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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 6/16/2021 6:08:11 PM

Subject: [Memo: Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls \(MMIWG\) & Red Women Rising Recommendations Review - Update \(RTS 13910\)](#)

Attachments: [ACCS - GM - Memo \(Council\) - MMIWG-RWR Progress Update \(2021-06-15\).pdf](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

The attached memo from Sandra Singh, General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services provides an update regarding Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice review and the Red Women Rising Recommendations Review. Of note:

- The attached memo provides an interim update to Mayor and Council on staff efforts to review recommendations from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Red Women Rising (RWR) reports, and identify areas of alignment with City priorities and where there are gaps. (RTS# 013910).
- Work on this initiative was significantly delayed in 2020 due to the COVID emergency response.
- Significant work has been underway since September 2020 to review the over 400 recommendations with an External Advisory Group. Next steps are internal review with City departmental representatives to develop potential actions followed by review of draft recommendations by the External Advisory Group and UIPAC.
- Staff currently plan to bring forward a report with recommendations to Mayor and Council in December 2021.

Should you have any questions, please contact Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services at Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca and she will ensure they are responded to through the weekly Council questions process.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

June 11, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Mary Clare Zak, Managing Director, Social Policy & Projects
Shabna Ali, Senior Planner, Social Policy & Projects
Monika Wilson, Manager, Indigenous Relations

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) & Red Women Rising Recommendations Review - Update

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide an interim update to Mayor and Council on staff efforts related to a Council motion of Sept 2019 to review recommendations from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Red Women Rising (RWR) reports, and identify areas of alignment with City priorities and where there are gaps. (RTS# [013910](#)). This motion was in response to a similar motion directed to Mayor and Council and passed in June 2019 by the Urban Indigenous People's Advisory Committee.

BACKGROUND

Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry and Red Women Rising Reports

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2008-2015), which published its Final Report in 2015 (<http://www.trc.ca/about-us/trc-findings.html>) with 94 Calls to Action to advance reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples in Canada and non-Indigenous people, governments, and organizations in Canada. Importantly, the TRC concluded that the removal of children from the influence of their own culture with the intent of assimilating them into the dominant Canadian culture amounted to cultural genocide. Ongoing systemic and societal discrimination, colonial practices, and individual intergenerational impacts of the Indian Residential School System (IRSS) continues to profoundly affect the well-being and prosperity of Indigenous People and Nations across Canada and here in Vancouver. Indigenous women

and girls have been the disproportionately impacted as the targets of violence. This impacts them, their families, their communities and the future of all Indigenous People in Canada. In 2016, the Federal Government launched a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, independent from the federal government. The Mandate of the Commission was to:

- examine and report on the systemic causes behind the violence that Indigenous women and girls experience, and their greater vulnerability to violence, by looking for patterns and underlying factors that explain why higher levels of violence occur. The commissioners have been mandated to examine the underlying historical, social, economic, institutional and cultural factors that contribute to the violence;
- examine practices, policies and institutions such as policing, child welfare, coroners and other government policies/ practices or social/economic conditions; and
- examine and report on institutional policies and practices that have been put in place as a response to violence, including those that have been effective in reducing violence and increasing the safety of Indigenous women and girls.

The Report entitled *Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside within the city of Vancouver* (RWR Report) (<https://dewc.ca/resources/redwomenrising>) was released April 2019. The report was the result of a participatory process that involved 113 Indigenous women and 15 non-Indigenous women as input into the National Inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) and was issued by the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC). This report issued 200 recommendations relating specifically to Vancouver. The RWR Report shares Indigenous women's, 2SLGBTQQIA+ and gender diverse peoples' powerful first-hand realities of violence, residential schools, colonization, land, resource extraction, family trauma, poverty, labour, housing, child welfare, being two-spirit, police, prisons, legal system, overdose crisis, healthcare, and more.

The June 3, 2019 Final Report of the National Inquiry into MMIWG – *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (<https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>) – reported that Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to be murdered or to go missing than members of any other demographic group in Canada. The 231 Calls for Justice (CFJ) contained in the MMIWG Final Report and the RWR Report recommendations together represent important ways to end the generational impacts of colonial systems and to transform systemic and societal values that have worked to maintain colonial violence.

Collectively, these reports are calling for accountability and justice for Indigenous, Metis, and Inuit women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA and gender diverse peoples. The reports call on all Canadians to support the Calls for Justice to end violence against Indigenous women. In order to address these wrongs this work must be led by Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples. In doing so, this process will shed light on the systemic barriers, gaps, and misalignments with the status quo in regards to the CFJ and RWR recommendations.

Approach and COVID Impacts

Recognizing the need to authentically and meaningfully respond to the MMIWG Calls for Justice and the RWR Report recommendations is a key reflection of the ongoing commitments

established in the City's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. In anticipation of the release of the MMIWG Final Report in June of 2019, the City Manager approved funding to advance this work in the spring of 2019. In January 2020, Rachel Wuttunee – an Anishinabek community planner from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug with a Masters degree in Planning from UBC – was hired as a Social Planner to advance this work. Staff started the planning for the work to but were interrupted from March 2020 until approximately September 2020 because staff were seconded to the COVID emergency response. A summary of the work undertaken while at the EOC and over the past nine months is included in Attachment A. Council approved additional funds to complete this work in the 2020 budget, recognizing the redirection of staff to the COVID response.

Staff's role is to review and identify opportunities to integrate priorities and/or recommendations from MMIWG Inquiry Calls for Justice and RWR Report recommendations into the work of the City of Vancouver as a local government. Ultimately, the staff will come forward with specific recommendations for how the City can implement meaningful actions in response to these two reports.

The combined 431 recommendations must be analyzed against a range of existing City policies, practices, and programs, including the City's Reconciliation Framework as a central anchor. Importantly, staff cannot undertake the analysis independent of community: meaningful engagement with communities is critical to creating relevant recommendations that respond to community needs and priorities and, accordingly, a relationship-centred approach is essential for how we develop our local recommendations here in Vancouver.

DISCUSSION

Project Structure

While the project is led out of Arts, Culture, and Community Services, the work is necessarily City inter-departmental in scope. Accordingly, there are structures in place to ensure staff recommendations are both meaningful for the community and approved/achievable by impacted City departments:

External MMIWG2S Advisory Committee: Staff convened a committee of MMIWG Grandmothers, Family Members and Advocates. The advisory committee supports the project in mapping alignments and gaps between the National Inquiry on MMIWG Calls for Justice and the RWR Report recommendations with the cities plans, policies, priorities, and practices.

Inter-Departmental Working Group: Staff are convening an inter-departmental working group with staff representation from across City departments to support the review of recommendations and to assist with prioritization.

Urban Indigenous People Advisory Committee (UIPAC): Staff are supporting a sub committee of the UIPAC to provide advise on this project in response to UIPAC requesting meaningful engagement and involvement on identifying COV priorities.

Drafting Recommendations for the City

Over the fall and winter of 2020/2021, ACCS staff completed the review of the 431 combined recommendations arising from the MMIWG Calls for Justice and RWR Report recommendations in consultation with the External Advisory Committee. Eight key themes identified are:

- Culture and Tradition,
- Indigenous Economic Wellbeing,
- Justice,
- Education,
- Safety and Security,
- Healing and Wellness,
- Housing, and
- Transportation.

These themes are being examined against COV policies, plans, priorities, and practices. The objective is to examine alignment, gaps and opportunities to close gaps between the reports themes and the City's work.

Over the summer, the internal Inter-Departmental Working Group will review the work-to-date, including the mapping and staff analysis, and will be asked for guidance and input on potential actions in response to the recommendations. This is a critical step because the recommendations will have the potential to impact other City strategies and will require work by Departments beyond ACCS. A key consideration for the Interdepartmental Working Group will be how to best strategically identify and prioritize those potential actions with greatest impact, align them, and monitor for accountability.

Recommendations for the City's approach will be drafted and then will be presented to the external advisory committee, UIPAC, and other community groups for their feedback. After this feedback is incorporated, the draft recommendations will be presented to the City Leadership Team for approval before being brought to Council for final consideration.

NEXT STEPS

The project lead recognizes to follow protocol and have permission from the Host Nations to do this work, sing their songs, and share their teachings on their lands. Staff will continue engagement with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations on how they would like to be involved. Squamish has included MMIWG response in their 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

Working closely with the internal inter-departmental working group and with MMIWG Advisory Committee and UIPAC, staff will continue to engage with Indigenous communities and review and identify opportunities to integrate within the City's work key recommendations from both reports.

Timeline

Staff plan to work with the inter-departmental working group and external advisory committee over the remainder of the summer. The current project plan identifies a report to Council in December 2021.

FINAL REMARKS

If there are any questions or Councillors need additional information, please feel free to contact Sandra Singh, General Manager at Sandra.singh@vancouver.ca.



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Attachment A

Related Work

Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh:

Staff was introduced to MST at an Inter-Governmental Relations Department (IGR) meeting to inform them of the MMIWG work underway. Staff identified an opportunity to collaborate in Squamish Nations Strategic Plan “to hold governments accountable for responding to MMIWG”.

Urban Indigenous People’s Advisory Committee

Staff also attends all UIPAC meetings with the MMIWG report being a standing agenda item and updates provided to the committee with regularity. The committee continues to provide input and perspective into this work.

Liaison with senior government

Staff advised at virtual meetings with BC’s response to MMIWG “The Path Forward”. Staff also attended and advised at various provincial and federal initiatives on the prevention of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2S led by the Honorable Carolyn Bennet and Minister Mosef.

Emergency Operations Centre and outreach to Urban Indigenous Communities

Staff conducted outreach to the Urban Indigenous community and non-profit organizations on immediate direct needs and supported coordination of PPE, food, donations, and supplies. Staff also supported the start-up of The Urban Indigenous Pandemic Hub (UIPH), a unique partnership between Metro Vancouver Executive Council (MVAEC), Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), the City, and First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). During this time, staff supported the start-up and work of Urban Indigenous Peer Outreach Street Team “Moccasin Mafia”. This project is led by MMIWG grandmother Skundaal. The team offers culturally appropriate supports and meals during the evening hours when most services are closed. Staff continued to support Moccasin Mafia after closure of the EOC and fostered partnerships and funding opportunities. Currently Moccasin Mafia is working in partnership with Watari and Cedar Feast catering and is funded by United Way. Staff currently takes care of the administrative burden, leaving the community team to focus on outreach and support. This project continues into June 2021.

Social Grants

Staff reviewed and advised ACCS grant application process, scoring matrix for adjudication, and co-facilitated follow up (talking circles) with grantees. Staff piloted a decolonizing oral granting process with Saa-ust for their 2020 funding. All funding sources need to consider the history of the Indian Act 1876 and of withholding resources from Indigenous Peoples.

Oppenheimer, Strathcona, Crabb Park and DTES

Staff brought medicines, food, and donations to the sacred fire held at Oppenheimer, Crabb Park, and Strathcona in solidarity with Culture Saves Lives, and supported the 4 day passing over ceremony for the infant who was found in the portapotty with staff from Carnegie and with community leaders.

Vancouver Police Department and Official Police Complaint Commissioner of BC

In partnership with Pacific Association of First Nation Women (PAFNW) staff advises and provides strategic advice on shifting the VPD and OPCC investigations and complaint process's to be more transparent, culturally aware, and trauma informed.

Response to Gassy Jack Monument

Staff also supported outreach to Indigenous leaders regarding the Gastown plan and the "Gassy Jack" monument. Vancouver founder John Deighton married a 12-year-old Indigenous girl "Quahail-ya" after his first wife's death. In response to the Gastown BIA's request to remove the statue the Squamish Nation released a statement recommending that the descendants of their ancestors and the Squamish Nation be involved in any decisions about the telling of their people's history or actions taken in their people's name. The City is currently waiting for further instruction.