

2021 Reconciliation Annual Report

September 20, 2021





Oki!

The City of Lethbridge acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian Plains and pays respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

The 2021 Reconciliation Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of Métis Elder **Louise Saloff**. Louise will be remembered as a champion of education and wellness within the Lethbridge Indigenous community. This report is also dedicated to the memory of the generations of Indigenous children who attended Residential Schools, many of whom never returned home.

Contents

Greetings from Mayor Chris Spearman	3
Greetings from the Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee Co-Chairs	4
Report Overview	6
Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee Membership	7
Partner Organizations.....	9
Our Year in Review	10
Highlighted On-going Initiatives	19
MMIWG Recommendations and Work Plan.....	19
Indigenous Summer Student Program.....	19
Memoranda of Respect, Understanding and Partnership.....	19
MMIWG and Reconciliation Ally Toolkits	20
Transit Fee Assistance Pilot.....	20
Upcoming Initiatives for 2021 and 2022	22
Indigenous Legacy Commemoration Project.....	22
Indigenous Cultural Centre (ICC) Governance and Operations Planning.....	22
Indigenous Placemaking Strategy and Public Realm Audit.....	22
Allyship Social Marketing Campaign.....	23
Heritage Management Plan Update.....	23
Indigenous Awareness Training Program.....	23

Greetings from Mayor Chris Spearman

Oki! On behalf of Lethbridge City Council, I am pleased to bring greetings to the first ever Reconciliation Annual Report.

We are located in Blackfoot Territory and by including our land acknowledgement statement before every meeting of City Council, it serves as a significant reminder of the many and diverse contributions that Blackfoot and all Indigenous peoples have made and continue to make in our community. By celebrating these contributions in Lethbridge, we create space for dialogue, partnership, and reconciliation in our communities.

As we've witnessed over the past few months with the discovery of many unmarked graves around the country, dialogue and coming together is more important than ever. Holding space and being open to hearing the truth is an integral piece of reconciliation and one we must continue to support.

The current climate makes the work being done by the Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee and the City's Indigenous Relations Office more important than ever. I'm so proud to be part of a City Council that has made reconciliation a priority and even prouder of our community for embracing it.

I'd like to thank the many Elders, knowledge holders, elected representatives and community partners who have graciously given their time to help City Council and the City reach this place of understanding. I look forward to seeing the work of reconciliation strengthen our relationships with the Indigenous community and continue to hold space and work together for the betterment of all of our communities.

Chris Spearman, *Nitsikimmapiiyipitsi*

Mayor, City of Lethbridge

Greetings from the Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee Co-Chairs

Oki! As co-chairs of the Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee (RLAC), we are pleased to have this opportunity to share this annual report with the residents of Lethbridge, southern Alberta and beyond for the 2020-2021 year.

As a Committee of Lethbridge City Council, we are grateful to the commitment the City has made in its response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Despite the pandemic, RLAC has been very active over this last year, supported by City staff including **Perry Stein, Pamela Beebe, Alli Moncrieff** and **Meagan Williams**.

Committee work has focused on issues of relevance to the City, community and broader region. Some of our collective milestones include City Council's approval of a work plan based on the MMIWG Calls for Justice and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Kainai / Blood Tribe Chief and Council. RLAC has also been actively involved in discussions around the K-6 draft curriculum presented by the Provincial Government, will have a chapter in a forthcoming edited volume on race relations in Lethbridge published through Athabasca University Press, will be assisting the City in multiple Indigenous placemaking projects, and is contributing to conversations and research around media reporting, work of the Lethbridge Police Service, and the ongoing opioid crisis.

All committee meetings are open to the public, and we are always looking for interested individuals to contribute to the work of reconciliation – whether as members on the committee or allies in the community. Thank you to our community partners and to you, for your interest in learning more about reconciliation in Sikóóhkotok, Lethbridge.

Treena Tallow, *Naato'saihpiyi'aakii*

Co-Chair, Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee

Patrick Wilson, *lipiams'kapo*

Co-Chair, Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee



Report Overview

The City of Lethbridge supports reconciliation and relationship building with Indigenous peoples through the Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee (RLAC) and Indigenous Relations Office (IRO). RLAC is a Committee of City Council comprised of diverse community voices from multiple sectors, including education (primary and post-secondary), business and Indigenous community serving organizations. Its mandate is to act as an advisory committee to City Council on issues relating to reconciliation and to champion the Reconciliation Implementation Plan. RLAC also promotes mutual understanding and support between the City and urban Indigenous peoples, Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy Nations), the Lethbridge and Area Métis Council, and all of the 5,000 plus Indigenous peoples who call Lethbridge home.

The IRO oversees a portfolio of City Council, corporate and community projects related to reconciliation and relationship development. This includes managing the implementation of City Council's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Work Plan, the development of Indigenous Awareness Training, planning for a potential future Indigenous Cultural Centre, and various projects designed to increase the visibility of Indigenous peoples within public spaces (something we call Indigenous Placemaking). The IRO also provides administrative support to RLAC and other City Departments to ensure Indigenous peoples and perspectives inform their work.

2021 marks the first year that the City of Lethbridge has prepared a Reconciliation Annual Report, the purpose of which is to celebrate successes from the previous 12 months, and to highlight upcoming initiatives from both RLAC and the IRO. The Report also creates an opportunity to build greater public awareness and support for the City's work, and to celebrate the contributions of our many volunteers and community partners. We invite you to learn more about our initiatives over the past year and encourage you to find ways to support reconciliation in your lives.

Many of the initiatives you will read about in this Annual Report emerge from one of two Council-approved plans: The City of Lethbridge and Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network Reconciliation Implementation Plan (2017 – 2027), approved in 2017, and the MMIWG Work Plan, approved in 2021. To help you identify the origins of the various initiatives highlighted in this report, they will be labeled.

Reconciliation Implementation Plan / RLAC initiatives are identified with:



MMIWG Work Plan initiatives are identified with:



Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee Membership

Treena Tallow, Co-chair	Indigenous Community Representative
Patrick Wilson, Co-chair	Citizen-at-large
Marcia Black Water	Education Sector Representative (Lethbridge College)
Mike Bruised Head	Education Sector Representative (University of Lethbridge)
John Chief Calf	Education Sector Representative (Lethbridge School Division)
Annette Bruised Head	Education Sector Representative (Holy Spirit School Division)
Cyndi Vos	Business Sector Representative (Chamber of Commerce)
Nicole Geske	Business Sector Representative (Chamber of Commerce)
Amanda Scout	Indigenous Community Representative
Rachel Hoof	Indigenous Community Representative
Katie Jo Rabbit	Indigenous Community Representative
Echo Nowak	Indigenous Community Representative
Sara Strickland	Citizen-at-large
Chris Spearman	Mayor Lethbridge City Council
Deputy Mayor	Lethbridge City Council (rotating position)

Past members 2020 – 2021

Shawn Singer	Indigenous Community Representative
Louise Saloff	Indigenous Community Representative
Travis Plaited Hair	Indigenous Community Representative
Jerry Firth	Citizen-at-large



Partner Organizations

The Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee and the City of Lethbridge wish to thank the following partners for their generous support over the last year.

Allied Arts Council

Alpha House

Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council

Blood Tribe / Kainai Nation

CKXU

Galt Museum & Archives

Heart of Our City Committee

Historic Places Advisory Committee

Indigenous Recovery Coach Program

Interfaith Foodbank

Lethbridge and Area Métis Council

Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce

Lethbridge College

Lethbridge Historical Society

Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network

Lethbridge Public Library

Lethbridge Sisters and Spirit Planning Committee

Lethbridge Sports Council

Mike Marcotte (Prime Catering)

Piikani Nation

Public Art Committee

Red Crow Community College

SAAG

Saamis Aboriginal Employment and Training Association

Sage Clan

Siksika Nation

Telus

United Way of Lethbridge and South Western Alberta

University of Lethbridge

Our Year in Review

The following pages highlight some of the most memorable events and initiatives over the past year.

September 2020

4th Annual Reconciliation Week

Orange Shirt Day



October 2020

14th Annual Sisters in Spirit March and Vigil



City Council presented with draft recommendations to respond to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice (see page 19)



150th Anniversary of the Battle of the Belly River in Sikóóhкотok (Lethbridge) commemorated with a video featuring RLAC member and Kainai Elder **Mike Bruised Head (Ninna Piikskii)**



November 2020

City of Lethbridge Indigenous Cultural Centre Feasibility Study awarded Commonwealth Association of Planners Award for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement (see page 22)



Star Crop Eared Wolf wins the 3rd Annual Expressions of Reconciliation art contest hosted by the United Way of Lethbridge and South Western Alberta



City celebrates Métis Week by flying the Métis Flag at City Hall (see page 11)

December 2020

"Voice and Representation" selected as the focus for 2021 RLAC events and partnerships



2nd annual partnership between RLAC and Southern Alberta Art Gallery to host Reconciliation-themed film series





Leadership from the Lethbridge and Area Métis Council, including Elder **Alice Bissonette** (2nd from Left) and Council President **Dr. Adam Browning** (4th from Left), is pictured following the raising of the Métis flag at Lethbridge City Hall. The Métis flag is one of the oldest in Canada and pre-dates Confederation.

Each November the Métis Nation of Alberta celebrates Métis Week as a legacy to Louis Riel and an opportunity to showcase Métis culture.

January 2021

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Work Plan with 25 Recommendations approved by City Council (see page 19)



*City partners with **Marjie Crop Eared Wolf** work to incorporate Blackfoot ecological knowledge within two landscape design projects (Great Bear Boulevard West and Downtown's Galt Gardens)*



February 2021

City begins development of corporate Indigenous Awareness Training as part of its commitment to the TRC Calls to Action and National Inquiry into MMIWG Calls for Justice (see page 23)



Sisters in Spirit Women's Memorial March and walking tour held in the Oldman River Valley



March 2021

City launches transit fee assistance partnership with Saamis Aboriginal Employment and Training Association (see page 20)



Lethbridge City Council passes a resolution committing to making its workforce more diverse and reflective of the community it serves

April 2021

*The Electrical Utility Box Wrapping Pilot project, a partnership between the City's Public Art and Heart of Our City Committees, unveiled two works by Kainai artists **Hali Heavy Shield** and **Rudy Black Plume** (see page 13)*










The work of Kainai artists **Hali Heavy Shield** (pictured above) and **Rudy Black Plume** (pictured below) is featured on electrical utility boxes in Downtown Lethbridge's Galt Gardens. This project was designed to bring added vibrancy to the Downtown and promote Indigenous Placemaking.






Hali and **Rudy** will also both be featured on future art installations at Fire Station #5 in West Lethbridge.



May 2021

- City incorporates Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) into City Council decision-making process* 
- First intake from Indigenous Summer Student Program starts at City of Lethbridge, Lethbridge Public Library and the Galt Museum & Archives (see pages 16 & 19)* 
- City Council approves Capital Improvement Program, including funding for Indigenous Cultural Centre site and governance planning and the Indigenous Placemaking Strategy (see page 22)* 
- National Day of Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit People event held at City Hall (see page 15)* 
- City installs first heritage plaque that includes an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement (Bank of Montreal Building, 522 3 Ave S)* 

June 2021

- Partnership created between the City, the United Way of Lethbridge and South Western Alberta and the University of Lethbridge on a Social Marketing Allyship Campaign (see page 23)*  
- Hali Heavy Shield** selected to lead community engagement for the Indigenous Legacy Commemoration Project (see page 22)*  
- National Indigenous Peoples Day and Awareness Week celebrated in Lethbridge (see page 15)* 
- After extensive engagement with Indigenous peoples, organizations and Communities, City Council approves new Municipal Development Plan which includes strengthened guidance for reconciliation and engagement with Indigenous peoples*

July 2021

- RLAC, Telus, Heart of our City Committee and Public Art Committee partner on Call for Indigenous Artists for Reconciliation Week, and chose works by Kainai artists **Cheyenne McGinnis** and **Hali Heavy Shield*** 
- Funding received from Government of Canada to support future planning for an Indigenous Cultural Centre (see page 22)* 



The City of Lethbridge recognized the National Day of Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit People by hanging a red dress in front of City Hall (pictured above) as a way of honouring and bringing attention to this on-going tragedy in our City and communities across North America.



Kainai Councillor **Piinaakoyim Tailfeathers** (pictured below) helps the City of Lethbridge kick-off events during National Indigenous Peoples Day.



Kalli Eagle Speaker

(pictured above) joined the Galt Museum & Archives in 2021 as an Indigenous summer student and supported programs and partnerships in the community, including a summer sewing program with the Sik-oo-kotoki Friendship Centre.

Madeson Singh (pictured below) joined the Lethbridge Library in 2021 as an Indigenous summer student and led children, family and community programs including art and music-based activities.



August 2021

Construction finishes on new flag poles at City Hall that will fly the Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) flag permanently



City Council permanently declares October 4, Sisters in Spirit Day



City Council declares that it will officially recognize the new National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30



September 2021

Siksikaitsitapi Flag Permanently Raised at City Hall



City and RLAC release Reconciliation and MMIWG toolkits and resources with the support of Siksika communications consultant **Shaylen Smith** and Kainai artist **Rudy Black Plume** (see page 20)



City releases its first video land acknowledgement with the support of Elders and Knowledge Keepers across Siksikaitsitapi Territory, including **Shirlee Crowshoe** and **Ira Provost** (Piikani), **Mike Bruised Head**, **Tom Little Bear** and **Rebecca Many Gray Horses** (Kainai) and **Butch Wolf Leg** (Siksika)



City recognizes its first National day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30





Highlighted On-going Initiatives

MMIWG Recommendations and Work Plan

In January 2021, Lethbridge City Council approved 25 recommendations to address social, economic and institutional barriers that disproportionately face Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples in our community. The Work Plan provides a three-year commitment to advance governance, social, economic and educational initiatives including many of the initiatives highlighted in this annual report. The recommendations were generated by RLAC members with the support of community partners (including members of the Lethbridge Sisters in Spirit Committee) and City of Lethbridge staff.

Indigenous Summer Student Program

In March 2021, Lethbridge City Council passed a resolution to create a workforce that more closely resembles the diversity of the community it serves. In alignment with that resolution, and to advance the MMIWG Work Plan objective of creating employment and economic development opportunities for Indigenous peoples, the Indigenous Summer Student Program launched in 2021. Over the summer months, six Indigenous summer student positions were created across various City of Lethbridge Departments and affiliated organizations, including in Finance, Purchasing, Waste and Recycling, the City Solicitor's Office, the Lethbridge Public Library and the Galt Museum & Archives. The next intake of Indigenous summer students will be in 2022.

Memoranda of Respect, Understanding and Partnership

In May 2021, the Councils of the City of Lethbridge and Kainai / Blood Tribe ratified a Memoranda of Respect, Understanding and Partnership (MOU). The MOU identifies areas of mutual interest and creates a structure to allow the Councils and their administrations to work more closely together to advance opportunities and address challenges.

MMIWG and Reconciliation Ally Toolkits



One of the goals of the MMIWG Work Plan recommendations was to create opportunities for and to empower non-Indigenous allyship. To achieve this, the MMIWG Work Plan Recommendations #11 and #16 called for the development of a MMIWG Tool Kit and a Reconciliation Ally Tool Kit. The overarching goals of the Tool Kits are to generate greater understanding to what it means to live in Blackfoot Territory. This includes bringing added attention to both the barriers and opportunities facing Indigenous peoples in the community, and to empower non-Indigenous peoples to identify and take meaningful action in their lives. The Toolkits were developed by Blackfoot consultants **Shaylen Smith** and **Rudy Black Plume**, and supported through RLAC members and community partners.

Transit Fee Assistance Pilot



Access and affordability of transportation can be a huge barrier to anyone transitioning into or re-entering the work force. To address these challenges, the MMIWG Work Plan Recommendation #22 called for the creation of a pilot project to provide free transit passes to Indigenous women working with a local employment agency. This pilot, a partnership between the City of Lethbridge and Saamis Aboriginal Employment and Training Association, will measure the impact of removing transportation affordability barriers has on employment acquisition and retention among participants. We look forward to sharing the learnings from this pilot with the community after it concludes at the end of 2021, as well as future opportunities to support Indigenous women's economic empowerment.



CITY HALL

910-470-1234

Upcoming Initiatives for 2021 and 2022

Indigenous Legacy Commemoration Project



This project responds to the Reconciliation Implementation Plan and MMIWG Work Plan recommendations to honor victims, survivors and families of the Residential School System and MMIWG acts of genocide. Through community engagement led by Kainai artist and educator **Hali Heavy Shield**, this project will better understand the community's perspectives and aspirations for commemoration, including the form it should take, design principles, as well as the number and location of commemorative projects. Community engagement will take place over the Fall of 2021 and will result in a list of commemorative opportunities that the City will then further explore.

Indigenous Cultural Centre (ICC) Governance and Operations Planning



This project builds upon feasibility and governance studies completed in 2019-2020. The Study will look to implement an interim governance structure, further analyze interim and ultimate operating models and identify preferred locations for the ICC and an Outdoor Gathering Space between September 2021 and early 2022. The 2020 Feasibility Study defined the role of the ICC in Lethbridge as a safe place that bridges the distance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the Lethbridge region that meets the community's physical and cultural needs through the creation of Ethical Space. Funding for this project has come from the City of Lethbridge Capital Improvement Program and through the Government of Canada's Canada Cultural Spaces Fund.

Indigenous Placemaking Strategy and Public Realm Audit



This project will identify opportunities to better showcase Blackfoot and other Indigenous cultures, languages and peoples within public spaces throughout the community using the principles of something called placemaking. Placemaking is an approach to creatively reimagine public spaces in ways that bring life to underused spaces and foster a stronger sense of belonging and connection between people and their community. This project will look at both new opportunities for Indigenous placemaking as well as evaluate ways in which Indigenous peoples are reflected in existing public spaces to ensure that representation aligns with the values of truth, reconciliation and inclusion. Community and Elder engagement will take place over the Fall of 2021 with recommendations and placemaking opportunities brought forward early in 2022.

Allyship Social Marketing Campaign


For this project the City of Lethbridge is partnering with the United Way of Lethbridge and Southwestern Alberta and the University of Lethbridge to build a social marketing campaign to support community-based allyship. Social marketing is the use of commercial marketing tools to achieve positive community outcomes. A positive approach was selected in consultation with Indigenous community partners (rather than an “anti-racism” campaign) because of its alignment with Blackfoot cultural values like Kimmapiiyitsinni (to be compassionate) and Niitsitapiiyisinni (to be Blackfoot). When completed in the Fall of 2021, the campaign will identify a target audience(s), and tools to encourage the target audience(s) to undertake specific allyship behaviours or activities with clearly identified measures and outcomes. **Karla Carcamo** and Piikani post-secondary student **Tristyn Grier** are leading the research and design for the campaign with the support of **Dr. Debra Basil** from the Dhillon School of Business.

Heritage Management Plan Update

The aim of this project is to incorporate a more inclusive vision of heritage within the City’s heritage management framework. The project advances actions identified in the Reconciliation Implementation Plan to engage Indigenous partners and better understand guiding principles and protocols for identifying, managing and protecting Indigenous heritage sites found in Lethbridge. This project builds upon previous collaborations between the City of Lethbridge and Blackfoot Confederacy Nation Consultation Departments including the 2017 Traditional Knowledge and Use Assessment which created a baseline inventory of Indigenous cultural sites. This project is expected to be complete by Fall 2022.

Indigenous Awareness Training Program

The Reconciliation Implementation Plan and MMIWG Work Plan both identify the need to provide City staff with the knowledge and skills to work more closely with the Indigenous community. The Indigenous Awareness Training program (IAT) will help staff better understand the historical and contemporary experiences of Indigenous peoples, including intergenerational impacts of colonization. It will also help staff to engage with the TRC Calls to Action and MMIWG Calls for Justice and to incorporate reconciliation into their personal and professional lives. The IAT program is being developed with the advice and support of Piikani Knowledge Keeper and educator **Ira Provost**.



For more information, please visit

www.lethbridge.ca/IndigenousRelations

The 2021 Reconciliation Annual Report was prepared by the City of Lethbridge Indigenous Relations Office with the support and contributions of the Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee, the Galt Museum & Archives, including **William L. Baliko, Kalli Eagle Speaker** and **Graham Ruttan**, as well as artistic contributions from **Rudy Black Plume**.