

To:	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	September 28, 2023
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-CW-15-23
Title:	Update on Reconciliation and Relationship Building with First Nations
Prepared by:	Kim Wingrove, CAO
Reviewed by:	
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That Report CAOR-CW-15-23 Update on Reconciliation and Relationship Building with Indigenous People be received; and
2. That the Council of the County of Grey recognizes and supports the key tenets of the Declaration of Mutual Commitment and Friendship between the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centre:
 - Indigenous people reside and build community and resilience in municipalities across Ontario;
 - The value of Indigenous knowledge and expertise to design, plan, implement, and evaluate public policy and programs that impact the well-being of Indigenous people is paramount;
 - The responsibility is taken up by Indigenous Friendship Centres to meet Indigenous community needs;
 - The value of building relationships and partnerships with Friendship Centres to improve the quality of life of Indigenous people in their municipality and to work against racism, inequality, discrimination and stigma within and between communities;
 - The exchange of information and skills within and between municipal governments and related associations contributes to improved understanding of Indigenous relations.
3. That the Shko Naaniibwida - Standing Strong Together document developed by the M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre which provides recommendations on how to further recognize First Nation culture be supported by the County of Grey and incorporated into 2024 work planning; and

- 4. That Grey Roots Museum be directed to build on their outreach and engagement with Indigenous people by increasing access to stories and artifacts in the collections and offering admission at no charge to Indigenous people.**

Executive Summary

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report on June 2, 2015, which included 94 Calls to Action to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. Grey County acknowledges it can play a leadership role and set a standard by advancing reconciliation locally and regionally through partnerships and collaboration. Since recognizing September 30th as the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Grey County has undertaken initiatives to build positive relations with First Nations people and organizations and advance the spirit of reconciliation. This report notes some of the work in progress and new initiatives being planned.

Background and Discussion

Municipal governments play an essential role in leading communities and advocating for inclusivity and reconciliation. An ongoing process of community development and establishing, strengthening, and maintaining respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is necessary to support this. Grey County can improve community well-being and quality of life of Indigenous people living in our municipalities through local policy development, and offering programs and services which are based on community-identified needs and priorities.

The following describes initiatives and organizations current and planned in support of relationship building with Indigenous people in our region.

M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre

The Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendships Centres (OFIFC) is the province's largest Indigenous service network and has partnered with AMO on various initiatives to improve collaboration and information sharing among members to support the Indigenous population through programming, research, education, and policy advocacy. M'Wikwedong in Owen Sound is our local OFIFC and is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year on October 14th.

Grey County has worked alongside M'Wikwedong and provided support in several ways in recent years. In 2018, Grey and Bruce County jointly sponsored a Truth and Reconciliation Conference and trauma informed training for community workers to assist them in better serving people who have experienced intergenerational trauma.

In April of 2021, Council directed staff to pursue the development of a declaration of mutual commitment and friendship with the M'Wikwedong Indigenous Friendship Centre in follow up to the Declaration of Mutual Commitment and Friendship and Addendum agreed jointly by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. Unfortunately, this direction was not completed due to the interruption of regular business by the pandemic. The AMO OFIFC Declaration is attached to this report.

The word Giiwe, at its root means home. The purpose of this M'Wikwedong program is to strengthen relationships and inter-sectoral collaboration on matters of importance to Indigenous people. The Shko Naaniibwida – Standing Strong Together document notes 20 actions that community partners can take in support of the purpose. With Council's support, staff will include these actions in departmental work plans and provide a progress report in 2024.

Grey Roots Museum and Archives

The histories and cultures of Indigenous communities in Grey County are interwoven throughout the permanent exhibits, interpretation and event landscaping at Grey Roots.

In the past, exhibits, such as *The Good People: Know our Stories, Know Us*, have been developed in partnership with Indigenous communities. The project was guided by Elder Basil Johnston and fifteen doodems on display were designed by Indigenous artist Don Chrétien and carved by Anishinaabe artist Sidney Nadjiwon. Also, part of the exhibit is a carving by the late Wilmer Nadjiwon, artist and master carver, entitled "Seven Grandfather Teachings about Chaos on Turtle Island".

Grey Roots has created an Indigenous Advisory circle that welcomes representatives from the Indigenous community, including Saugeen First Nation and Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation to meet and guide Grey Roots staff in the development of exhibits, programming, and future direction of the museum.

The Circle provides guidance, knowledge and feedback to Grey Roots on local First Nations history and culture and offers important and new perspectives on Grey Roots' exhibits and programs, with a view to telling more complete, inclusive and accurate stories of Grey County's past.

Members meet quarterly and as needed, at Grey Roots, Saugeen First Nation and Neyaashiinigmiing.

Since the first meeting in April 2022, the Circle has shared invaluable support on the re-development of the permanent exhibit in the Grey County Gallery and feedback on our new *Saukiing Anishnaabekiing Presents Our Stories* exhibit. Staff have requested their input into improvements to the land acknowledgement language and process.

Indigenous Advisory Circle Members and quick bios can be found here:
<https://greyroots.com/truth>

Through the Grey County Community Cultural Initiatives Fund, support has been provided to Indigenous groups such as Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences (Cape Croker Park) and the Gichi-Name Wiikwedong Reconciliation Garden (Owen Sound) to produce events and exhibits that increase awareness of Indigenous history and culture. Grey Roots continually engages with Indigenous education specialists and artists to bring authentic cultural experiences to our special events and public programs.

Staff request Council support for Grey Roots Museum to continue to build on their outreach and engagement with Indigenous people by increasing access to stories and artifacts in the collections and offering admission at no charge to Indigenous people. Bruce County Museum has enacted this policy and it would be beneficial to be able to provide a consistent experience in Grey County.

Grey County Planning Department

The County circulates all planning applications received by the County to Indigenous communities. We have also engaged Indigenous communities regarding County Official Plan updates. As part of Recolour Grey, specific sections were included to recognize the several Indigenous populations that have traditional territory within Grey County. We also included policies about the importance of engaging First Nations and Metis on planning applications and encouraging local municipalities to engage with Indigenous communities on local planning applications.

Appendix C in the County Official Plan shows traditional territories/treaty areas of various Indigenous communities within Grey County. The County has also engaged Indigenous communities on other strategic initiatives/plans such as the Forest Management Plan, Recreational Trails Master Plan, etc. and will continue to engage and consult on future initiatives.

The Planning department is working on developing an archeological master plan in consultation with SON and others.

Climate Change Team

Grey County's Climate Action plan acknowledges that Indigenous knowledge systems are central to a thorough understanding of how people perceive, understand, mitigate, and adapt to climate change. The plan commits to building meaningful collaboration with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, the traditional keepers of this land, and Indigenous communities and organizations located within the Grey County to nurture their contribution and guidance, and ensure their feedback is integrated into the Plan.

Recently, the climate change engagement coordinator met with the SON Environment Office to discuss possible collaborative projects including shoreline restoration, tree planting, and consultation training for municipal staff. Grey County provided support for the M'Wikwedong Giwe Sharing Circle on September 26 (as part of ICLEI funding) as a learning opportunity for land managers about responding to climate change. The team is also consulting with the Executive Director of the Bagida'waad Alliance on opportunities for collaborative projects (i.e., living fencing, climate monitoring, training).

Other Potential Future Projects and Initiatives

- Undertake consultation with SON on their plans for the Mountain Lake property which was transferred by the County to SON as part of the land claim settlement.
- Consider developing an Indigenous Affairs Advisor/Liaison position who would work with Indigenous organizations and Indigenous community leaders, service providers, community agencies, Council, staff, and other community groups to further reconciliation initiatives and advise on policy changes and opportunities for innovative programs or initiatives.
- Consider allocating space for Indigenous students in the proposed Grey Bruce paramedic program at Georgian College in Owen Sound.

Legislated Requirements

From the Canadian Bar Association: In the 2020 PPS, the following is mentioned regarding Indigenous interests in planning matters.

The province's rich cultural diversity is one of its distinctive and defining features. Indigenous communities have a unique relationship with the land and its resources, which continues to shape the history and economy of the province today. Ontario recognizes the unique role Indigenous communities have in land use planning and development, and the contribution of Indigenous communities' perspectives and traditional knowledge to land use planning decisions. The province recognizes the importance of consulting with Aboriginal communities on planning matters that may affect their section 35 Aboriginal or treaty rights. Planning authorities are encouraged to build constructive, cooperative relationships through meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities to facilitate knowledge-sharing in land use planning processes and inform decision-making.²⁶

The relevant PPS sections, which implement this vision, are reproduced below.

1.2.2 Planning authorities shall engage with Indigenous communities and coordinate on land use planning matters.²⁷

2.6.5 Planning authorities shall engage with Indigenous communities and consider their interests when identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources.²⁸

4.8 The Province, in consultation with municipalities, Indigenous communities, other public bodies and stakeholders shall identify performance indicators for measuring the effectiveness of some or all the policies. The Province shall monitor their implementation, including reviewing performance indicators concurrent with any review of this Provincial Policy Statement.²⁹

Financial and Resource Implications

Eliminating the admission fee to Grey Roots for the Indigenous community will have a negligible impact on Grey Roots annual revenue.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Planning, Community Services, Economic Development Tourism and Culture, Legal
 - AODA Compliance
 - Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets – consultation and engagement with Indigenous leaders
- External (list)

Appendices and Attachments

Shko Naaniibwida - Standing Strong Together

AMO OFIFC Declaration of Mutual Commitment and Friendship