with Indigenous partners,
- Collaboratively developing an Engagement Plan,
- Engagement initiatives for both staff and the public, and
- Comprehensive Findings Report, capturing the insights garnered from the engagement processes.

Continuing within this phase, it's worth noting the preliminary results arising from the initial engagement - specifically, an online staff survey that garnered a total of 157 responses. Among the respondents, most (78%) had already completed "The Path" online cultural awareness training.

The most prevalent themes in staff responses when asked what reconciliation mean to them, included:

1. Enhanced Understanding of History and Ongoing Learning,
2. Moving Forward (encompassing phrases like "take action," "work towards," and/or "make amends"); and,
3. Building Relationships.

Similarly, staff identify actions that should be included in Bruce County's plan. These included:

1. Building Relationships with Indigenous partners/communities,
2. Ensuring an Indigenous voice in decision making,
3. Support Indigenous Economic Development,
4. Indigenous Employment Opportunities; and,
5. Addressing Anti-Indigenous Racism.

Phase 3 – Indigenous Reconciliation Plan Development

The primary goal of this phase is to create a practical Indigenous Reconciliation Plan for Bruce County, with its development guided by the Engagement Strategy and any additional input from essential stakeholders. This phase encompasses the identification of specific actions and methods for measurement. The Reconciliation Plan itself will be meticulously crafted, supported by a well-defined Communications Plan. The eventual launch of the plan will mark a pivotal moment, and regular reviews will ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

In this manner, the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan moves purposefully from commitment and awareness to partnership-building, culminating in a robust Reconciliation Plan with the necessary strategies for communication and progress measurement.

Current Reconciliation Efforts:

Bruce County continues to take steps to improve relationships with neighbouring Indigenous communities. This initiative is in support of and complimentary to our current efforts, acknowledging that there is more to be done and there is a need for a thoughtful, coordinated, corporate-wide approach - a plan, built on foundation of understanding and collaboration.

Provided below is a comprehensive departmental update of new initiatives, which builds upon the previously outlined and in many instances ongoing initiatives ([January 20, 2022](#)).

Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre (BCM&CC)

Programs/Exhibitions and Collections Management

- On June 29, 2022, the BCM&CC was pleased to host community members from SFN, for the Saugeen First Nation's Ribbon Skirt Project (Maamwi Maadhookiidaa Miinggoozwin). The program began to bring women in the community and their families together during the pandemic, offering a chance to reconnect with one another while sharing gifts and creating ribbon skirts for other women in the
- BCM&CC releases new educational resources for Treaties Recognition Week. Included in these resources are recorded presentations from the Museum's November 3, 2022, event with Trish Meekins, a knowledge keeper for the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. The presentations were attended by nearly 200 students from G.C. Huston Public School and focused on the importance of treaties in Canada, specifically the treaty history that relates to the lands within what is now Bruce County.

- New children's book, entitled "[Memengwaa, the Monarch Butterfly](#)" by local author Dorothy Ladd launched at the BCM&CC. The launch event provided attendees with the opportunity to meet Ladd in person and learn more about her inspiration behind the book.
- The BCM&CC offered free admission to all visitors on June 21, 2023, in honour of Indigenous Peoples' Day.
- Cultural Demonstrations (July & August 2023) - These sessions encompassed diverse topics, delving into cultural traditions, and unveiling the depth of Indigenous histories in the region. These demonstrations were made possible through collaboration with Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) and Historic Saugeen Métis (HSM) communities.
- Leading Bruce County's efforts to acknowledge National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day, a national day to honour Indigenous children in residential school - those lives that were lost and those who survived. This includes:
 - Commissioning artwork, shown here.



- The artwork included above was designed specifically for Bruce County by Taylor Cameron, an emerging woodland artist from Saugeen First Nation No. 29. His paintings highlight the beauty of the natural world around us using vivid colour schemes that introduce a different perspective on animals, landscapes, and teachings. Taylor's use of both movement and line work creates balance compositions that showcase the subject matter.
- This artwork will be featured in several initiatives over the month of September as part of our broader approach to Truth and Reconciliation, including email signatures, pins, t-shirts, and flags (flown at prominent locations across Bruce County), throughout the month of September, and half-mast on September 30.
- Three Kairos Blanket Exercise workshops are planned for September 21, 22 & 23, 2023 across Bruce County, targeting youth, educators, and the public. Workshops can accommodate up to 50 people each (150 people total). Museum

staff are collaborating with EMS staff to offer mental health support, recognizing that this exercise could potentially trigger certain individuals.

- Legacy of Hope: Youth on Reconciliation Exhibit. Since 2022 we have been collaborating with community members from both Nawash and Saugeen and Grey Bruce Health Services on a truth and reconciliation project. The concept of the project and discussion focused on bringing a series of exhibitions from the [Legacy of Hope Foundation - Indigenous-led charitable organization](#) to the BCM&CC over the next three years to broaden awareness, educate and open dialogue on a variety of topics.

Ongoing discussions with the community members determined that a localized focus and community involvement are required. As part of the upcoming launch of the first exhibition, Youth on Reconciliation, we have reached out to the Bluewater District School Board, Grey Bruce Catholic School Board, M'Wikwedong and the public to encourage local youth to submit artwork that can be included in the exhibition. We are also hosting community members to hold weekly sessions in the exhibition space to engage with visitors in discussion. A private SON community members exhibit opening will take place prior to the public opening of the exhibition.

- Collaboration with SON community members to curate Indigenous led exhibitions and programs with the launch of two new exhibitions September 2023 and January 2024.
- The BCM&CC in consultation with SON EO created and implemented a joint Repatriation Framework and Guideline February 2023 to facilitate the process of repatriation.
- First repatriation of archaeology materials from the BCM&CC completed and transferred to SON EO in May 2023. Facilitated the transfer and loan extension from a provincial institution to SON in April 2023. Ongoing active repatriation work of several archaeological collections (Ontario and USA).
- Working with the Ontario Archaeology Society (OAS) to host their 50th Symposium at the BCM&CC November 2023. Assisting the OAS symposium committee to develop Indigenous tours as part of their program.
- The BCM&CC currently collaborating with the Historic Saugeen Métis (HSM) on a permanent exhibition focused on Métis history and heritage.

Bruce County Public Library (BCPL)

- Saugeen First Nation (SFN) donated 17 red ribbon skirts to bring awareness to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). These were displayed at all branches throughout May and June 2023, along with library resources and information.
- Outreach at the Great Lakes Metis Nation Fish Fry.

- Instruction to teachers on how to operate the school's 3-D printers at Neyaashiinigmiing.
- Updated Indigenous subject headings to more respectful and inclusive terms, impacting over 800 item records.
- Hosted local Indigenous author Dorothy Ladd reading from her new book "[Memengwaa, the Monarch Butterfly](#)", for story times at multiple branches as well as our Summer Reading Club Kick-off, as well as adding the title to our Local Author collection.
- Offered workshops with Indigenous Elder Priscilla Yellowhead Toby.
- Featured Indigenous Stories as part of our Summer Reading programming.
- Acknowledged Orange Shirt Day on September 30 with a focus on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, inviting patrons to share their learnings, actions, and messages of support in writing which were then part of a ceremony with Priscilla Yellowhead Toby.
- Displayed beadwork by Indigenous Artist Nishoni Fox.
- Displayed quilts in honour of residential school survivors.

Human Services

Cultural Safety Training

- Online offerings shared for staff to voluntarily partake.
- Participating in the organization of collaborative events (i.e., OMSSA Indigenous Forum and Indigenous Health Equity Forum of Healthy Communities)
- Indigenous educators have attended divisional meetings (ad-hoc) to provide training.

Indigenous Relationships Committee

- Participation in Healthy Communities Partnership, work underway to set an Indigenous working group.
- Participation in the Early Learning Cultural Awareness & Inclusion Working Group

Network/Relationship Building with Indigenous Service Providers

- Ongoing work with M'Wikwedong; Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC), through other collaborative initiatives.
- Ongoing relationship building with comparable departmental staff at each First Nation.
- Networking with First Nation Child Care Centres and Metis Nations of Ontario

Relationship building and collaborative program planning with Indigenous-Led Cultural Awareness Educator

- M'Wikwedong & SOAHAC are members in Homelessness Response table.
- Staff Participation in Giiwee Sharing Circle

- Social Assistance Network Meeting (Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works, and First Nations Ontario Works)
- Inviting Indigenous Service provider representatives as guests to team licensed childcare operator meetings

Indigenous Programming Delivered by Indigenous Staff

- Agreement with M'Wikwedong for EarlyON Cultural Services
- M'Wikwedong housing services

Availability/Use of Sacred Medicines, Cultural Teaching Tools (talking stick, feather, etc)

- Indigenous resource bundles distributed to Child Care Centres and EarlyON.
- Indigenous Educator brings Cultural teaching tools to programs at EarlyON to share with families including drumming, authentic shakers, smudging, making cedar tea and sharing the significance for medicinal use, talking stick/feather are both used during gathering time.
- MNO has provided childcare educator resource information.
- Staff at M'Wikwedong have provided training/supports for staff in to make drums and shakers.

Planning & Development

Planning Division

- Holding monthly staff meetings to review ongoing applications relevant to Saugeen Ojibway Nation Environment Office (SON EO).
- A workshop titled "Archaeology and Consultation in the Saugeen Ojibway Nation Traditional Territory" was hosted on April 21, 2023, by Planning Staff from Bruce County, Grey County, and SON EO. Over 160 participants, including municipal staff and planning consultants, gained insight into SON's Archaeological interests and the progress made in preparing an Archaeological Management Plan for Bruce County.
- Bruce County, SON EO staff and Historic Saugeen Métis (HSM) are collaboratively outlining an implementation approach for the Archaeological Management Plan.
- A collaborative effort involving Bruce County, Timmins Martel Heritage Consultants, and SON EO are developing a session for the Ontario Archaeology Society Symposium. The session titled "The Seven Generations and Two Worlds of Archaeology in Bruce County" will be presented at the upcoming symposium at the BCM&CC in Southampton this fall.

Employment Services

- Consultations with First Nations and Urban Indigenous Employment Service Providers are a key focus for Employment Services Bruce Grey Huron Perth (Employment Services). Engagements have started with partners in Saugeen and Neyaashiinigiing communities.
- Guided by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), Employment Services recognizes the importance of meaningful services for

off-reserve individuals and urban Indigenous peoples, even though on-reserve services are beyond their scope.

- Initial research revealed that discomfort with self-identification and lack of Indigenous services led to limited Indigenous engagement with Employment Ontario services. Addressing this, Employment Services collaborated with the Huronia Area Aboriginal Management Board (HAAMB), adding HAAMB members to the Region Advisory Committee and facilitating their transition as a service provider.
- HAAMB officially joined Employment Services on April 1, 2023, forming partnerships with various employment service providers, and establishing connections with Saugeen and Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation social services.
- An experienced Employment Development Officer (EDO) was hired by HAAMB to support expanded services. HAAMB is also initiating collaborations with educational institutions and community partners for client training and employment pathways.
- Employment Services is actively cultivating relationships with Indigenous and First Nation organizations, emphasizing cultural competency training, best practice implementation, and ongoing consultation for providing culturally appropriate services to Indigenous people.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

There is no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with this report.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

Interdepartmental consultations with the Senior Management Team have occurred, led by the Indigenous Reconciliation Working Group (Megan Garland, Director, Long Term Care & Senior Services; Cathy McGirr, Director, Museum & Cultural Services; Tina Metcalfe, Director, Human Services; Steve Schaus, Director/Chief, Paramedic Services; Jenelle Bannon, Business Development Coordinator, Planning and Development; Jolisa Hamilton, Talent Acquisition & Employee Relations Manager, Human Resources; and Matt Meade, Corporate Strategic Initiatives Specialist, Office of the CAO).

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

1. Build a strong and inclusive community.
2. Enhance and grow partnerships.
5. Ensure a positive, inclusive, and accountable work culture.

Report Author:

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Approved for Submission:

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