



City of Thunder Bay
Aboriginal Liaison
Strategy

Initial Progress Report

April 3, 2013





Mayor's Message

The relationship of this municipality with all Aboriginal peoples is a priority of this council and an important part of the transformation of Thunder Bay.

Management guru Peter Drucker said this: "The best way to predict the future is to create it." That's what we are doing in Thunder Bay. As we said in our Strategic Plan, our goal over the next 10 years is to create the future we all want: A Thunder Bay that is connected, healthy, vibrant and strong. Since March of 2010, the Aboriginal Liaison Unit has been working hard to implement the priorities as identified by our community, City Council, and city administration in the Aboriginal Liaison Strategic Plan. The future we want to create requires continuous effort. Where we strategically want to be tomorrow requires time spent implementing today. What do we want Thunder Bay to look like in the future? It's a big question and an important one. As our city grows and attitudes change, it is vital that we continue to talk as a community about what we want our city to become. There is a strong commitment within the City of Thunder Bay to create the future we all want. By working together, we will get there.

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT *Strengthening Relationships between the City of Thunder Bay and Urban Aboriginal People*

Our Declaration of Commitment is an important component to the building of a strong and respectful relationship with the Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay. Aboriginal peoples include Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples (as defined by Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982). It is also a realization of a commitment made in the Aboriginal Liaison Strategic Plan accepted by City Council on March 29, 2010.

Our commitment to the Aboriginal peoples of the City of Thunder Bay is based on the understanding and recognition that:

- Aboriginal peoples have traditionally inhabited this land and have a unique and special relationship with it;
- Aboriginal peoples have the right to make decisions for themselves;
- Aboriginal peoples have and continue to participate in and support the economic well-being of our community;
- Aboriginal peoples have distinct languages, cultures and spiritual practices that need to be respected;
- Aboriginal peoples have endured many hardships and injustices since first contact that have created various social and economic disadvantages;
- Aboriginal peoples have made invaluable contributions throughout our collective history that have created a stable and rich community;

The City of Thunder Bay's declared commitment is to:

- Partner with Aboriginal peoples in creating an inclusive community that values and respects the diversity that exists in the City of Thunder Bay;
- Work with Aboriginal peoples to identify and assist with the removal of barriers that hinder their full participation in community life;
- Recognize the needs and concerns of Aboriginal youth and assist with the creation of opportunities in building our community;
- Work with the community to create a safe and welcoming environment that Aboriginal peoples will feel comfortable in;
- Recognize and celebrate the valuable contributions Aboriginal peoples have made and continue to make in our community;
- Maintain and support the living document – "Aboriginal Liaison Strategic Plan".



[Signature]
Mayor Peter Brubaker

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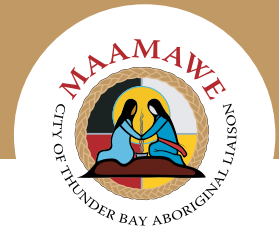


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The Aboriginal Liaison Unit

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Our Mission

To enhance the well-being of Thunder Bay's Aboriginal communities through the creation of a new civic relationship and partnership that promotes the full participation of Aboriginal citizens in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the community to improve the quality of life for all citizens in Thunder Bay.



John Hannam, City Clerk

Originally from Nova Scotia, John lived in southern Ontario before moving to Thunder Bay in 1989. He spent 12 years in the private sector and seven years with the Ontario Office of the Registrar General before moving to the City of Thunder Bay. For the past 15 years, John has been with the Office of the City Clerk for the City of Thunder Bay serving as the City Clerk since 2004. John has a Master's Degree in Public Administration (Local Government) from the University of Western Ontario. He is an active member of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerk and Treasurers of Ontario, a Director at Large on the Association's Board, member of the Management Committee, Chair of the Legislative Committee, and is the Past Chair of the Association's Northwestern Ontario Zone 9. John has written, researched and lectured on local government issues such as municipal elections, orientation for new councils, and council-staff relations. In leading the City's Urban Aboriginal Strategy, John's focus has been seeing the relationship between the City and its Aboriginal community steadily improving.



Sam Achneepineskum, Aboriginal Liaison (acting)

Sam Achneepineskum is Ojibway from Marten Falls First Nation and has a diploma in Health Administration from Yellowquill College. His life's work has always revolved around assisting others on their journey to healing and recovery in the health and social services sectors. Prior to joining the City of Thunder Bay, Sam worked with Residential School Survivors in the Nishnawbe Aski territory. Sam is also currently involved with correction services for men and youth as a cultural and spiritual advisor.

Early in his career, Sam realized that health & social issues need be addressed from their root causes. "It's about building healthy relationships within ourselves, our families, and our communities."



Joyce Hunter, Aboriginal Liaison Strategy Coordinator

Is Cree ('n' dialect) from Weenusk First Nation, which is located along the Hudson Bay coast in polar bear country. She acquired her diploma in journalism from Durham College and began her career at The Daily Press in Timmins as a general assignment reporter/photographer before moving on to aboriginally owned and operated Wawatay News to work first as the publication's reporter than as its editor. She has spent more than 10 years as a working journalist and has won national and provincial awards for her work. Because of her time with Wawatay News, Joyce brings a wealth of varied knowledge about Aboriginal people and their issues along with a vision for respect, inclusion and change.



Aboriginal people have always shared their gifts.

Through the Aboriginal Action Plan, the City of Thunder Bay commits to accepting those gifts, understanding them and to find ways in which to help those gifts grow and flourish. By creating an environment of acceptance, recognition, support and collaboration we have been working to create a dynamic future where we will all grow and flourish. The Aboriginal Liaison Strategic Plan is a guide that will lead to a stronger, healthier relationship between Aboriginal people and the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay.

Each role has specific actions that have been identified by the community, City Council and City administration as necessary in improving the relationship.

This report will share the progress that has been made, highlight the partnerships that have been developed and ready the path for the next stage of our journey.

Please note, as with any relationship, there are challenges. What has become evident, even through those challenges, is the degree of commitment the Corporation and the community have made to each other.

Our Responsibilities

- Creating an inclusive community
- Providing programs and services which are accessible to Aboriginal people
- Providing employment opportunities
- Providing leadership
- Providing/creating a safe community
- Recognizing Aboriginal contributions to community life

There are four areas of focus within the Aboriginal Liaison Strategic Plan:

- The Role of Leader
- The Role of Partner
- The Role of Service Provider
- The Role of Employer







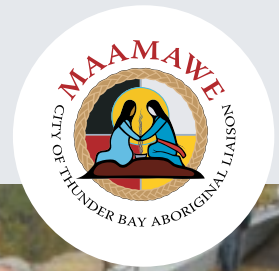
1.0 The Role of the Leader



Goal

To communicate and demonstrate the commitment of our City Council to working closely with our Aboriginal people to improve the social, cultural, political and economic well-being of our community.

- Declaration of Commitment to Strengthening Relationships between the City of Thunder Bay and Urban Aboriginal People is signed March 29, 2010
- Council begins practice of welcoming people by recognizing treaty and Fort William First Nation's traditional lands
- Regular meetings are held with Fort William First Nation, discussions lead to a signed declaration of commitment forming a collaborative relationship that will benefit our respective communities (signed October 4, 2011)
- Aboriginal Liaison Strategy Plan and document finalized, newsletter template completed, additional staff position approved, website updated, PPT design
- Intergovernmental Committee is struck, City begins writing letters of support for Aboriginal partners, resolutions of council (i.e. Ring of Fire)
- Provides administrative support, launched the RESPECT campaign
- Aboriginal community included in the selection process
- All Aboriginal organizations are receiving nomination package, Aboriginal people being recognized



2.0 The Role of the Partner



Goal

To support and recognize the work of the Aboriginal community by sharing expert knowledge, information, and resources, and contributing to the creation of partnerships that will improve the well-being of the Aboriginal community.

- Council has supported the Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee in the 2011 and 2012 budget, attends meetings, provides additional supports as required.
- In an advocacy capacity, Aboriginal Liaison met with provincial Assistant Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and federally, the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Office of the Federal Interlocutor at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to engage them in discussions toward tripartite agreements to benefit urban aboriginal community members.
- Sit as an organizing committee member on the community-led Biindigaate Indigenous Film Festival, Aniiimki Festival (Fall Festival of Services), National Aboriginal Day, Community Coalition Unified for the Protection of Children and Youth, Residential School Working Group, and Aboriginal Youth Achievement and Recognition Awards committees.
- Have ongoing relationships with Fort William First Nations (economic development, recreation and culture, education and communication), inform our Sister Cities in Finland, Japan and the United States of our Aboriginal community (demographics, partnerships) to promote greater understanding and respect, worked with Wasaya Group to open a youth centre at Victoriaville Centre to benefit Aboriginal youth, Lakehead University (academic, research and statistical information sharing on Aboriginal issues), and ONWA (Aboriginal participation in elections), Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre – new building initiative, and the Biwaase'aa program which supports impoverished youth.





3.0 The Role of the Employer

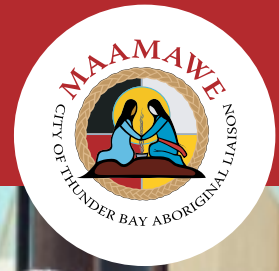


Goal

To broaden our understanding of Aboriginal culture, to build a workforce that is reflective of our community's diversity and to strengthen the City of Thunder Bay as an employer of choice.

- Maamawe tradeshow display designed and utilized at career fairs, giveaways
- Human Resources (HR) and Recreation departments participate when available
- HR participates on the Aboriginal and Employment Resource Committee
- Partnered with Anishinawbek Employment and Training - created placement opportunities
- All City job opportunities are sent to Aboriginal agencies
- Council included cultural awareness training for all new hires in 2010-2014 Strategic Plan
- Posting opportunities on City's internal posting board, posters of events shared with all departments
- Medicine walk, cultural awareness training for new hires, articles in internal publications
- City of Thunder Bay added a work training component to the Victoriaville youth centre initiative created in partnership with Wasaya Group Inc. to give Aboriginal youth access to work training opportunities available through the city's recreation department





4.0 The Role of the Service Provider



Goal

To increase Aboriginal participation in municipal services and programs, by providing those services and programs in a culturally sensitive manner.

- Fall Feast expanded in 2011 to Animi Festival
- Participated in Gathering of Services, student orientation hosted by Wasaya Group, City police produced video for students coming to the city, youth centre initiative
- Provided Biwaase'aa \$70,000 each year for three years to operate after school programming,
- Working with Lakehead Public School Board to provide Biwaase'aa space in Ogden School so they can expand programming
- Recreation partnered with Fort William First Nation to provide cultural teachings at Chippewa Day Camp Program



City of Thunder Bay
Aboriginal Liaison

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