

Report To:	Regional Chair and Members of Regional Council
From:	Jane MacCaskill, Chief Administrative Officer
Date:	June 15, 2022
Report No:	CA-04-22
Re:	Relationship Agreement with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Regional Council endorse the Relationship Agreement between Halton Region and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.
2. THAT the Regional Chair be authorized to sign the Relationship Agreement with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation on behalf of Regional Council as outlined in Report No. CA-04-22 re: "Relationship Agreement with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation".
3. THAT a copy of Report No. CA-04-22 be forwarded to the City of Burlington, Town of Halton Hills, Town of Milton, Town of Oakville, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) for their information.

REPORT

Executive Summary

- Through Report No. CA-07-21: Indigenous Relationship Initiative Update, Regional Council endorsed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report and Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as well as highlighted the importance of building and fostering relationships with Indigenous Peoples, Communities and First Nations.
- While there are no specific First Nation communities located within the boundaries of Halton Region, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) are the Treaty Holders of the territory in which Halton Region sits.

- Relationship agreements can be helpful in building and fostering relationships while identifying areas of mutual concern and interest, as well as in establishing and supporting shared understanding and ongoing conversations.
- As part of Halton Region's responsibility to move forward with Truth and Reconciliation, the Region has begun building relationships with Indigenous Peoples, Communities and First Nations and has jointly developed a Relationship Agreement with MCFN.

Background

Halton Context

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released a summary of its findings along with 94 "calls to action" to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples and directed all levels of government, organizations, as well as individuals to make concrete changes in society.

In September 2007, the United Nations adopted the UNDRIP. The declaration acknowledges both individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples around the world, as well as the principles of equality, partnership, good faith and mutual respect.

While there are no First Nation Communities located within the boundaries of Halton, there are Indigenous Communities around Halton, including MCFN, whom are the original Treaty and titleholders of the territory in which Halton Region resides.

National Indigenous History Month

June is recognized in Canada as National Indigenous History Month to honour the history, heritage and diversity of Indigenous Peoples. It is also an opportunity to recognize the strength of present-day Indigenous Communities. National Indigenous History Month is a time for learning about, appreciating and acknowledging the contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. As part of Halton Region's recognition of Indigenous Peoples, Communities and First Nations, Council has endorsed the permanent flying of the Flag of MCFN and the Region now has a Land Acknowledgement Statement that was developed in consultation with MCFN. Presenting the proposed Relationship Agreement to Council during June is of great significance.

Discussion

Relationship Building in Halton

Over the past two years, Halton Region has been moving forward in the journey to learn more about the Indigenous narrative, history and rights while recognizing the importance of building and fostering meaningful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous Peoples, Communities and First Nations based on cultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect. As part of Halton Region's commitment to build and foster meaningful relationships, regional staff have been instrumental in establishing and building key and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, Communities and First Nations, including MCFN. MCFN has met numerous times with staff from various departments to share their history, culture and heritage. This has proven to be an important form of knowledge exchange that helps to increase cultural knowledge and understanding in the Regions' journey of relationship building.

Relationship Agreements

Municipal governments across Canada are looking to implement changes within their organizations as part of their journey in creating meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples, Communities and First Nations. Relationship agreements can be helpful in building and fostering relationships while identifying areas of mutual concern and interest, as well as in establishing and supporting shared understanding and ongoing conversations. To support municipalities in this work, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has developed and released guides and resources, which can be found on AMO's website <https://www.amo.on.ca/advocacy/indigenous-relations/municipal-indigenous-relations> . As part of Halton's own agreement work, these tools were consulted and input was provided through Halton's involvement on the AMO Indigenous Relations Task Force. Halton Region would be a leader amongst its municipal counterparts in being one of, if not the first municipality, in Ontario to endorse a relationship agreement.

Relationship Agreement between Halton Region and MCFN

As part of moving forward with this meaningful relationship, Halton Region staff have been working with MCFN to develop a Relationship Agreement, which can be found in Attachment #1. The objective of this Relationship Agreement is to establish a constructive, collaborative and mutually respectful relationship between Halton Region and MCFN. The purpose of the Agreement is to formalize the working relationship between the Region and MCFN as well as to help to achieve the shared objectives of the TRC Calls to Action and the UNDRIP. Some notable elements of this Agreement include:

- acknowledgement of the role of MCFN in regard to Treaty Rights and responsibility and the commitment to develop a long-lasting relationship based on understanding and mutual respect;

- a mutual agreement which outlines that in order to become better allies and work toward reconciliation it is necessary to learn more about each other, the land and its history;
- desire to develop a lasting relationship that is based on the principles of understanding, mutual respect and reciprocity;
- recognition that various ongoing, planned, and future projects, activities and initiatives will be entirely within the Region and MCFN's Territory and have the potential to engage MCFN's Rights;
- agreement to work together on priority areas that strengthen relationships and build lasting friendships and partnerships;
- agreement that projects and activities should be conducted in a manner that is ecologically sound, involves MCFN as environmental stewards and promotes the recognition of MCFN's rights, history, culture and traditions;
- agreement to a set of guiding principles to be applied when engaging in collaborative discussions related to projects and activities;
- commitment to furthering the relationship by creating a process for consultation on specific subject matters identified by the Parties (e.g. stewardship, cultural heritage) and consultation generally on the current Region Official Plan Review and future reviews that occur within the timeframe of the Relationship Agreement; and
- commitment to establishing a working committee/s including officials from the Region and MCFN that will meet, as required, in order to make progress on the objectives and purposes of the Relationship Agreement and will report on progress.

Ogimaa (Chief) Stacey Laforme from MCFN has been a strong advocate for developing the Relationship Agreement between Halton Region and MCFN. Together with Ogimaa Laforme, Regional staff in Strategic Policy & Government Relations and Legal Services have been instrumental in the development of this Relationship Agreement, which staff recommend Regional Council endorse.

Next Steps

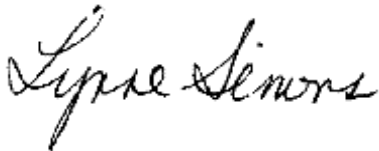
If passed, Ogimaa Laforme and Chair Carr will participate in a signing ceremony to commemorate this important and significant event. Regional Council will continue to be updated as appropriate on the outcomes associated with the Relationship Agreement.

As Halton Region moves forward with our commitment to the TRC calls to action, and continues to build relationships with Indigenous People, Communities and First Nations, this approach will guide our work in fostering these meaningful relationships.

FINANCIAL/PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Costs to support the Relationship Agreement with MCFN, largely related to honorarium for MCFN's participation, are included in the 2022 Operating Budget. Any future financial impacts related to supporting MCFN will be brought forward for Council's consideration through the annual budget process.

Respectfully submitted,



Lynne Simons
Director, Strategic Policy & Government
Relations

Approved by



Jane MacCaskill
Chief Administrative Officer

If you have any questions on the content of this report,
please contact:

Lynne Simons

Tel. # 6008

Attachments: Attachment #1 - Relationship Agreement between Halton Region and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation