Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – September 17, 2019

REPORTS

Item No. 4 Welcoming Winnipeg – Reconciling our History – Phase 1 Update

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee recommended to Council:

1. That an extension of time of up to 120 days be granted for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Rolling,

That an extension of time of up to 120 days be granted for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

Carried

COUNCIL DECISION:

On June 20, 2019, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee and adopted the following:

1. That the Public Service report back to Council by September 2019, with its recommendation for a Welcoming Winnipeg policy, an implementation plan and recommendations for policy changes or enhancements, if needed, including but not limited to historical markers (including plaques, markers and statues) or place names (including historic trails, street names, park names and buildings).

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On June 11, 2019, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to Council.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Welcoming Winnipeg – Reconciling our History – Phase 1 Update

Critical Path: Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
R. Forgues	M. Jack	N/A	M. Ruta, Acting CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Winnipeg, we have an opportunity to honour our Treaty relationship and re-examine our relationship with Indigenous Peoples and the traditional lands on which Winnipeg was built. With the arrival of Settlers in Canada, Indigenous territories were re-mapped and re-named, becoming the standard for cities that continue to grow within Indigenous territories. In some cases, historical markers commemorate historical figures that advocated, constructed, and participated in creating policies, laws, and legislation that had devastating effects on the lives of Indigenous peoples, such as residential schools from 1880 to 1996.

The City is committed to a Journey of Reconciliation. To date this journey has included the Mayor declaring 2016 as the Year of Reconciliation; the City supporting the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action (43, 47, 57, 75 and 77); establishing Winnipeg's first Indigenous Accord; and adopting a practice of territorial acknowledgements.

On January 29, 2019, the Mayor announced that the City would be launching a public engagement process to assist the City in the development of a process and policy to guide how the city recognizes and commemorates various historical figures and events with markers, place names, plaques, signs, street names, etc. Public engagement activities occurred during February and March 2019. Participants of the engagement process were advised that a Phase 2 process would include draft recommendations being shared for additional feedback before being considered by Council, originally targeted for the June 2019 Council meeting.

However, accommodating requests for additional consultation opportunities impacted Phase 1 timelines, and delayed the analysis of feedback. This information will be used in Phase 2 to draft policy changes or enhancements that will be taken back to the community for further input and refinement before presentation to Council for their consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Public Service report back to Council by September 2019, with its recommendation for a Welcoming Winnipeg policy, an implementation plan and recommendations for policy changes or enhancements, if needed, including but not limited to historical markers (including plaques, markers and statues) or place names (including historic trails, street names, park names and buildings).

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On January 29, 2019, Mayor Bowman announced a public engagement effort regarding the Welcoming Winnipeg initiative. The public engagement is intended to obtain input from Winnipeggers to help the City develop a process and policy to guide how the City recognizes and commemorates various historical people and events with place names, plaques, signs, and street names.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no financial implications related to the recommendations as activities involve using existing mechanisms and resources for internal and ongoing external consultations.

Phase 2 is required as it was shared with community that results would be reported back and an opportunity would be available to share ideas on next steps.

Further consultation would also allow for increased Indigenous input as less than 20% of respondents in the engagement activities identified as Indigenous.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Winnipeg has the largest per capita population of Indigenous peoples of any major city in Canada. Indigenous people have lived here for millennia and Indigenous peoples have contributed to the creation and evolution of Winnipeg. However, not all of our collective history is fully reflected in existing historical markers (including plaques, markers and statues) or place names (including historic trails, street names, park names and buildings). For this reason, it is imperative that Winnipeg take a leadership role to build knowledge and understanding on this important matter.

The subject and priorities of this initiative emerged through previous discussions with members of a tri-level government committee considering Indigenous priorities and identifying ways to create a more welcoming Winnipeg. The City's Indigenous Relations Division secured project funding for staffing resources to produce an initial inventory of historical sites and monuments,

murals, business, and other opportunities to promote Indigenous contributions, stories, and perspectives through signage, digital media and various other forms.
Choosing place names and public monuments that are culturally and historically meaningful, and resonant for the public, is a matter of current national concern. In August 2018, the City of Victoria removed the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald, the country's first prime minister, from its city hall front steps. Later that month, a statue of Macdonald was vandalized in Regina, with its hands painted red – mirroring an earlier vandalization in Montreal, where a Macdonald statue was painted totally red in 2017.

Mayor Bowman stated that "What we're trying to do here is learn from what we've seen in other communities, where municipal governments have reacted to debates about single monuments or place names," he said. “We don’t know how Winnipeg should deal with these issues and wants to consult Winnipeggers first, adding the initiative is a part of reconciliation efforts.”
The Welcoming Winnipeg initiative could be an example of how government can support Call to Action #43, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples particularly:

Article 11

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

Article 13

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.

Article 15

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.
2. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

In December 2018, the Mayor’s Indigenous Advisory Circle (MIAC) provided preliminary input for the Welcoming Winnipeg initiative and the Mayor requested that the Indigenous Relations Division prioritize the Welcoming Winnipeg initiative.

Phase 1 of the engagement process was launched in January 2019 and continued to March 2019. It included a promotional video, online survey, public workshops, a panel event; and opportunities to submit stories by email and telephone. The results of these activities will assist in the development of a process and policy for decision-making related to historical markers

(including plaques, markers and statues) or place names (including historic trails, street names, park names and buildings).

Public engagement preliminary results:
The Indigenous Relations Division and the Office of Public Engagement completed the first phase of the Welcoming Winnipeg public engagement process that collected public opinion to ensure the contributions, experiences, and perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are reflected truthfully in Winnipeg's stories, historical markers, and place names.

Invitations to participate in activities and events went out to 141 organizations through the Winnipeg Indigenous Accord and through the Indigenous Relations Division's Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak distribution list of over 1000+ subscribers; events were also promoted through social media (Twitter and Facebook).

To date, 700+ Winnipeggers have participated in engagement opportunities – of which less than 20% identified as Indigenous.

The various mechanisms included questions on adding perspectives, removing markers, or adding new historical markers;

- 62% indicated low support to remove historical marker
- 27% indicated high support to remove markers
- 11% were neutral

In most cases, it was noted that by removing markers, an opportunity for conversation and acknowledgement would be lost.

There were also questions regarding ways to recognize Indigenous Peoples and their contributions through permanent and honourary street and place names; as well acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples relations to territory and lands through traditional place names. Overall support leans towards honouring and acknowledging Indigenous Peoples contributions.

It was shared that results would be reported back and they will be provided an opportunity to share ideas on next steps.

This initial feedback is similar to the broader North American dialogue and actions occurring to address the imbalance of what and who is remembered and commemorated regarding the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples displaced from lands, economies, languages, cultures, and communities.

Internationally, New York City commissioned a Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art monuments, where, over a period of 90 days, commissioners met to discuss controversial monuments and art within the city guided by five principals.

Similar Canadian municipal examples addressing this dialogue include; the City of Toronto adding a giant medicine wheel to their city sign at Nathan Phillips Square to honour Indigenous

Peoples for National Indigenous Peoples Day; and the City of Regina has established an official committee that reviews applications for re-naming streets within this context.

Locally, the City of Winnipeg is experiencing activities that include commemorating and celebrating Indigenous Peoples and places such as; the renaming of the North Winnipeg Parkway (in progress); the public art installation on the Bunn's Creek Parkway; renaming a City recreation facility to Sergeant Tommy Prince Place; and renaming a City Park Giizhigooweyaabikew Park that honours community leader Leslie Spillet. These recent activities demonstrate the need for change of how the City names historical markers and places in Winnipeg, in particular actively highlighting Indigenous history, culture and language.

On February 26, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection Community Services and Parks directed that the Winnipeg Public Service report back in 120 days, with a cumulative listing of assets for the purpose of creating one comprehensive by-law for naming/renaming of city assets, excluding Street Names. It is envisioned that the Welcoming Winnipeg initiative would be a companion piece within this process that is to be determined.

The Indigenous Relations Division is proposing to engage the Mayors Indigenous Advisory Council and Human Rights Committee of Council (HRCC) on the Welcoming Winnipeg initiative. Input from the phase one consultations noted high support for community input in the decision-making process as it relates to naming and renaming historical markers and place names.

The feedback gathered through the public engagement process is currently being finalized and will be used to help inform the recommendations for further community input and Council's consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: May 17, 2019

Project Name:

Welcoming Winnipeg – Reconciling our History – Phase 1

COMMENTS:

There is no financial impact associated with the report recommendations. All recommendations will delivered through existing staff resources.

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Tanis Yanchishyn
Manager of Finance (Campus)
Corporate Finance Department

CONSULTATION

Office of Public Engagement

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

Complete Communities Direction Strategy

Supporting Direction 1 - Conserve, protect, and celebrate the significant heritage resources that illustrate the broad range of Winnipeg's heritage values.
Supporting Direction 2 - Provide leadership in heritage conservation that links to broader civic goals of economic development, sustainability, and neighbourhood planning

SUBMITTED BY

Department:
Division: Indigenous Relations
Prepared by: R. Forgues
Date: May 24, 2019