

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: November 15, 2022

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Meeting Date: November 23, 2022

TO: Library Board

FROM: Kurt Heinrich, Chair, CRPD Committee

SUBJECT: VPL Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy

SUMMARY

This report outlines the strategies that VPL proposes to undertake to continue to respond to the calls of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada and contribute to the implementation of the City of Vancouver's response to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

PURPOSE

This report is for decision.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board adopt the findings of the UNDRIP Task Force and collaborate in cross-departmental implementation to ensure VPL policies and procedures align with UNDRIP.

That the Board approve the VPL Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Committee members commented that the Strategy was thorough and well organized, and in particular noted the thoughtfulness to language. They noted the opportunity to include important work that has been done so far, and they expressed the importance of public accountability and reporting to the Board on progress through the quarterly reports.

POLICY

VPL's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan prioritizes Truth and Reconciliation. During the strategic plan engagement, conversations with the public and key stakeholders highlighted the need to bring Indigenous history, languages and cultures into library spaces and to continue sharing Indigenous voices through our collections and programming. The Strategic Plan confirms that VPL is committed to being a place to learn about the history and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, referring to First Nations, Métis and Inuit. This includes learning about the truths of the historic and ongoing impact of colonization and the importance of movement toward Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

This work aligns with VPL's core values of respecting diversity and social inclusion as expressed in the Library's Values and the [Library's Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#), the latter last updated in 2010.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The VPL 2020-2023 Strategic Plan includes two specific goals related to Truth & Reconciliation: *Reflect and celebrate Indigenous cultures and history* (Shared Spaces & Experiences priority) and *Enhance understanding and appreciation of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing* (Belonging & Connection priority), in addition to seeking opportunities to act on the Calls to Action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission across all goals. The Strategic Plan does not include specific reference to UNDRIP.

INDIGENOUS CONSIDERATIONS

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action represent one of the most important documents in Canada today, and staff have been working to implement these since 2016. Supporting the implementation of the articles in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples builds on this work, and can further our efforts towards better relations with Indigenous peoples, greater understanding, and addressing historical wrongs.

BACKGROUND

In November 2019, the Province of BC passed legislation to implement UNDRIP, the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#). The City of Vancouver Council unanimously passed a motion to implement UNDRIP at the local government level on March 11, 2021. In March 2021, Council established an [UNDRIP Task Force](#) composed of 7 Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh representatives and 5 City Councillors. The objective was to provide advice to COV Council on what COV should do to implement UNDRIP by October 2022. Following this, from October 2022 through 2023, COV staff will explore how each recommendation could be implemented (feasibility, implications, etc.), and report back to the new Council with analysis and recommendations on implementation.

In February 2022, The Chief Librarian & CEO presented a report summarizing current, planned and potential activities that support the implementation of UNDRIP ([link to report](#)). She also noted that the Library was invited to participate in processes for the UNDRIP Task Force. VPL's Indigenous Planner participated as a member of the task force technical committee, providing support to the UNDRIP Task Force as they developed this strategy. In addition to these efforts, VPL staff participated in the City of Vancouver processes to consider the Calls to Justice of the Inquiry into MMIWG (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls) ([link to report](#)) and Red Women Rising Reports ([link to report](#)).

A City of Vancouver UNDRIP management forum, comprised of senior civic leaders across disciplines, including the Chief Librarian & CEO and VPL's Director, Planning & Communications, met monthly to hear updates on key directions and recommendations the Task Force was considering; to flag major concerns and/or issues with draft recommendations, if any; to make suggestions for refining draft recommendations; and to identify related City of Vancouver initiatives underway or on the horizon.

DISCUSSION

[The City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy](#) was approved by Council October 25, 2022 after Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh Nations endorsed and celebrated the release of the strategy on October 19th. Vancouver City Council has referred the Strategy to the VPL Board, encouraging VPL to adopt its findings and inviting VPL to collaborate on cross-departmental implementation (see letter from City Council in Appendix A). VPL has opportunities to support both the provincial and municipal implementations, primarily in the areas of education, information, and culture. Many of these opportunities were identified in the summary of ongoing, planned and potential activities presented to the Board in February 2022.

To reflect alignment with the UNDRIP implementation strategies at both the City of Vancouver and Province of British Columbia, while also addressing the TRC Calls to Action, VPL's draft Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy is organized under the four major themes identified in the DRIPA Implementation Plan:

1. Social, Cultural and Economic Well-being
2. Ending Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination
3. Self-Determination and Inherent Right of Self-Government
4. Rights and title of Indigenous Peoples

VPL's draft Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy is in Appendix B. Throughout the draft strategy, relevant UNDRIP articles have been footnoted, and applicable recommendations from the City of Vancouver UNDRIP Task Force noted in brackets.

NEXT STEPS

The draft strategy will be finalized based on input from trustees and staff, with an action plan outlining timelines, responsibilities and deliverables to follow. Staff will report to the VPL Board on the progress of the action plan on a quarterly basis, within the Indigenous Relations section of the quarterly strategic plan progress report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications of the action plans will be considered as they are developed.

APPENDIX A

VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20

Sent via email

October 31, 2022

Dear Vancouver Public Library Board:

RE: Report of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Task Force

Vancouver City Council, at its meeting on Tuesday, October 25, 2022, approved the following:

THAT Council approves the following recommendation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Task Force:

WHEREAS

1. The Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples are the original stewards of the lands known as the City of Vancouver, and they have throughout history and to this day lived in relationship with their lands and waters with their own distinct cultures, governance systems, laws, and ways of life;
2. The City of Vancouver ("the City") voted unanimously on June 24, 2014 to acknowledge that the City is on the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples, and the City adopted a Reconciliation Framework on July 8, 2014;
3. Rights and title holders in the City of Vancouver are the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh within the meaning of UNDRIP. The City of Vancouver, as a City of Reconciliation, has the responsibility to recognize the rights and title of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh and to repudiate colonial concepts of Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius¹;
4. Many Indigenous people from other territories reside in Vancouver, on Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh territories and as Indigenous people also have Indigenous rights within UNDRIP. The City of Vancouver has the

¹ Such concepts, in effect since the 1400s, declared that non-Christian lands were 'empty' and were used to justify colonization and the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples and their lands, and the imposition of western laws, governance, and economic systems.

responsibility to provide rights-based programming and services to the diverse Indigenous populations living in the city, in ways which include and respect the authority of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh as the rights and title holders of these lands;

5. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UNDRIP”) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007, which provides the framework for reconciliation, healing, and the enjoyment of rights by Indigenous Peoples; establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the world’s Indigenous Peoples; addresses both individual and collective rights; cultural rights and identity; rights to education, health, employment, language, and others; outlaws discrimination against Indigenous Peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them;
6. Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (“TRC”) Calls to Action and the MMIWG and 2S Calls for Justice call on all levels of government to adopt UNDRIP as the framework for reconciliation;
7. In 2021, City Council voted to create the UNDRIP “Task Force on Implementing UNDRIP in the City of Vancouver”, in partnership with the Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation to develop Calls to Action on how the City can implement UNDRIP as the framework for Indigenous relations and reconciliation;
8. Since that time, the Task Force has been working to develop the *City of Vancouver’s UNDRIP Strategy* outlining Calls to Action for the implementation of UNDRIP at the municipal level, as the minimum standard for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of Indigenous Peoples.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council endorse the Task Force Report dated October 25, 2022, entitled “Report of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Task Force”, (*“City of Vancouver’s UNDRIP Strategy”*) and direct staff to determine what is needed to implement each Call to Action, and report back to Council with an UNDRIP Action Plan with findings and next steps on implementation across City departments;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to establish an inter-governmental process for carrying out this next phase of work, to facilitate Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh review of shared workplans, work prioritization and ongoing engagement;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff, in consultation with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, to develop a community-based UNDRIP engagement process with the diverse Indigenous populations living in the city;

FURTHER THAT Council refer the above-noted report, (aka *“City of Vancouver’s UNDRIP Strategy”*) to the Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver Police Board, Vancouver Public Library Board, and Vancouver School Board and encourage them to adopt the findings of the Task Force and collaborate in cross-departmental implementation to ensure their own policies and procedures align with UNDRIP;

FURTHER THAT Council accept these Calls to Action as a pathway forward to building

good relations on these Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh lands, guiding the City of Vancouver to take all measures necessary to ensure that its policies, laws, practices, and standards are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

AND FURTHER THAT Council request the incoming Council continue the intergovernmental group comprised of the Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation representatives, and four representatives appointed by Council for a minimum of 6 months with the purpose of working with staff to develop the long-term inter-governmental process for next steps on implementing the City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RH', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rosemary Hagiwara
Acting City Clerk

City Clerk's Office e-mail: info@vancouver.ca

APPENDIX B

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION STRATEGY – DRAFT REPORT NOVEMBER 2022

INTRODUCTION

Vancouver Public Library (VPL) recognizes our responsibility to respond to the calls of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada and honour Indigenous rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This strategy is intended to align with and support the UNDRIP implementation strategies at both the City of Vancouver and Province of British Columbia, while also continuing to address the Calls to Action of the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada) and Calls to Justice of the Inquiry into MMIWG (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls) and Red Women Rising Reports. Throughout the report, relevant UNDRIP articles have been footnoted, and applicable recommendations from the City of Vancouver UNDRIP Task Force noted in brackets.

In aligning with these broader strategies we also recognize that, in many ways, VPL is uniquely positioned as a neighbourhood-embedded institution to implement the types of actions that can make Indigenous rights, truth and reconciliation feel present and meaningful in the daily lives of community members. This is particularly apparent as it relates to the need for public awareness, cultural presence, and anti-racist, culturally safe services as identified in federal, provincial, and municipal UNDRIP and TRC implementation work.

In the interests of alignment with the existing work of local Nations, and municipal and provincial strategies, VPL has organized the Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy under the four major themes identified in the Provincial Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) Implementation Plan:

1. Social, Cultural and Economic Well-being
2. Ending Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination
3. Self-Determination and Inherent Right of Self-Government
4. Rights and title of Indigenous Peoples

While VPL supports and works to help advance all themes, the emphasis of this strategy is on the first two themes, as these are areas where the Library can make the greatest contribution. This approach is fundamentally rights-based, sensitive to the unique and distinct rights of local Nations and urban Indigenous Peoples, and centres Indigenous leadership and self-determination as a pre-requisite to any work towards reconciliation.

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OVERVIEW

Foundational Calls to Action

The VPL Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation Strategy acknowledges that strong foundations of relationship development and commitment to institutional change are necessary to ground this important work. For the purposes of this strategy we align to the six foundational Calls to Action identified by Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation and the City of Vancouver in the report of the UNDRIP Task Force. These are:

1. Identify and implement options for new rights-based governance models and decision-making processes with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, with UNDRIP as the framework.
2. Provide ongoing capacity funding for Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh to help facilitate relationship-building, and their role in decision-making and the implementation of UNDRIP into City policies, procedures, and operations.
3. Develop stronger intergovernmental coordination and communication processes and explore opportunities to develop, renew, expand, or strengthen relationship protocol agreements, MOU/As, and protocol agreements with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations which involve clarification of jurisdiction.
4. Establish a process for the City to look for embedded colonialism within its systems, and re-shape its own internal policies, procedures and by-laws in ways which recognize and respect the laws and governance of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, and align with UNDRIP to create systemic change.
5. Review local government legislation (e.g., Vancouver Charter), as well as federal and provincial legislation to understand what changes are needed to implement UNDRIP and this report's Calls to Action. Work with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, and the diverse Indigenous populations living in the city to advocate for the Province and Federal government to make these changes.
6. In consultation with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh, develop processes to continue to build relationships with the diverse Indigenous populations living in the city

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and support their rights as Indigenous persons. Include capacity funding for this community-engaged work.

While the relationship between Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and the City of Vancouver is appropriately an intergovernmental relationship, VPL can uphold this relationship in good faith and in a manner which respects the sovereignty and unique rights and title of the local Nations. VPL can also abide by the communications protocols established collaboratively between the Nations and City to ensure we are facilitating strong communication which respects the time and priorities of the Nations.

In particular, there are opportunities to demonstrate our commitments to institutional change at the Library level, including establishing processes to review VPL practices, policies, and procedures for embedded colonialism and alignment with the rights and title of local Nations. VPL can work with colleagues at the regional, provincial and federal level to identify barriers and opportunities to respect Indigenous rights and reconciliation, as well as to challenge embedded colonialism in the library system as a whole (per Call to Action 4). Finally, VPL can commit to continued work towards direct relationship building with Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation, as well as the diverse Indigenous community in Vancouver (per Call to Action #6). These opportunities are expanded on in greater detail below.

Goal 1. Support Social, Cultural, and Economic Wellbeing¹

Objectives

- 1.1 Direct VPL capacity and resources to support Indigenous communities to reclaim, uphold, and continue Indigenous languages, traditions, knowledge systems and cultural heritages (CoV UNDRIP 1.3)
- 1.2 Ensure VPL careers are inviting to Indigenous workers, and VPL contract opportunities are accessible to Indigenous businesses and professionals (1.16, 1.17)

¹ This goal aligns most closely with articles 11, 12,13, 14(2), 15(1), 16(2), and 21, identified as actionable by VPL Board of Trustees

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Strategies and Actions

- 1.1 Develop and formalize partnerships with Indigenous communities through outreach, resource sharing, program and service co-development, service agreements or other formal commitments as desired (1.9)
- 1.2 Promote respect for the unique rights of Indigenous Peoples by providing public education and resources on topics such as Indigenous intellectual property rights, repatriation, and the responsibilities of property owners and businesses with regard to cultural heritage protection (1.7)
- 1.3 Conduct an audit of VPL holdings to identify items in need of repatriation and develop policies and protocols to respect Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK), cultural heritage, and intellectual property rights (1.7)
- 1.4 Introduce art and other representation of local Nations and urban Indigenous communities in library spaces (1.8, 4.10, 4.11)
- 1.5 Develop an Indigenous employee recruitment and retention plan (1.16)
- 1.6 Work with the City of Vancouver to implement an Indigenous procurement policy (Early Action 3, Early Action 4, 1.17)

Goal 2. Address Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination²

Objectives

- 2.1 Work with Indigenous communities and partners to offer library services and programs in a manner that is culturally appropriate, accessible, and reflects the expressed needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples (2.13)
- 2.2 Ensure all VPL staff have a constructive and respectful understanding of the distinct histories and unique rights of Indigenous Peoples and contribute to public education and understanding of Indigenous rights and reconciliation (Early Action 6, 2.13)

² This goal aligns most closely with Articles 2, 14(2), 15(2) and 16, identified as actionable by VPL Board of Trustees

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- 2.3 Provide a culturally safe environment both internally (among VPL staff and Trustees) and externally (for partners, patrons, and community) in which to address harms and support the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous communities, including residential school survivors, intergenerational survivors, and Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ communities (Early Action 6, 2.13)

Strategies and Actions

- 2.1 Provide mandatory Indigenous cultural safety and sensitivity training to all VPL staff (exempting Indigenous staff) (Early Action 6)
- 2.2 Develop ongoing training and resources that equip VPL staff to support a culturally safe and inviting environment for Indigenous colleagues, patrons, partners, and leaders (Early Action 6)
- 2.3 Continue to provide public programs like the Indigenous Storyteller in Residence that encourage understanding of truth, reconciliation and Indigenous rights and celebrate Indigenous excellence (2.16, 4.12)
- 2.4 Conduct an Indigenous rights and reconciliation maturity audit to identify and address existing issues, barriers, and opportunities at VPL, potentially as a foundational component of an institutional equity audit (Foundational Call to Action 4)
- 2.5 Take meaningful action to identify, address, and eliminate anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination at VPL (2.13)
- 2.6 Adopt the City of Vancouver’s MMIWG2S Response Report (June 13, 2022) and implement the recommendations to support safety and wellbeing for Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ community members which are applicable to VPL (2.15)
- 2.7 Take steps to ensure VPL systems and databases allow for the correct representation of local Indigenous names and languages (4.10)

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Goal 3. Respect Indigenous Self Determination and the Inherent Right of Self Government³

Objectives

- 3.1 Build and formalize sustainable long-term relationships, agreements, and communications protocols with local Nations and urban Indigenous communities (Foundational Recommendation 2, Foundational Recommendation 3)
- 3.2 Advance Indigenous participation in the leadership, governance and/or oversight of VPL and respond meaningfully to the leadership and priorities of local Nations and urban Indigenous communities (Foundational Recommendation 2, 4.13)

Strategies and Actions

- 3.1 Work to establish ongoing dialogue with the local Nations and urban Indigenous communities through established referral and communication channels (Foundational Recommendation 3, Foundational Recommendation 6)
- 3.2 Conduct targeted outreach to encourage representation from the local Nations and urban Indigenous communities in VPL Board Trustee roles and/or other unique leadership roles (4.13)
- 3.3 Advocate to provincial partners for the extension of eligibility for VPL board roles to all members of the local Nations, including those living on traditional territories outside the colonial boundaries of Vancouver (Foundational Recommendation 5)

Goal 4. Honour the Rights and Title of Indigenous Peoples⁴

Objectives

- 4.1 Proactively align VPL's policies, practices, and processes to respect the unique rights and title of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations (Foundational Recommendation 4)

³ While the Articles of UNDRIP should be understood in an encompassing and holistic sense, this Goal aligns most closely with Articles 5,14, and 16 identified as actionable by VPL Board of Trustees

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- 4.2 Ensure the standards for Indigenous rights established in UNDRIP are guideposts for the development, implementation, and evaluation of VPL policies, practices, services and programming (Foundational Recommendation 4)

Strategies and Actions

- 4.1 In all new and renewed VPL policies, establish a standard practice of considering impacts and opportunities for Indigenous Peoples - including potential impacts to Indigenous rights and title and opportunities to support Indigenous social, cultural, political, and economic self-determination (Foundational Recommendation 4)
- 4.2 Identify educational strategies for VPL staff, Trustees, and patrons to build understanding of original Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh laws, and learn how colonialism impacts Indigenous Peoples and their laws. (4.1)
- 4.3 Recognize the location of VPL on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations through public signage, artistic representation and regular practices like land acknowledgements (4.11)
- 4.4 Following the development of formal naming processes at the City of Vancouver, update the VPL Interim Naming Policy to finalize goals and respectful processes for Indigenous naming of VPL branches and major library facilities (Early Action 1, 4.10)
- 4.5 Adopt the Final Report of the City of Vancouver’s intergovernmental UNDRIP Task Force and implement recommendations to uphold Indigenous rights and title that are applicable to VPL (Council Motion- Report of the UNDRIP Task Force)