

Edmonton

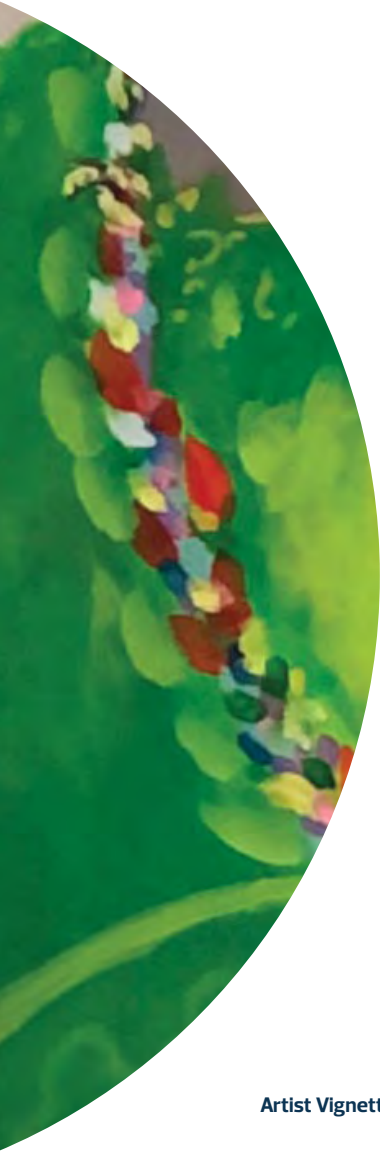
CITY OF EDMONTON
INDIGENOUS
FRAMEWORK

OUR
JOURNEY
2023

WAHIGICCOBI
WÂHKÔHTOWIN
ILAGIINGNIQ
KINSHIP



Artist: MJ Belcourt Moses



HONOURING PLACE

Land acknowledgements remind us to continue strengthening relationships and understanding between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples. As City of Edmonton staff undertake the journey of implementing the Indigenous Framework, we recognize our connections to one another and the land. Our work involves building strong communities and a sense of belonging. It is our responsibility to reflect on the stories and experiences that make us who we are, and define our role in renewing relationships with the First Peoples of this land.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Edmonton acknowledges the traditional land on which we reside is in Treaty 6 territory. We thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as nêhiyaw (Cree), Dene, Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Nakota Isga (Nakota Sioux), and Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) peoples. We also acknowledge this land as the Métis homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel. It is a welcoming place for all peoples who come from around the world to share Edmonton as a home. Together we call upon all of our collective, honoured traditions and spirits to work in building a great city for today and future generations.





Guiding Our Journey

Wahigicobi (wah-hee-gee-chee-cho-bee), an Îlethka Nakoda word meaning “kinship relationships,” is a name that Elders gifted to the Indigenous Framework to guide our journey. Elders have also shared with us related terms such as the nêhiyaw (Cree) concept of WÂHKÔHTOWIN (wah-KOH-toh-win), as well as Ilagiingniq (ee-la-geeng-nuk) in Inuktun.

As we strengthen our relationships with Indigenous Peoples, we commit to continuously learning about kinship as shared by Elders and Knowledge Holders.

Acknowledgement of Kinship

Over the past 20 years, both the City of Edmonton and Indigenous community members have made significant efforts to build good relationships. Together we created the Indigenous Framework on that foundation. We are grateful for the Indigenous community members and partners — including Elders, Knowledge Holders and youth — who share their time, knowledge, leadership and lived experience.

This journey is like a winding river that carries close-knit relatives and reveals new ones around each bend. We commit to strengthening the relationships created along the way while looking forward to more on the horizon.



Artist: Lana Whiskeyjack



Working Together and Fostering Good Relations

The Indigenous Framework thrives on the interconnection of many relationships. The City of Edmonton nurtures these connections through celebrations, gatherings, advocacy and public engagements. We work to understand and address the priorities of distinct Indigenous Peoples and communities through dialogue, and by respecting their cultures, traditions and legacies.

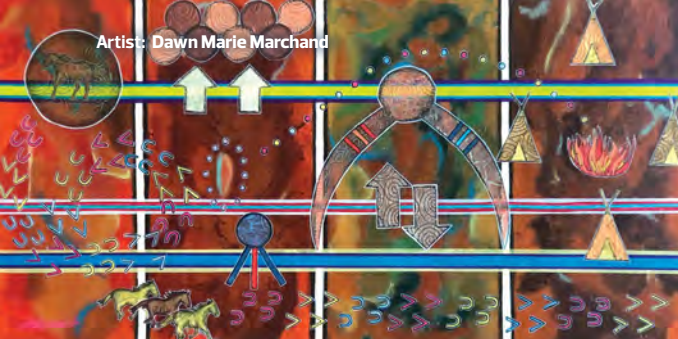
Driven by Indigenous Community Members

As a living initiative, the Indigenous Framework is driven by the voices of Indigenous community members and designed to adapt to their priorities. Every part of our organization, from staff to elected representatives, holds unique and important relationships with Indigenous Peoples. We strive to strengthen these relationships through the principles, roles and commitments of the framework.

Guidance of Elders and Knowledge Holders

A diverse circle of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders from First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities helps to realize the framework. Through ceremonies, prayers and intergenerational teachings, they anchor us to Indigenous ways of knowing and being that model good kinship relationships. This circle also offers guidance on cultural protocols and worldviews that informs our truth and reconciliation journey.

We thank the Elders and Knowledge Holders who graciously share their time and knowledge with City of Edmonton staff, senior leadership and Edmonton City Council.



VISION:

As City of Edmonton employees, we are encouraged and supported to demonstrate leadership in building quality relationships with Indigenous Peoples as we honour and strive to understand Indigenous experiences, histories, and cultures.

In this multigenerational work, the process is just as important as the outcome.

PRINCIPLES: • RELATIONSHIPS • AGREEMENTS • CELEBRATIONS • RENEWAL

FOUR ROLES:

The four roles are guiding lights that show how every City of Edmonton employee can follow the Indigenous Framework.

- Listener:** Listen with open hearts and minds when Indigenous Peoples share their stories and experiences.
- Connector:** Connect Indigenous Peoples to programs, services, people and resources that enrich the community and nurture relationships to create positive change.
- Partner:** Work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples on initiatives to improve the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Edmonton.
- Advocate:** Stand with Indigenous Peoples to create a safe and inclusive city where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

SEVEN COMMITMENTS:

These commitments outline how the City of Edmonton strives to honour and enact the framework through policies, programs and services.

Guided by the four roles, our journey in 2023 included many memorable milestones.

Declaring the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation an Annual Civic Holiday

In March 2023, Edmonton City Council officially declared September 30 an annual civic holiday to recognize the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#).

This day honours residential school survivors and the children who never returned home, along with affected families and communities. Understanding this tragic and painful history, and recognizing the intergenerational trauma that ripples into the present, is a vital part of the reconciliation process.

COMMITMENT #1

Support the journey of reconciliation by applying the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the foundation for the Indigenous Framework.



How the City of Edmonton commemorates September 30:

- Supporting community-led gatherings and ceremonies
- Flying city hall flags at half mast
- Lighting the High Level Bridge orange
- Tying orange ribbons on municipal fleet vehicles
- Wearing orange shirts, pins and ribbons
- Displaying Every Child Matters banners in Churchill Square
- Exhibiting the [Survivors' Flag](#), a symbol of remembrance that honours the lives and communities affected by residential schools

COMMITMENT #2

In partnership with organizations, businesses, academic institutions, other orders of government, and individual citizens, eliminate the systemic racism and discrimination that Indigenous Peoples face in Edmonton.

Access to Ceremony – Smudging in City Facilities

Indigenous community members and organizations have been asking for a process to smudge at events and gatherings. Throughout 2023, we worked to remove barriers to this important ceremony in municipal facilities.

Smudging is now allowed in the following City of Edmonton spaces:

- City Hall
- Valley Zoo
- Muttart Conservatory
- All recreation facilities
- Senior centres

Additionally, the City of Edmonton assumes all operational costs to support smudging in these spaces, including electrical modifications and fire safety equipment. While some facilities allow smudging at any time, others require prior notice to prepare equipment and sensors. Staff at each site can provide additional information.



Indigenous Art in the City

Investing in Indigenous artists supports the resurgence, reclamation and revitalization of Indigenous cultures. Creating space for Indigenous artwork is also a direct response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, as well as the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice.

In 2023, we supported:

- The installation of [four Indigenous Framework artworks](#) by **MJ Belcourt Moses**, **Brad Crowfoot**, **Dawn Marie Marchand** and **Lana Whiskeyjack** outside council chambers in Edmonton City Hall
- The [Dignity Mural](#) designed by 15 artists from diverse backgrounds including the lead artist **Carla Rae Taylor**, who has Dene and Irish roots
- A commemorative crosswalk at [Āō°\(ĪNĪW\) River Lot 11∞](#) and two decorative traffic control boxes near Kinsmen Park and Edmonton City Hall — all designed by artist **Lance Cardinal** of Bigstone Cree Nation to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

COMMITMENT #3

Identify and implement ways to make City spaces and buildings welcoming and safe for Indigenous Peoples and ensure they can see themselves reflected in City spaces.

- Additional decorative sign blades designed by the late **Gloria Neapetung** of Yellow Quill First Nation for [Okisikow \(Angel\) Way](#), as well as a commemorative crosswalk at 101A Avenue and 97 Street designed by **Nikk Goodswimmer**



COMMITMENT #4

Support all City staff to build relationships that honour the framework's four roles within their interactions with Indigenous Peoples and increase staff's knowledge of Indigenous cultures, traditions and world views through education and learning opportunities.

Education and Awareness

It is vital that City of Edmonton employees have access to information, resources, experiential opportunities and knowledge sharing networks to enhance their learning journeys.



Some highlights from 2023 include:

- More than 1,670 City of Edmonton employees completed Indigenous Awareness Training in 2023, bringing the total to over 11,500 since 2014
- Learning events about [kihcihkaw aski-Sacred Land](#), as well as our [Urban Reserve Strategy](#) and [MMIWG2S+ Action Plan](#)
- The launch of an internal webpage to host Indigenous Framework learning resources
- Organizing Indigenous Framework learning workshops attended by approximately 1,200 City staff
- Co-creating and promoting a growing collection of educational videos to share teachings and truths from Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders
- City staff are also encouraged and supported to visit Indigenous organizations and participate in community events, such as: [Ben Calf Robe Traditional Powwow](#), [Alberta Indigenous Games](#) and the [Orange Shirt Day Run and Walk](#)
- Gatherings for municipal staff to build kinship with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders
- Indigenous Framework Corporate Action Team visits with Indigenous organizations, and participation in Indigenous events



COMMITMENT #5

Host and participate in events where the City of Edmonton, including Council, senior leadership and all levels of administration, and Indigenous Peoples can build relationships, and celebrate our journey together.

Indigenous Resurgence

The City of Edmonton funds, supports and partners with organizations and events that advance Indigenous sport, recreation and cultures including:

- [Native Hockey Alberta Provincial Championships](#)
- [Ben Calf Robe Traditional Powwow](#)
- [Indigenous Experience](#) at K-Days
- [Youth & Masters Alberta Indigenous Games](#)
- [Treaty No. 6 Recognition Day](#)
- [Métis Recognition Week](#)
- [Poundmaker's Lodge Annual Competition Powwow](#)

We also support community-led events to commemorate the [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#) and celebrate [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#).

These events brought together more than 30,000 people and provided economic opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs, businesses and performers who showcased their products, services and talents.

The City of Edmonton values these partnerships and the opportunity to participate in commemoration, celebration, community connection and public education.

COMMITMENT #6

Identify and remove the systemic barriers that exist for Indigenous people in gaining employment with the City of Edmonton and create career development opportunities for Indigenous employees.



Miyowatisiwin Camp Inspire

In June 2023, Edmonton Fire Rescue Services partnered with Enoch Cree Nation to launch [Miyowatisiwin Camp Inspire](#), a program that encourages Indigenous Peoples to consider a career in firefighting. **A Cree word that means "being of good character,"** Miyowatisiwin is the name Enoch Cree Nation gifted to the program, which introduces participants to the job in a safe and inclusive way. Campers complete simulated ground training exercises and have an opportunity to network with professionals and build confidence while learning skills they can share with their communities.

We do our best work when we work together and when we walk alongside each other on this journey.



COMMITMENT #7

Ensure Indigenous Peoples and City staff are informed and engaged, when appropriate, on actions the City of Edmonton takes in relation to the Indigenous Framework.

Community Engagement

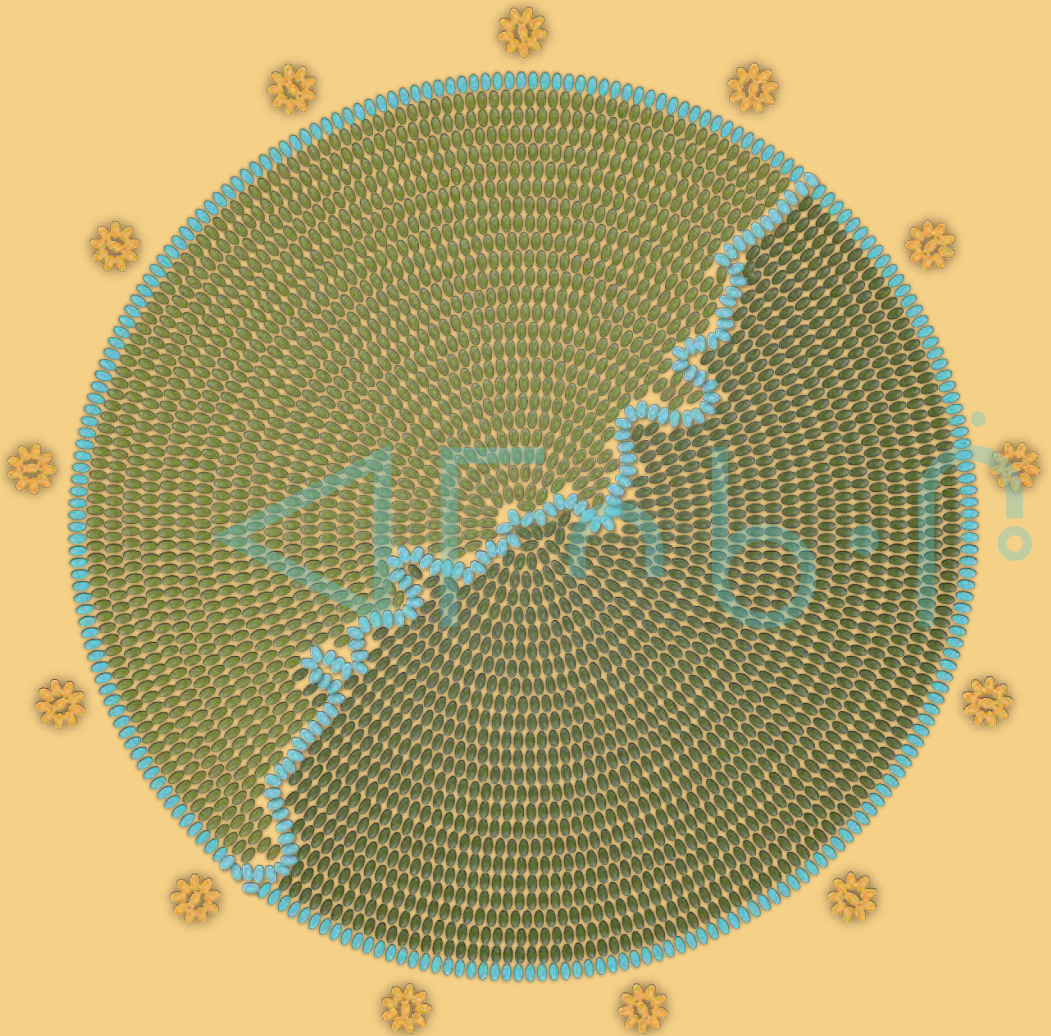
In the spirit of this commitment, the Indigenous Framework Corporate Action Team engaged in conversations with Indigenous community members in November 2023 to receive their guidance on each municipal department's efforts to implement the framework.

These annual sessions are essential to create trusting and open relationships with Indigenous community members, partners and municipal staff involved with the Indigenous Framework. They also allow the City of Edmonton to receive feedback, demonstrate accountability and reaffirm our commitment to reconciliation.

Prominent themes emerging from community feedback include:

- Housing & Houselessness
- Connecting with Indigenous Communities
- Resurgence
- Elder Protocol
- Urban Reserves
- Youth
- Ceremonial Sites & Medicines
- Safety & Sensitivity
- Engaging & Retaining Indigenous Employees
- Reconciliation

The full Indigenous Framework 2023 What We Heard Report is available at: edmonton.ca/IndigenousFramework



Artist: **Tashina Makokis**

Our Commitment

The Indigenous Framework will continue to develop as these relationships grow, and with a deeper understanding of Indigenous Peoples' truths, experiences, identities, rights and distinct cultures. This work is not a “checkbox” exercise, but an ongoing demonstration of active participation in advancing the Calls to Action, Calls for Justice and the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The framework empowers City of Edmonton staff to build strong and supportive relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Guided by Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders and driven by the values of Indigenous community members, this initiative helps us walk alongside them as listeners, partners, connectors and advocates in our reconciliation journey.



The full Indigenous Framework 2023
Annual Report is available at:
edmonton.ca/IndigenousFramework

