

Indigenous Relations: 2025 Annual Report

Appendix A – Actioned Commitments under the Indigenous Relations & Inclusion Strategy

PURPOSE

Appendix A – Actioned Commitments under the Indigenous Relations & Inclusion Strategy outlines the actions the City of Thunder Bay has undertaken to advance reconciliation, foster inclusion, and build meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples.

This document is an Appendix to Corporate Report 353-2025 detailing a clear account of the commitments that have been actioned under the Strategy from 2020-2025 and is intended to inform the Standing Committee on Quality-of-Life, City Council, Indigenous partners, and members of the public about the progress made to date and next steps.

These actions reflect the City’s commitment to moving from intention to action, demonstrating transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to priorities identified in collaboration with Indigenous partners, communities, and organizations. This appendix serves to summarize completed and ongoing initiatives while establishing a strong foundation for continued efforts toward a more respectful, inclusive, and equitable Thunder Bay.

PILLAR 1: RESPECTFUL RELATIONS

Commitment 1: Implement relationship agreements with Indigenous partners		
	Progress	Next Steps
1.1 Analyze and develop a work plan to operationalize City-signed relationship agreements and publicly declared commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Declaration of Commitment signed with Fort William First NationMOU with Thunder Bay District Metis Council currently under review with CTB Legal; anticipatory signing mid-to-late 2026Friendship Agreement signed with North Caribou Lake First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete a comprehensive review of all City-signed agreements and commitments, clarifying intent, roles, timelines, and reporting obligationsTranslate agreement commitments into concrete, time-bound actions integrated into divisional and corporate work plans



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Indigenous partners through relationship-based processes to confirm priorities, sequencing, and culturally appropriate decision-making Establish accountability mechanisms, including progress tracking, regular reporting to Council and partners, and ongoing review informed by partner feedback
1.2 Dialogue and report annually on progress on implementing agreements with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to establish regular dialogue and complete formal reporting will be renewed and prioritized moving forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regular, relationship-based dialogue with Indigenous partners to discuss implementation progress Confirm preferred communication methods, frequency, and cultural protocols Develop a standardized annual reporting framework for agreement implementation Establish mechanisms to measure both process and relationship outcomes Demonstrate responsiveness by acting on partner feedback
Commitment 2: Honour & foster relations with Fort William First Nation, Metis, and local Indigenous Partners		
	Progress	Next Steps
2.1 Present motion for Council to annually confirm Declaration of Commitment to Urban Aboriginal Peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion brought forth to Council on annual basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule annual Council motion to reaffirm the Declaration; align with existing event/celebration
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant progress made under the Declaration of Commitment Agreement with Fort William First Nation; regular meetings with multiple divisions to address issues of mutual interest and advance shared initiatives. Key areas of collaboration include: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain regular, relationship-based engagement with Indigenous partners Coordinate internal City participation to support respectful and consistent engagement



<p>Indigenous partner staff to strengthen working relations</p> <p>(b) Appoint Council member to attend Elders Council meetings</p> <p><i>** Elders Council now formally recognized as Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC)</i></p>	<p>Archaeology Intern Project, West Arthur Secondary Plan and Master Plan, City of Thunder Bay Belrose Study, Archaeological Management Plan, Preliminary discussions on the Trowbridge Mountain Biking Trails and related archaeological findings, Thunder Bay Northwest Arterial Addendum Archaeological Assessment (in partnership with Fort William First Nation and Red Sky Métis Independent Nation), and ongoing discussions regarding the use of Chippewa Park facilities by Thunderbird Rescue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly meetings with Métis Nation of Ontario, Red Sky Métis Independent Nation, and Fort William First Nation • Truth and Reconciliation Planning Committee developed with 14+ local Indigenous partners, currently on hold • Councillor Shelby Ch'ng appointed to IAC • Enhanced working relations between City Council, IAC, and Indigenous partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Fort William First Nation, Red Sky Métis Independent Nation, Métis Nation, and Indigenous partners to support ongoing collaboration • Identify shared priorities, emerging issues, and opportunities for partnership • Identify and appoint a Council member to attend IAC meetings post-election • Provide orientation and cultural protocol guidance to the appointed member • Establish feedback loop between IAC and City leadership
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Commitment 3: Guide & support City leadership and staff in advancing Indigenous Relations

	Progress	Next Steps
<p>3.1 Provide professional learning opportunities and supports to empower leadership and administration to build effective working relations with Indigenous partners</p> <p>(a) Renew and deliver Indigenous Cultural Awareness and other relevant learning opportunities to City Council and staff</p> <p>(b) Evaluate Walk-a-Mile training to respond to evolving needs with Indigenous community input</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51.63% of staff have completed Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training, with 48.37% pending completion • 51.67% of trained staff have participated in additional cultural learning • ICAT expanded from 3 to 6 hours to strengthen learning outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue renewing and supporting the delivery of Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training and other relevant learning opportunities for Council and staff • Expand learning opportunities to align with emerging priorities and organizational needs • Establish a regular delivery schedule for Council and staff

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation approach revised to address delivery challenges • IAC engaged to reassess training content and effectiveness • 20 staff participated in Indigenous Engagement 101 pilot training • Expression of Interest for ICAT facilitators renewed to build capacity/increase training opportunities • Staff engaging in cultural competency opportunities offered through community partners external to CTB • CTB Supervisors advocating for additional learning opportunities for staff, even if informal; recognizing importance and prioritizing access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate learning opportunities into onboarding and leadership development programs • Develop a competencies roadmap/matrix to identify staff learning needs and develop differentiated delivery models based on need • Conduct a formal evaluation with Indigenous community input • Update training content to reflect evolving community priorities and lived experiences
<p>3.2 Confirm appropriate engagement approaches with Indigenous partners</p> <p>(a) Draft a guidance document and deliver staff training on engagement with Indigenous partners and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance document drafted to support engagement efforts, currently under review for widespread distribution • Informal training opportunities provided to staff regarding engagement approaches and support • Departmental bundles are being developed; training to be provided to empower staff to lead engagement initiatives in culturally informed and appropriate manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop consistent, organization-wide engagement approaches grounded in respect, reciprocity, and relationship-building • Finalize an Indigenous engagement guidance document • Support the delivery of staff training with a focus on consistent and culturally appropriate engagement across the organization • Maximize InsideCTB platform to improve staff access • Explore development of a centralized, Indigenous-led, staff portal enabling employees across all departments to access Indigenous-specific content and resources, engage in interactive and non-traditional learning, track competencies progress, etc.

Pillar 2: Responsive City

Commitment 4: Implement Anti-Racism & Inclusion Accord		
	Progress	Next Steps
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft proposal for third-party systemic review of corporate policies and procedures completed Cross-departmental collaboration to align the systemic review with existing corporate policy and procedure reviews underway Draft Indigenous Inclusion Lens developed to support identification of systemic racism and barriers as part of Phase I audit work Indigenous Advisory Council engagement to inform implementation of policy changes related to Indigenous inclusion and cultural safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure third-party reviewer and initiate Phase I audit Apply the Indigenous Inclusion Lens across priority policy areas Identify and prioritize actions for redress based on audit findings
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accord Implementation Working Group is in a planned pause; work expected to resume in 2026 Analysis of Accord commitments, TRC Calls to Action, and MMIWG Calls for Justice ongoing Approx. 33% of relevant TRC Calls to Action are implemented/in progress City-wide anti-racism resources launched, including Accord website and Anti-Racism Resource Guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete analysis of remaining TRC Calls to Action and MMIWG Calls for Justice Develop short- and long-term anti-racism action plan aligned with Accord commitments Strengthen staff access to enhanced anti-racism learning resources in collaboration with Community Safety & Well-Being and Human Resources
4.3 Facilitate Resource Guide Working Group to support Accord signatory organizations' members (Coalition) implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accord Resource Guide completed and approved to support Coalition implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-launch and promote the Resource Guide to Accord signatory organizations



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather feedback from Coalition members to inform future updates
4.4 Support Coalition efforts and Accord awareness through communications methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundational anti-racism tools developed, supporting consistent Accord messaging Inter-departmental collaboration continues to align communications and awareness efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen coordinated communications to increase Accord visibility and understanding Leverage digital platforms to support ongoing public and organizational awareness
Commitment 5: Inclusive research & policy development		
	Progress	Next Steps
5.1 Where required, develop practices and procedures that enhance inclusion and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of tools developed/in-development to empower staff to engage and advance Indigenous Relations Indigenous inclusion lens, smudging protocol, land acknowledgement guide, elders' protocol, honoraria guide, etc. developed Developed Sacred Fire protocol, training and procedures to support TBFR understanding, capacity, service deliveries and related competencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue developing practices/procedures to build capacity, enhance inclusion and training Explore differentiated approaches and experiential opportunities to support further learning for CTB staff
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and analysis completed on the City's response to the TRC Calls to Action, MMIWG Calls for Justice, and the Seven Youth Inquest recommendations as well as on-going research and analysis on Indigenous issues to support City objectives Findings have informed advice to the Corporation and supported alignment with reconciliation and anti-racism commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue analysis to identify additional TRC Calls to Action and MMIWG Calls for Justice applicable to City operations Strengthen the integration of research findings into corporate policy, planning, and decision-making



Commitment 6: Promote workplace diversity & inclusive employee supports		
	Progress	Next Steps
6.1 Revive and coordinate City Indigenous Employees' Network to identify priorities and engage staff for further retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review purpose, direction, and impact of Indigenous Employees Network Relaunch with clear/established direction Explore opportunities for Indigenous Self-Identification amongst staff
6.2 Collaborate with Well at Work, Health & Wellness Coordinator to develop culturally responsive staff supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect with HR to discuss next steps in advancing/embedding culturally responsive supports
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in local career fairs Ongoing work with HR to identify contacts/expand reach to Indigenous candidates Early-stage participation to support employment equity studies and implementation of workforce diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships with Indigenous employment agencies Develop recruitment pathway Leverage existing community employment/training programs supporting Indigenous residents Increase opportunities for secondary/post-secondary student placements, apprenticeships, employment program placement for Indigenous peoples

Pillar 3: Education & Inclusion

Commitment 7: Collaborate with partners on public awareness activities to promote Indigenous inclusion and address racism in the community		
	Progress	Next Steps
7.1 Continue supporting Indigenous-led community gatherings that support Indigenous inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent support for Indigenous-led community gatherings, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maamawe Family Day Pow Wow World Water Day National Indigenous Peoples Day Treaties Recognition Week National Indigenous Disabilities Awareness Month Spirit Garden Revitalization Wabshkaa Animkii Benisii Pow Wow Diversity Thunder Bay Speakers Event Maamawe Art Bus Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build cross-sectoral partnerships internally to support enhanced collaboration, increase resources, and maximize impact Embed annual events into workplans expanding resource/staffing support Ensure Indigenous partners/programs are aware of funding opportunities or support through existing City programs
7.2 Continue to honour commemorative days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Survivor's Day proclaimed and recognized annually (June 30) Honouring of commemorative days through flag raising ceremonies, media releases, events, and education initiatives Commemorative days are noted on the Indigenous Relations Website with culturally informed explanations and links to deepen learning/understanding Communication blasts are delivered via email to all City staff with information regarding commemorative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to honour commemorative days, annual proclamations and public education activities Work cross-divisionally to expand support and bring a strengthened/collaborative approach to events that honour commemorative days Leverage existing teams to support broader corporate efforts related to Indigenous Relations



	<p>days, and additional links to further learning and build capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorative days honoured include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Valentine's Day Memorial Walk ○ National Day of Awareness for MMIWG2S ○ Indigenous Survivors Day ○ National Day for Truth & Reconciliation/ Orange Shirt Day ○ Sisters in Spirit Day ○ Indigenous Veteran's Day ○ Louis Riel Day ○ Water Walks 	
7.3 Support speaking engagements and awareness campaigns when requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported numerous speaking engagements and awareness campaigns upon request across health, education, community service, justice, and government sectors • Visible in community; ongoing support for community-led initiatives/events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/implement awareness campaigns to support safe/inclusive communities from Indigenous perspective • Continue supporting requests aligned with reconciliation priorities
Commitment 8: Honour & celebrate Indigenous space & place		
	Progress	Next Steps
8.1 Collaborate with staff on City-led initiatives that promote Indigenous inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Survivor's Day Proclamation (June 30) • 2 treaty text signs have been installed permanently at City Hall • Indigenous City Spaces featured on City's Indigenous Relations webpage • 3 project completes; 5 projects in progress; 2 projects in consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue collaboration on City-led inclusion initiatives • Empower staff throughout the Corporation to bring forth ideas that support opportunities to promote Indigenous inclusion

8.2 Honour Indigenous history and culture in City spaces through exhibits and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits, ceremonies, and recognition initiatives implemented; ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host exhibit from Legacy of Hope Foundation in collaboration with community partners Leverage and support existing exhibits and activities that honour Indigenous history and culture in City Spaces Advocate for Indigenous Cultural Hub and Creative Space across departments
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sacred Fire infrastructure and guidance tools implemented Indigenous-led public art initiatives underway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance new place-making opportunities with Indigenous and/or community partners Maintain and enhance existing spaces

PILLAR 4: INDIGENOUS-COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

Commitment 9: Provide guidance to make City services responsive to needs of Indigenous Peoples		
	Progress	Next Steps
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing guidance provided by the Indigenous Advisory Council through regular meetings; IAC currently comprised of 8 voting members, one Councillor, and City Administration IAC Terms of Reference formally adopted following Ratification Ceremony (April 2025) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify service improvements supporting equitable access Advance development/implementation of Indigenous newcomer resources

<p><i>** Elders Council now formally recognized as Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAC accessible through regular meetings, ad hoc sessions, and on as needed/available basis • IAC identification recognized as need; beaded medallions have been commissioned with expected completion Spring 2026; medallions to be worn when representing the IAC in any official capacity • Welcome Kit developed; implementation deferred 	
<p>9.2 Promote role models and mentorship opportunities for Indigenous residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support student placements through sections, divisions, departments and corporation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to develop CTB Indigenous Excellence Awards • Expand mentorship and role-model initiatives through student placements, summer student positions, and community-based education/training programs
<p>Commitment 10: Improve outreach & communications on City services</p>		
	<p>Progress</p>	<p>Next Steps</p>
<p>10.1 Support collaborative approaches for orientation activities for First Nations students from remote communities attending school in Thunder Bay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently support established orientation activities such as DFC Amazing Race, Matawa Career Fairs, and NAN Student Orientation, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop orientation activities based on Seven Youth Inquest Recommendations and best practices in First Nations Education in collaboration with Tourism Thunder Bay • Support collaborative approaches and enhance existing programs/activities • Participate in Wake the Giant activities as engaged community partner • Strengthen partnerships supporting student transitions



10.2 Improve communication and outreach on initiatives and funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased social media presence via Facebook platform since 2021; approximately 2200 followers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue improving accessibility and outreach as capacity allows Key event sponsor Wake the Giant 2026 and beyond Improve CTB communication/outreach initiatives to better engage/serve Indigenous residents, partners and communities
10.3 Update the City Indigenous Relations and Inclusion website and public-facing communication materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website updates completed in 2021 and 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue periodic updates to reflect evolving priorities
Commitment 11: Advocate & work with governments & local partners to improve outcomes		
	Progress	Next Steps
11.1 Continue collaborative relationship with and seek ongoing advice from the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee (UAAC) on priorities of mutual interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing engagement with UAAC maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue seeking advice on shared priorities
11.2 Work with local partners to support enhanced coordination of existing efforts and services for Indigenous peoples in Thunder Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support provided to multiple Indigenous-led initiatives and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen coordination with community partners
11.3 Strengthen relationships with provincial and federal partners to collaborate while leveraging investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with intergovernmental and Indigenous networks maintained Engaged with Indigenous Municipal Network to discuss trends, challenges, and best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue reporting on Inquest-related progress to Council and partners Continue relationships with government partners and the Indigenous Municipal Network