

Staff Report 2021-0419

Meeting Date: December 6, 2021

Subject: Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol

Submitted By: Sally Drummond, Heritage Resource Officer, Strategic Policy Planning, Planning Department

RECOMMENDATION

That in response to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls for Action, the Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol titled, "A Guide to Meaningful Engagement with Indigenous Neighbours, July 2021", attached as Schedule A to Staff Report 2021-0419, be approved as the Town's approach to Indigenous community engagement; and

That staff be directed to use the Protocol as a Guiding Document to develop policies to implement Actions that incorporate the Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol into the updated Official Plan.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls for Action to advance the reconciliation process in Canada included actions for municipal governments.
- Collaborative development with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation of an Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol (the Protocol) is the Town of Caledon's first step in respectfully advancing reconciliation.
- The intent of the Protocol is to foster a deeper relationship between the Town and Indigenous communities and establish written documentation regarding expectations for proactive and meaningful engagement to help the Town better understand and incorporate Indigenous interests and priorities as they relate to municipal activities.
- The Town will seek to include diverse Indigenous perspectives and expectations in the Protocol through further outreach and engagement with additional Indigenous communities with traditional rights and interests in Caledon.
- The Protocol is intended as a 'living document' to be reviewed annually and continually refined based on continued collaboration with Indigenous communities and learned experience.
- The Protocol is considered a guiding document in preparation of the updated Official Plan and will inform policy development.
- The Protocol identifies further steps to reconciliation with Indigenous communities that may be considered in development of other municipal initiatives.

DISCUSSION

Background

The Town of Caledon is situated on lands that are home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island (North America). The [2015 Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls](#)



[to Action](#) to advance the reconciliation process in Canada include several that are specific to municipal governments (refer to Calls to Action numbers 43, 47, and 57). In brief, these are to recognize and implement the rights of Indigenous Peoples; to repudiate concepts of European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and land and reform associated laws and policies; and to educate and train public servants on the history and culture of Indigenous Peoples.

Respectfully, to advance reconciliation, the Town will need to foster a deeper relationship with Indigenous Nations and Peoples, one that is not solely based on legislative requirements for consultation. Understanding more about the history of this land and peoples will help the Town be better neighbours and partners with Indigenous Peoples. This relationship-building needs to occur not just at the Council level, but also at the staff level.

To this end, staff initiated the development of an Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) for the dual purpose of:

- fostering relationships with Indigenous communities that support a shared understanding of how to work together better; and,
- establishing written documentation that promotes incorporation and respect of the voice and diversity of Indigenous communities in Town policies, operations and development processes.

The Protocol was co-developed by staff from multiple departments (Planning; Engineering; Community Services; Corporate Services) and individuals from MCFN's Department of Consultation and Accommodation (DOCA) through a series of discussions and information exchange over 2020 and 2021, facilitated by consultants. MCFN helped the Town better understand Indigenous interests and priorities as they relate to municipal activities by helping to refine expectations for proactive and meaningful engagement.

It is intended that the Protocol include additional Indigenous perspectives and expectations through future outreach and engagement with other Indigenous Nations with interests, rights and traditional territories in Caledon, including Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council, Huron-Wendat Nation and Métis Nation of Ontario.

Goals

The goals of the Protocol are to:

- improve awareness and knowledge
- collaborate towards a shared understanding
- identify culturally appropriate planning and implementation activities
- integrate Indigenous community-led processes, expertise, knowledge, and priorities
- proactively identify barriers and solutions
- integrate mechanisms for continual improvement

Audience/Users

The Protocol was developed for use by Town staff that need to engage with Indigenous Nations and Peoples. In practice, it provides a framework for meaningful engagement that can be applied to an array of municipal matters ranging from land use planning to cultural activities.

This Protocol may also serve as a useful resource to the Town's project partners and other community agencies that work within the Town to enhance knowledge of how to engage, build and sustain a good working relationship with Indigenous Nations and Peoples that have shared interests with the Town.

The Protocol is organized around the following four sections:

1. Historical Perspectives

An important aspect of meaningful engagement is having an informed understanding of our shared histories and perspectives. The different Indigenous Nations have diverse histories, identities, customs and ways of interacting with the land. This section entails summaries of individual Indigenous Nations' histories as well as the Town's post-contact history.

2. Policies and Projects

Municipalities undertake a wide range of activities that have legislative requirements to consult with Indigenous Nations and Peoples. There are also other activities for which mutual recognition and respect, as well as shared responsibilities, allow for broader outreach and engagement with Indigenous communities.

This section identifies the types of activities the Town undertakes involving engagement with Indigenous Nations and Peoples. These include broad policy projects, such as Town-initiated studies, master plans and the Official Plan Review, as well as development and infrastructure projects. It also identified other opportunities such as Town-sponsored cultural events, public art, environmental stewardship, naming/messaging for Town signs, public spaces and assets, and sports/healthy living programming.

3. Meaningful Engagement

Meaningful engagement is intended to raise awareness and build understanding among all parties so that informed input and decision-making can occur. The goal is for the engagement process to be mutually beneficial. Through the co-development of the Protocol, the following guiding principles were identified as the foundation for meaningful engagement:

- Meaningful: meaningful relationships take time and effort to maintain
- Respect: respect and understanding are the foundation of meaningful relationships
- Trust: trust reinforced through transparency and accountability
- Change: change requires collaboration, co-development, and coordination

This section outlines the Town and MCFN's understanding of meaningful engagement and identifies the key parameters of the engagement lifecycle. These include early outreach to Indigenous communities to share project details; building knowledge through sharing draft reports and incorporating Indigenous input; providing project updates and clarifying how Indigenous input has been incorporated; documenting engagement efforts and outcomes.

The section also addresses the value of building on shared experiences to identify challenges and successes and productive ways to improve the engagement process. This will be achieved through establishing regular meetings with Indigenous communities at specific times of the year to discuss projects, communication efforts and outcomes, and refinements to the Protocol. These meetings could align with Town project planning following budget approval or in advance of fieldwork activities, and at the end of fieldwork activities or in alignment with year-end reporting.

This section also identifies potential social and project risks for the Town in poor execution of the Indigenous community engagement process. The Town must ensure staff are aware of this Protocol and support their efforts to mitigate potential risks. Careful planning, preparation, undertaking and documentation of the engagement process by staff will be important to ensuring success of the Protocol in aiding the fostering of deeper relationships with Indigenous communities.

4. Community-Specific Engagement

This section outlines the engagement interests and expectations of the different Indigenous communities based on direct input from them. These community-specific engagement expectations will inform staff in preparing for and undertaking Indigenous consultation. Establishing clear boundaries and expectations provides a basis to build upon.

In brief, MCFN's engagement expectations address such matters as recognition of MCFN territory, honour, respect, early notice, capacity funding, full participation, protection of the cultural and natural environment, cooperation and collaboration, accommodation, long term relationship agreements, and refusals/consent.

Next Steps

To date, the Town has engaged with Indigenous communities on a variety of infrastructure and policy planning projects, such as environmental assessments and master plans, as well as heritage signage projects. Engineering staff have established memorandums of understanding with several First Nations with interests in Caledon regarding the retention of Indigenous Field Liaison Representatives during Town-initiated archaeological assessments. The Town has been less consistent about when and how engagement occurs for development planning matters.

The Town will be engaging with MCFN on a variety of community initiatives, an example of which is its current working relationship with MCFN on the Bolton Downtown Revitalization project.

The next step in implementing the Protocol with MCFN will be to schedule the bi-annual meetings to discuss Town projects. This will require prior consultation and coordination between staff.

The Protocol is considered a guiding document in preparation of the updated Official Plan and will inform policy development.

The Protocol identified further steps in the path to reconciliation for the Town to explore, including:

- Indigenous awareness and competency training for municipal staff.
- Acknowledgement and celebration of Indigenous histories, achievements and ways.
- Shift the narrative through diversity and inclusion in employment and procurement practices.
- Establish an Indigenous working committee to co-define and monitor future steps.
- Collaborate with urban Indigenous Peoples and coordinate with local and regional support networks to understand and address needs.
- Collaborate on community awareness / education programming.

Further development of this Protocol will entail outreach/engagement by staff with other Indigenous communities with interests in Caledon, including Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council, Huron-Wendat Nation and Métis Nation of Ontario.

The Protocol is a 'living document' subject to annual review and collaborative refinement based on continued Indigenous engagement and learned experience.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are various financial implications for the Town associated with implementation of the Protocol, including staff training and project budgeting for Indigenous consultation and engagement agreements.

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Sustainable Growth

- Complete the Official Plan Review including designation areas for employment, residential area growth (Mayfield West and Bolton Residential Expansion Study) and Comprehensive Zoning By-law review

Connected Community

- Preserve heritage and natural areas

Improved Service Delivery

- Apply a diversity lens (age, language, culture) throughout the Town's operations and services

ATTACHMENTS

Schedule A: Indigenous Community Engagement Protocol titled "Town of Caledon: A Guide to Meaningful Engagement with Indigenous Neighbours", Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, July 2021