

Indigenous Relations and Inclusion Strategy: 2021-2027

Executive Summary:

Since amalgamation in 1970, the City of Thunder Bay has undergone many changes – from industry, to demographics, and to expansion of services. The political landscape has also evolved, calling upon governments to reconcile relations with Indigenous Peoples. In response, the City of Thunder Bay has dedicated focused efforts to embark on this journey to improve relations and outcomes with Indigenous communities.

Today, Indigenous Peoples in Canada are among the fastest growing and youngest population, with growing numbers pursuing their education. According to the 2016 Census, the city of Thunder Bay has the highest proportion of Indigenous population of any major Canadian municipality (12.7 percent). These demographics reveal a timely opportunity for local growth, but it will largely depend on how the community responds to advancing Indigenous Peoples' inclusion to capitalize on these opportunities.

As a community, we are faced with an important opportunity to dedicate efforts in collaborating and working more effectively with Indigenous partners. The future depends on the City's investment to help to make our city more inclusive and welcoming for all peoples, in particular, for Indigenous Peoples.

Moreover, race should never limit anyone's participation in social, economic and political opportunities. In this spirit, the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay ("the City") in collaboration with local Indigenous and community partners, drafted and signed onto the City of Thunder Bay Anti-Racism and Inclusion Accord ("the Accord") in 2018. The Accord commits signatories to address racism, and advance inclusion in the city. The City is eager to implement the Accord of which the foundational groundwork is laid out in this 7-Year Strategy.

The Strategy renews the City's Indigenous relations efforts and implements the Accord. It guides collective work by supporting City divisions so actions are cohesive and contribute to long-term, sustainable outcomes and relations in the city of Thunder Bay.

This Strategy, led by City Council and supported by both the Indigenous Relations and Inclusion Section and administration, will serve as a roadmap to operationalize this vision, using a whole-of-government approach. The work will involve participation across divisions, with advisory and liaison support from the Indigenous Relations and Inclusion Section. Process and protocol guidance will also be given by the City's Anishinaabe Elders Council ("Elders Council"). In the spirit of "Maamawe- All Together", the City will demonstrate what can be achieved when working as a team and as leaders in the community.

This Strategy document is the result of reviewing the Aboriginal Liaison Strategy and the Accord with input from the Elders Council, Divisional staff, the Urban Aboriginal

Advisory Committee, and participants at the 2019 Open House on Implementation of the Accord. Key aspects of the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy Community Plan (2016-21) were also considered and integrated within this Strategy.

We are embarking on a journey of reconciliation with Indigenous communities. This a responsibility that the City is committed to as demonstrated in this Strategy, while acknowledging its importance to realizing community prosperity. It is our hope that through collective efforts, we will help build a healthy and culturally thriving community-one that is inclusive for all to enjoy well into the future.

Message from the Mayor:

On behalf of the City of Thunder Bay and City Council, it is an honour to endorse the City's commitment to further investing in the advancement of our evolving relationship with Indigenous Peoples in Thunder Bay.

The vision Maamawe (All together), as articulated in the Strategy, aligns with the City of Thunder Bay 2019-2022 Strategic Plan's theme: *One City, Growing Together*. This blending of visions is one way the City has been working diligently to fulfill its commitment to improving relations with Indigenous peoples and newcomers living in or visiting Thunder Bay.

With the release of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the 2016 Seven Youth Coroner's Inquest Recommendations, and more recently, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice in 2019, we acknowledge the need to fulfill these commitments with more focused attention. To renew our commitment, in 2018, we signed onto the Anti-Racism and Inclusion Accord, and created a senior leadership position to provide overall advice and support to the Corporation as we collectively work towards improving experiences and outcomes of Indigenous Peoples in the city of Thunder Bay in our capacity.

I am pleased to announce the City's renewed 2021-2027 Strategy. The Strategy lays out concrete actions, including updated activities and renewed approaches to better reflect the current landscape, while supporting the City in working more effectively with Indigenous partners and community leaders well into the future.

It is my distinct honour and privilege to introduce the Indigenous Relations and Inclusion Strategy for 2021-2027. It is also my hope that through working together, we can all help build a city that is culturally vibrant, safe, and inclusive for generations to come.

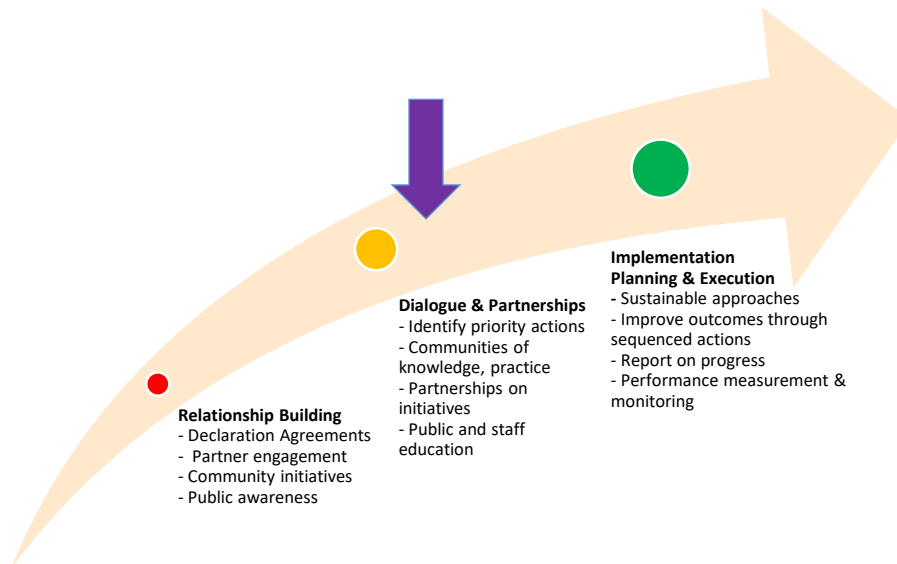
Sincerest wishes,

[signature]

Mayor Bill Mauro

Current Context:

The City has made notable strides in building relations with Indigenous partners and providing more responsive City services (see Appendix: Historical Timeline of City's Role in Fostering Reconciliation). While foundational work has been carried out, more work remains in affecting sustainable, positive change. Below illustrates our Critical Path to see this vision through:



Through the former Aboriginal Liaison Office (established 2008), many advances were made in establishing and fostering relations with Indigenous partners and service providers in Thunder Bay. The Indigenous Liaison role has also laid the foundation for honouring Indigenous spaces and contributions to be recognized for years to come, most notably, the Residential School Memorial, installed in 2019.

When the role of the Aboriginal Liaison was created, the need for an Elders Council was quickly identified. The now referred to Anishinaabe Elders Council is a fundamental guide for connecting with Indigenous communities while providing overall advice to the City on matters of protocol, and traditional practices. The title of Anishinaabe Elders Council was passed in its Terms of Reference in 2019 to reflect the traditional territory where Thunder Bay is situated upon and the Original peoples of this area pre-contact.

Key recent events have influenced how the City has evolved its approach in advancing Indigenous relations and anti-racism. Racism has been a matter of grave local concern, as cited by media outlets and recommendation reports. Recently, the 2016 Coroner's Inquest Report into the Seven Youth (Inquest) who lost their lives in Thunder Bay was considered a catalyst to using more coordinated approaches in response to local needs. Since then, systemic change has taken place in the City's operations and working relations, as it continues to implement the Inquest recommendations and collaborate with local partners on efforts.

The City also affirmed its support of advancements made through the Indigenous Liaison Office, and built on those foundations by creating the Indigenous Relations and Inclusion Manager role and Section. The Section will offer overall strategic guidance and support to the Corporation, coordinate the Elders Council, and in collaboration with staff and Indigenous partners, develop policy foundations to entrench this important work, while continuing to advance reconciliation and improved community relations for future generations.

Alignment with City of Thunder Bay’s Strategic Plan:

This Strategy aligns with the City’s overarching 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, *One City Growing Together*. Pillar 1 of its Strategic Plan reads as follows:

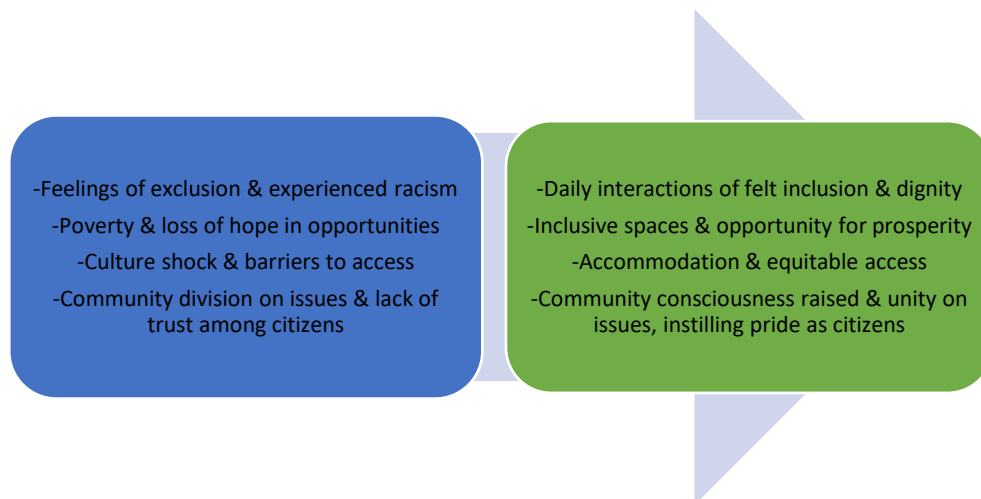
Lead: Provide civic leadership to advance mutual respect, equal opportunity and hope.

- 1. Seek advice and work collaboratively with Indigenous partners to deepen relationships and further reconciliation.*
- 2. Fulfill our commitments to Indigenous and racialized persons under the Thunder Bay Anti-Racism and Inclusion Accord.*

Implementation of the Indigenous Relations and Inclusion Strategy involves working with Indigenous partners and engaging community members to inform the City’s actions under each Pillar. One of the City’s priorities will be strengthening staff capacity through training to better equip teams to work more effectively with Indigenous Peoples.

The Strategy incorporates the Anti-Racism and Inclusion Accord’s objectives in its activities throughout, as the commitments guide each Strategy pillar. The City will be analyzing all Investigations cited in the Accord for implementation across divisions.

A Move to Proactive Measures Leading to Sustainable Outcomes:



The Work Plan

Vision: Guided by the City of Thunder Bay Anishinaabe Elders Council and local Indigenous community, the Indigenous Relations and Inclusion Section supports the City's enhancement of its relationship with Indigenous partners and communities, while advancing Indigenous Peoples' inclusion in the City's opportunities and growth.

Values and Guiding Principles:

The Seven Grandfather Teachings are sacred, Indigenous governing principles of the Anishinabek, the Original Peoples of this region. These Teachings will guide the Section's work and conduct in serving the local Indigenous community in a meaningful way in the spirit of Mino-Bimaazdiwin (Good Life):

1. **Respect – Mnaadendimowin:** to welcome and value contributions of all in advancing Indigenous relations and inclusion.
2. **Honesty – Gwekwaadziwin:** to follow through on commitments while being accountable to Indigenous communities in decision-making and reporting.
3. **Humility – Dbaadendiziwin:** to collaborate and build effective working relations with Indigenous partners and local organizations in advancing mutual goals.
4. **Love – Zaagidwin:** to serve the public and approach priorities with integrity and compassion.
5. **Bravery – Aakwa'ode'ewin:** to advocate to governments and community members to better address priorities of Indigenous Peoples in the city of Thunder Bay.
6. **Truth – Debwewin:** to heighten public awareness and dialogue through sharing stories and knowledge, while affirming Indigenous Peoples' rightful place.
7. **Wisdom – Nbwaakaawin:** to strengthen our knowledge base by seeking out learning and networking opportunities that support our work.

Strategic Approach:

The areas of focus will be addressed through four strategic goals to inform the City's work. Commitments and actions are informed by policy recommendations of commissioned reports relevant to a municipal setting and cited in the Anti-Racism and Inclusion Accord, which includes:

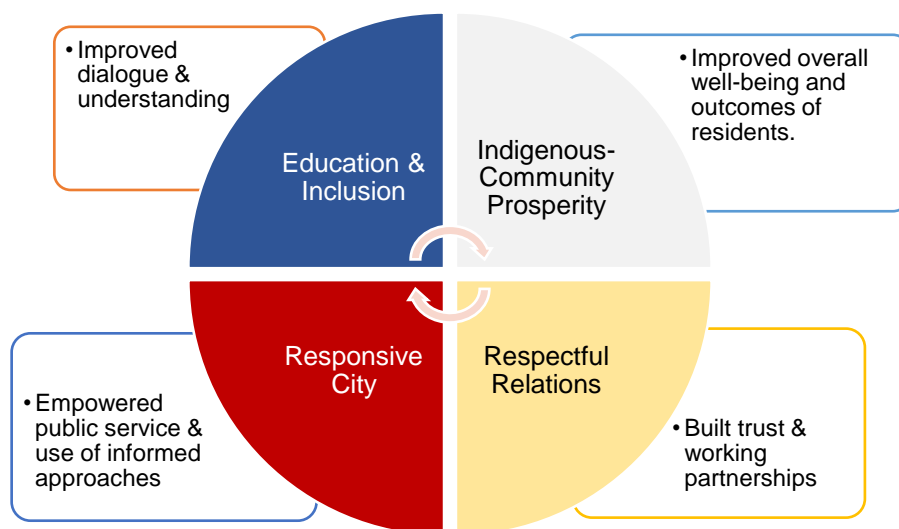
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;
- Office of the Chief Coroner Inquest on the Seven First Nations Youth;
- National Inquiry into Murdered & Missing Women & Girls; and
- Relationship agreements the City of Thunder Bay has with Indigenous partners.

By embracing our guiding principles, engagement with the Indigenous community will be critical to the Strategy's success. The Strategy will be reviewed annually to assess progress and prioritize actions for the next working year with resources identified.

Strategic Goals and their Objectives:

- 1. Respectful Relations:** Foster collaborative and respectful relations with Indigenous community, partners and nations.
- 2. Responsive City:** Support City capacity to further inclusion by offering informed advice and support.
- 3. Education & Inclusion:** Enrich public dialogue and knowledge on Indigenous topics with Indigenous partners in Thunder Bay through community awareness activities.
- 4. Indigenous-Community Prosperity:** Promote well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Thunder Bay through promotion of welcoming spaces and improving access to services.

Strategic Goals and their Anticipated Outcomes:



Pillar 1: Respectful Relations

Strategy Commitments:

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 18:

Indigenous Peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Truth and Reconciliation of Canada, Call to Action 57, Seven Youth Coroner's Inquest, Recommendation 139: ...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.

Declaration of Commitment: Strengthening the Relationship between Fort William First Nation and the City of Thunder Bay: Collaborate on outstanding issues to our mutual benefit.

Commitment 1: Implement relationship agreements with Indigenous partners

- 1.1 Analyze and develop a work plan to operationalize City-signed relationship agreements and publicly-declared commitments.
- 1.2 Dialogue and report annually on progress on implementing agreements with partners.

Commitment 2: Honour & foster relations with Fort William First Nation, Metis, and local Indigenous Partners

- 2.1 Present motion for Council to annually confirm Declaration of Commitment to Urban Aboriginal Peoples.
- 2.2 Facilitate effective working relations between the City and Indigenous partners.
 - (a) Liaise with Fort William First Nation, Red Sky Metis Independent Nation, Metis Nation, and Indigenous partner staff to strengthen working relations.
 - (b) Appoint Council member to attend Elders Council meetings.

Commitment 3: Guide & support City leadership and staff in advancing Indigenous Relations

- 3.1 Provide professional learning opportunities and supports to empower leadership and administration to build effective working relations with Indigenous partners.
 - (a) Renew and deliver Indigenous Cultural Awareness and other relevant learning opportunities to City Council and staff.
 - (b) Evaluate Walk-a-Mile training to respond to evolving needs with Indigenous community input.
- 3.2 Confirm appropriate engagement approaches with Indigenous partners.
 - (a) Draft a guidance document and deliver staff training on engagement with Indigenous partners and communities.

Pillar 2: Responsive City

Strategy Commitments:

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 15.2: States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the

Indigenous Peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous Peoples and all other segments of society.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 8.2:

States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for: (a) any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct Peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities.

Seven Youth Coroner's Inquest, Recommendation 145: Revise current policies to reflect new tasks and procedures where Recommendations are accepted.

Commitment 4: Implement Anti-Racism & Inclusion Accord

4.1 Conduct a systemic review of corporate policies and procedures and other articles to address racism and barriers through a third-party process.

(a) Conduct audit to identify priority areas of action and redress.

4.2 Facilitate Accord Implementation Working Group to create inventory of City efforts to date, and develop a long- and short-term anti-racism action plan.

(a) Analyze Accord commitments for City implementation.

(b) Explore enhanced Anti-Racism resources for staff with partners.

4.3 Facilitate Resource Guide Working Group to support Accord signatory organizations' (Coalition) implementation.

4.4. Support Coalition efforts and Accord awareness through communications methods.

Commitment 5: Inclusive research & policy development

5.1 Where required, develop practices and procedures that enhance inclusion and training (i.e., Smudging Protocol, Land Acknowledgments, etc.).

5.2 Conduct up-to-date research and analysis on Indigenous issues to support the City's objectives and provide effective advice to the Corporation.

Commitment 6: Promote workplace diversity & inclusive employee supports

6.1 Revive and coordinate City Indigenous Employees' Network to identify priorities and engage staff for further retention.

6.2 Collaborate with Well at Work, Health & Wellness Coordinator to develop culturally responsive staff supports (e.g., Elder support hours, promote available cultural programming).

6.3 Collaborate with Human Resources to enhance Indigenous recruitment and retention.

(a) Create responsive recruitment activities in partnership with Indigenous employment agencies.

(b) Advise on employment equity studies and implementation of workforce diversity.

Pillar 3: Education and Inclusion

Strategy Commitments:

Seven Youth Coroner’s Inquest, Recommendation 110: ...Incorporate better reflection of Indigenous presence in the territory for millennia.

Fort William First Nation-City of Thunder Bay-Nishnawbe Aski Nation Statement of Commitment to First Nation Youth and Families: Develop anti-racism campaign to raise awareness and eliminate racism against Indigenous people in Thunder Bay by challenging racist, hateful, ignorant discourse directed toward Indigenous people; address systemic racism in organizations and institutions in our community.

Declaration of Commitment- Strengthening Relationships between the City of Thunder Bay and Urban Aboriginal People: Partner with Aboriginal Peoples in creating an inclusive community that values and respects the diversity that exists in the City of Thunder Bay.

Commitment 7: Collaborate with partners on public awareness activities to promote Indigenous inclusion and address racism in the community.

7.1 Continue supporting Indigenous-led community gatherings that support Indigenous inclusion.

7.2 Continue to honour commemorative days (e.g., Louis Riel Day; Indigenous Peoples’ Month; Orange Shirt Day; Treaties Recognition Week).

7.3 Support speaking engagements and awareness campaigns when requested.

Commitment 8: Honour & celebrate Indigenous space & place

8.1 Collaborate with staff on City-led initiatives that promote Indigenous inclusion (e.g., Women’s History Month, local awards, Committees, etc.).

8.2 Honour Indigenous history and culture in City spaces through exhibits and activities.

8.3 Collaborate on new place-making initiatives and opportunities for welcoming spaces in the city.

(a) Conduct research in collaboration with academic and Indigenous partners to identify Indigenous heritage recognition opportunities in City spaces.

- (b) Maintain and enhance existing place-making spaces.

Pillar 4: Indigenous-Community Prosperity

Strategy Commitments:

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 21.2:

States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Report Call for Justice #3.1:

...Ensure that the rights to health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples, and specifically of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, are recognized and protected on an equitable basis.

Declaration of Commitment- Strengthening Relationships between the City of Thunder Bay and Urban Aboriginal People:

Work with Aboriginal Peoples to identify and assist with the removal of barriers that hinder their full participation in community life.

Fort William First Nation-City of Thunder Bay-Nishnawbe Aski Nation Statement of Commitment to First Nation Youth and Families:

Provide leadership, in the spirit of Treaty and reconciliation, to support and enable local governments, municipal leaders and community members to address this crisis with the goal of creating a safe and welcoming community for all.

Commitment 9: Provide guidance to make City services responsive to needs of Indigenous Peoples

9.1 With Elders Council guidance, identify ways to offer and promote equitable access.

(a) Advise on programs, proposals and process improvements.

(b) Develop a welcome kit for Indigenous newcomers to the city.

9.2 Promote role models and mentorship opportunities for Indigenous residents.

Commitment 10: Improve outreach & communications on City services

10.1 Support collaborative approaches for orientation activities for First Nations students from remote communities attending school in Thunder Bay.

10.2 Improve communication and outreach on initiatives and funding opportunities.

10.3 Update the City Indigenous Relations and Inclusion website and public-facing communication materials.

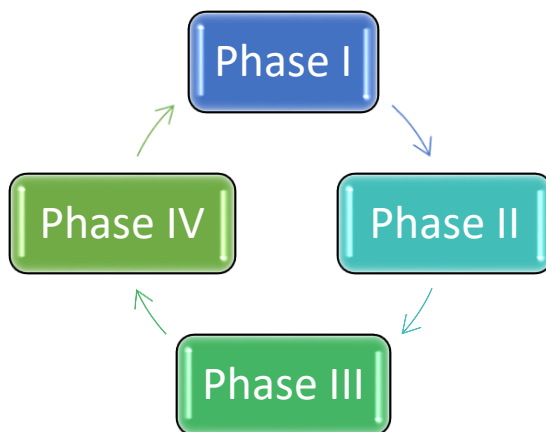
Commitment 11: Advocate & work with governments & local partners to improve outcomes

11.1 Continue collaborative relationship with and seek ongoing advice from the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee on priorities of mutual interest.

11.2 Work with local partners to support enhanced coordination of existing efforts and services for Indigenous peoples in Thunder Bay.

11.3 Strengthen relationships with provincial and federal partners to collaborate while leveraging investments.

Setting Plans into Action: Implementation Plan



Community engagement and reporting to City Council will be conducted annually.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm commitments • Audit current state • Public engagement on implementation • Staff training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training continued • Policy systemic review • Implement Accord Working Group direction • Work plans with Indigenous partners • Build work processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement systemic policy review recommendations • Implement plans with Indigenous partners • Enhance internal structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance evaluation • Report on and review Strategy • Develop renewed strategic actions

Determining Factors for Success:

- ✓ **Committed to Change:** Supported by leadership, while fostering effective relations.
- ✓ **Accountable:** Informed by Indigenous partners and supportive community partners.
- ✓ **Leverages Investments:** Provincial and federal commitment to support initiatives.
- ✓ **Capitalizes Expertise:** Strategic partnerships and building communities of practice.
- ✓ **Founded on Common Understanding:** Goals, outcomes, and scope are clarified.

Performance Measurement Guidelines

- Apply Indigenous research methods while respecting OCAP™ (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) principles.
- Based on key outcome areas: Social, Economic, Environmental, and Cultural.
- Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) with Indigenous partner input.
- Flexibility to modify activities where needed upon regular monitoring.

Appendix: Historical Timeline of the City's Role in Fostering Reconciliation

