



Staff Report to Council - for Information

Title: Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Planning Initiative - Q4 2023 Update
From: Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer
Date: January 11, 2024

Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

Report Summary:

Bruce County is progressing through a comprehensive Indigenous Reconciliation Planning Initiative, featuring phased delivery of training courses and the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The Reconciliation Action Plan is in Phase 2, focusing on an Engagement Strategy to shape the RAP. Emerging themes for the RAP encompass building relationships, addressing land rights, promoting cultural awareness, enhancing representation, and improving program access. Phase 3, starting in 2024, will involve crafting and launching the RAP, emphasizing commitment to partnership-building for effective reconciliation.

Background:

Bruce County's Indigenous Reconciliation Planning 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 Action Plan - Develop, including through appropriate levels of collaboration with Indigenous people, a Bruce County Indigenous Reconciliation Action 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.

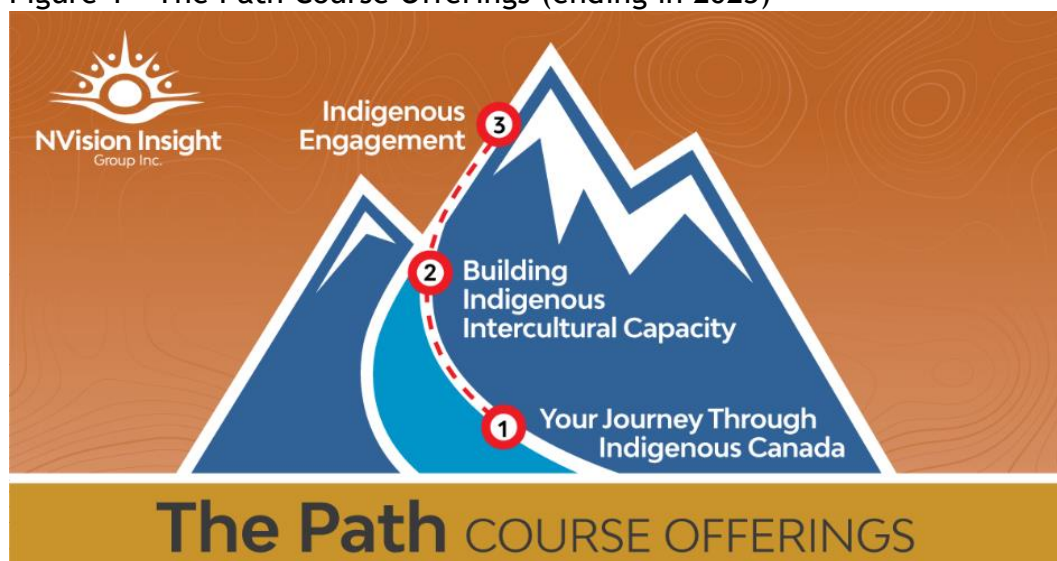
Update:

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

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 1.

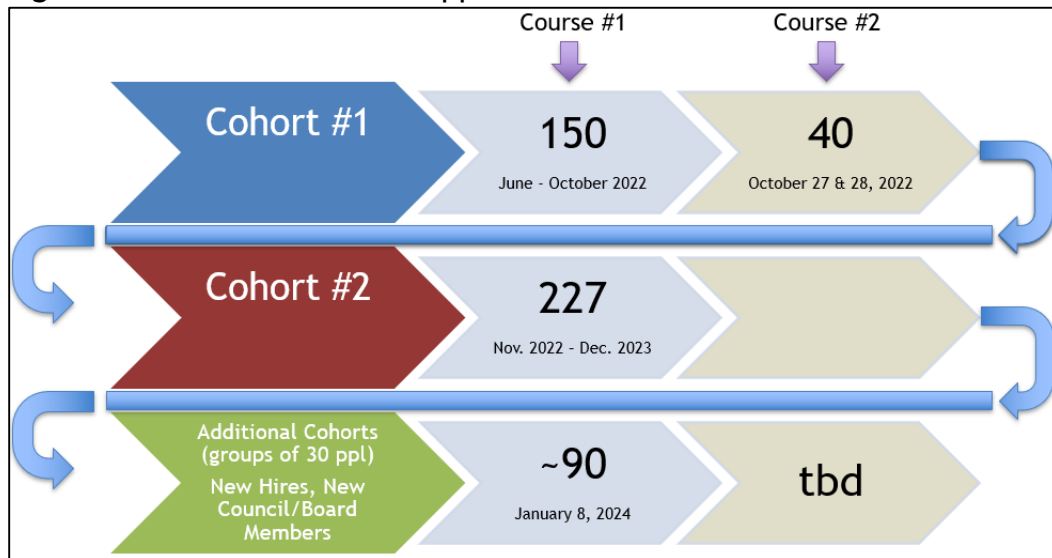
Figure 1 - The Path Course Offerings (ending in 2023)



As of December 2023, 377 registrants have successfully completed “The Path - Course #1 - Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada” - see Figure 2. 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. Moreover, there is an opportunity to provide assistance to Bruce County students and volunteers in successfully completing this training.

“The Path - Course #2 - Building Indigenous Intercultural Capacity” builds on the learnings of Course #1 and is intended to further build intercultural capacity and competency for those roles most in need. 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 - see Figure 2.

Figure 2 - The Path - Phased Approach



NVision has updated their training platform for 2024. "The Path - Course #1 - Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada" now features new and additional content, expanding the course from five modules (4.5 hours) to six modules (6 hours). As before, following the completion of Course #1, NVision Insight will conduct a one-hour "kitchen table" discussion session with participants who have finished the course (optional). These discussions aim to foster an open dialogue about key take-away points that significantly influenced the learners during the training program and any questions participants may have regarding concepts or information covered in the training program. This updated offering will be rolled out to the next cohorts on January 8, 2024. The staff engagement strategy includes a planned three-month check-in with supervisors, to be completed within six months. New/future participants will be invited to complete this training, using the same phased cohort approach.

The Path - Courses #2 & #3 have also been updated. No specific arrangements have been made to offer these courses at this time.

NVision has also developed a fourteen-topic suite of Indigenous learning opportunities. Participants can opt for three series or choose individual topics. Topics 1-4 constitute Course #1, while Topics 5-7 belong to Course #2, and Topic 8 aligns with Course #3. Topics 9 through 14 are new standalone topics that fall under the umbrella of Truth and Reconciliation - see Figure 3.

Figure 3 - The Path - New Standalone Topics

Cultural Awareness Learning Series	Building Indigenous Intercultural Capacity Learning Series	Truth and Reconciliation Learning Series
<p>Topic 1: Terminology and Origin Stories</p> <p>Topic 2: Defining Moments in Canada's Colonial History</p> <p>Topic 3: Treaties and Land Claims</p> <p>Topic 4: Understanding Indigenous cultures and worldviews</p>	<p>Topic 5: Race and Culture</p> <p>Topic 6: Bias and Stereotypes</p> <p>Topic 7: Building Indigenous Intercultural Capacity</p> <p>Topic 8: Indigenous Engagement</p>	<p>Topic 9: Indigenous Rights: From Inherent Rights to Denial of Rights, to Affirmation of Rights</p> <p>Topic 10: Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Context and History</p> <p>Topic 11: Indian Residential Schools and Day Schools</p> <p>Topic 12: UNDRIP: History, Context, Indigenous involvement, and relevance in Canada</p> <p>Topic 13: Anti-Indigenous Racism in Canada's Healthcare System</p> <p>Topic 14: Land Acknowledgements: What they are and why they are important</p>

2. Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan

The Reconciliation Action Plan is progressing through its phases with a comprehensive approach. Presently, the initiative is actively working to complete Phase 2.

✓ Phase 1 - Mapping the Landscape for Reconciliation (Complete)

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 culminated in the completion of a "Landscape for Reconciliation in Bruce County Report".

🔄 Phase 2 - Engagement Strategy (Nearing Completion)

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 Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). This Phase will culminate in an Engagement Report.

This phase of work includes:

- ✓ Survey to staff (150+ responses).
- ✓ Engagement with Departments (130+ staff).
- ✓ Engage Elected Officials (interviews complete).
- 🔄 Engaging with Indigenous partners (on-going),
- 🔄 Comprehensive findings report (Engagement Report), capturing the insights garnered from the engagement processes.






Key themes are emerging, which will serve as the foundational elements for in the framework and further elaboration in the Action Plan. These draft themes are currently described as:

1. Build and Strengthen Indigenous Relationships
2. Acknowledge and Address Indigenous Land and Rights
3. Cultural Awareness, Anti-Indigenous Training, and Continued Learning
4. Representation and Cultural Celebration
5. Indigenous Inclusion in Planning and Decision Making
6. Improve Program and Service Access
7. Create Economic Development and Employment Opportunities

Phase 3 – Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan Development (Begin in 2024)

The primary goal of this phase is to create a practical Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for Bruce County, with its development guided by the Engagement Report and any additional input from essential stakeholders. This phase encompasses the identification of specific actions and methods for measurement. The RAP 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.

This phase of work will include:

-  Development of the Reconciliation Framework
-  Development of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
-  Communications Plan
-  Approval Processes
-  Formal Launch & Implementation

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

Current Reconciliation Efforts:

Provided below is a comprehensive departmental update of new initiatives, which builds upon the previously outlined and in many instances ongoing initiatives ([September 7, 2023](#) & [January 20, 2022](#)).

Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre (BCM&CC)

Exhibitions

- Youth on Reconciliation is the first of a three-year plan to host exhibitions from the Legacy of Hope Foundation, with localized and relevant content through the work of committee members representing Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON), Saugeen Advocacy

for Healing Program, Grey Bruce Community Legal Clinic, Bright Shores Health System, Bluewater District School Board, and the Grey Bruce Catholic District School Board. The dedication, collaboration and commitment of the committee members, community members and museum staff, have created a strong foundation for ongoing exhibitions and programs by acknowledging and owning the truth to work towards reconciliation.

- Highlights

- Private Exhibition opening & community feast for SON Members
 - 2,288 visitors from Sept 18 - November 30
 - St. Mary's RISE (Reconnecting Identity through Spirit and the Environment) program (students + teacher + 2 SON Community Members)
 - Unifor Turtle Island Program (25 people + 1 SON Community Members)
 - 9 weekly SON Community Host sessions
 - Discussion and reflection on Indigenous teachings, perspectives as well as historical, local, and current issues.
 - 94 pieces of Youth Artwork (drawings, paintings, sculpture)
 - Resource list for further education (Saugeen Ojibway Nation Environment Office (SON EO)), Saugeen First Nation (SFN) Library, Bruce County Public Library (BCLP)
 - Wellness Resource booklet
- Relaunch of the Earth's Climate in the Balance exhibition featured artwork by SFN artist Jeanette Ladd. Prominent connections to endangered species "Monarch Butterfly" allows for visitor interaction within the exhibition.
 - Developed Saugeen First Nations Veterans Display honouring Indigenous Veterans Day, November 8, display highlighted photographs and artefacts from the BCM&CC collection.
 - Launch of Woodland People exhibition, by SFN artist Taylor Cameron. The exhibition will run from January-April 2024.

Programs

- Hosted 25 participants in Unifor's Turtle Island program, October 17. Participants toured the "Anishnaabwe Endaat" gallery as well as meeting with Nawash community host for the Youth on Reconciliation exhibition.
- Hosted the Ontario Archaeology Society (OAS) "Maawnjigidwin: 50 Years of Gathering, Where Yesterday Meets Tomorrow". Over 200 registrants in attendance. Assisted the OAS committee and SON EO to coordinate the opening ceremonies and Indigenous tours as part of the program.

Educational Resources

- Developing the "Climate Change in a Box" - in collaboration with SON EO Coastal Waters Program and funding from Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO), we are creating a free in-school resource for teachers to provide hands

on interactive programming for the Grade 8 Water Systems curriculum. This program will launch January 2024.

Repatriation

- In November we facilitated the transfer from a license holder to SON EO of 55 bankers boxes of material as well as the transfer to SON EO and renewal of loaned material to the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre (BCM&CC) Anishnaabwe Endaat material
- Actively engaged in the repatriation of a current loan from the Peabody Museum, Harvard USA.
- Actively collaborating with SON EO on the inventory of archaeological collections within the BCM&CC.

Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day

- New display of donated ribbon skirt by Melissa Root SFN, specifically to commemorate the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Successfully hosted 3 Kairos Blanket Workshops, in partnership with SFN and Nawash community members.
 - Grade 11 Walkerton District Community School Students
 - Two public sessions in Walkerton and Southampton

Bruce County Public Library (BCLP)

- Meeting Room policy updated to include opportunity for smudging.
- Developing programming around moccasin identifier kits.

Economic Development

- Consulting with Saugeen First Nation Economic Development to profile the following County programs.
 - Racialized and Indigenous supports for Entrepreneurs Grant
 - [Spark Program](#)
 - [Starter Company Plus](#)

Human Services

- Ongoing program work and supports in the following areas:
 - Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training Opportunities (i.e., through Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSAA), Healthy Communities)
 - Network/Relationship Building with Indigenous Service Providers
 - Relationship building and collaborative program planning with Indigenous-Led Cultural Awareness Educator
 - Indigenous led programming
 - Availability/Use of Sacred Medicines, Cultural Teaching Tools (talking stick, feather, etc.)

Planning

- Regular meetings between Planning and SON EO staff Scheduled into 2024.
- Increased communications through pre-submission consultations and inquiry responses regarding SON EO interests in development in SON Territory; Staff inviting SON EO to participate in pre-submission consultations for larger projects.
- Participated in a meeting between the Chiefs of Ontario Kee:Way Committee and Association of Municipalities of Ontario regarding protection of burial sites and cultural artefacts.
- Presented at the Ontario Archaeology Symposium (hosted by the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre) about the collaborative process to develop the Archaeological Management Plan (AMP).
- Provided technical support to SON EO related to site disturbance.
- Looking to further AMP implementation discussions with SON EO and with Historic Saugeen Métis (HSM) early in 2024.
- Consulting with SON on updates to Indigenous Peoples policies in the Official Plan.
- Starting updates to Planning Job descriptions to recognize importance and frequency of work with Indigenous peoples and organizations as rights holders.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

Going forward “The Path” training will be covered through existing departmental training budgets, part of budget deliberations annual.

There is no 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 Objectives:

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

Report Authors:

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Approved for Submission:

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