



Celebrating Municipal Excellence

2022 Nomination Form

Deadline: 4:00 p.m. on Friday, November 25, 2022

Nominee Contact Information		
Name of municipality/ municipalities being nominated: <small>(please include the names of all partner municipalities)</small>	City of Yorkton	
Contact Name:	Mitch Hipsley	
Contact role in project:	Mayor	
Telephone #:	306-786-1718	
Mailing Address:	Box 400 Yorkton, SK S3N 2W3	
E-mail Address:	jmatsalla@yorkton.ca	
Name of Nominated Practice or Project:	Reconciliation: The True Partnership	
Date of Project or Practice Initiation:	June 2022	
Date of Project or Practice Completion: <small>(If ongoing, please indicate)</small>		Ongoing: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Nominator Contact Information	
Name:	Jessica Matsalla
Organization:	City of Yorkton
Position:	Director of Legislation and Procedures (City Clerk)
Mailing Address:	Box 400 Yorkton, SK S3N 2W3
Telephone #:	306-786-1718
E-mail Address:	jmatsalla@yorkton.ca

Please provide as much detail as possible. Winning practices are posted in the Best Practices Library as a reference or resource to others. Nominations that clearly outline the practice and all steps involved have a higher chance of being selected for an award.

The Practice

1. What issue inspired the nominated project or practice?

Great accomplishments are often left unnoticed. A community ready for joining hands and moving forward in unity initiated a partnership which would be a reality the year following September 30th, 2021. Beginning in 2020, the newly elected Yorkton City Council invited the Tribal Chief and an elder from Yorkton Tribal Council to bless their meeting in prayer. In the years following, city officials demonstrated great leadership in Reconciliation by attending more and more First Nation community events that they had not attended in the past, leading to important conversations. During an event for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Tribal Chief Isabel O'Soup of Yorkton Tribal Council (YTC) observed a lack of indigenous representation at City Centre Park in the heart of Yorkton's downtown, and around the entire City of Yorkton. In conversations with Yorkton City Councilors and YTC, the idea of the most culturally recognized symbol of First Nations (Teepee), started to form along with other areas directed at education and truth. Displays of artwork and culture sites were virtually non-existent with meaningful representation. Yorkton's population and the steadily increasing Indigenous membership was ready to be included in the city's multi-cultural dynamics. It was clear that a partnership between the municipality and the Yorkton Tribal Council would need to take place to promote positive Reconciliation.

2. What has this project or practice done to address the issue?

In the words of Yorkton City Mayor "we are making history." The Yorkton Tribal Council along with city council hit the ground running. There were numerous successful initiatives and each one created mutual comfort and respect which enabled a continuing admiration of each organization's willingness for acceptance. The first such venture was with the Yorkton Legion Hall and recognizing both our peoples' contributions to the World Wars by sharing a D Day ceremony. This led to sharing Remembrance Day Celebrations which from now on will be inclusive of all our nations within the City of Yorkton. The Canada Day celebration was also a true partnership and was celebrated with inclusive and appropriate cultural displays with plans to continue together on from there. The City of Yorkton held a design contest for new bike locks in the downtown with the call requesting submissions of Indigenous artwork. The City of Yorkton and YTC jointly unveiled Indigenous designed bike stations with QR codes providing education and safety for riders. <https://regina.ctvnews.ca/city-of-yorkton-unveils-new-bike-locks-across-community-s-downtown-1.5965664>. The teepee structure, which is representative of home, and everything encompassed within our homes was erected in City Centre Park. This is symbolic of opening of doors and the inclusion of all within the community at one central location and includes a locally made documentary with the teachings of the

Teepee. This specific project proposal included using local businesses as subcontractors for both design and build, and the grand opening was proposed for September 30, 2022: the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Yorkton Public Library now has an Indigenous section designed in partnership with the Yorkton Tribal Council for education purposes. The top 215 books named by Reconciliation Canada were contributed by Yorkton Tribal Council to the Library for their Indigenous section. Building meaningfully upon each initiative is what a true partnership is, and this is what Reconciliation looks like.

The Process

This section should be the longest and most detailed part of your nomination. Include enough information, such as steps, resources accessed, and considerations to support a municipality interested in applying the same project or practice.

3. Indicate who had a direct role in this project or practice:

- ☒ Municipal Council
- ☒ Municipal Administration
- ☒ Other

Yorkton Tribal Council: Tribal Chief Isabel O'Soup

4. What was the role of the municipal council and/or municipal staff in this project or practice?

On June 20, 2022, Yorkton Tribal Council approached Yorkton City Council with a proposal for two permanent metal teepee structures to be erected in Yorkton's City Centre Park and at the Yorkton Tourism office. The presentation was titled, "Together we are Stronger," and shared the significance behind erecting a teepee in a public space. See the presentation here: <http://video.isilive.ca/yorkton/2022-06-20reg.mp4.html> The proposal before City Council was met with a unanimous vote to move forward with the project. A committee that combined City of Yorkton and Yorkton Tribal Administration employees was formed for the purpose of executing the project in its entirety. Location, design, and educational/marketing components all needed to be discussed and finalized. The groups were open to conversation and Reconciliation.

The Read Indigenous piece at the Library was organized by Amber Harvey, Yorkton Public Library Branch Manager, who had a direct role in this project, as did Yorkton Tribal Council employee, Cory Cadotte, Indigenous Cultural Liaison. They were both encouraged and supported by their respective leadership teams with the Yorkton Public Library Board and Yorkton Tribal Council. <https://regina.ctvnews.ca/what-we-re-all-about-new-read-indigenous-space-unveiled-at-yorkton-public-library-1.6090535> The Branch Manager managed the process and coordinated with the Indigenous Cultural Liaison, Yorkton Arts Council and Yorkton Public Library staff.

5. Were other groups were involved in developing this project or practice? If so, who were they and what role did they play?

Yorkton Tribal Council bore the primary design and build costs of the Teepee design and construction, with the City of Yorkton and Tourism Yorkton contributing throughout the process and continuing to manage the spaces/grounds housing the structures. Throughout the evolving partnership between the Tribal Council and City of Yorkton, many more relationships flourished. Organizations involved include, but are not limited to: FSIN, Yorkton Brick Mill Heritage Society, Yorkton Exhibition Association, Royal Canadian Legion General Alexander Ross Branch No.77, Yorkton Public Library, Western Development Museum, Saskatchewan Roughriders Football Club, Yorkton Lions Club, Yorkton Film Festival, Good Spirit School Division, Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools, the six member nations of YTC, and other organizations operating within the City of Yorkton. City Council also asked input of their Recreation and Community Services Advisory Committee on the Teepee Project. The Committee is struck at the will of Council and includes members of the community at large. The intent is that these members act as conduits to the community, being the voices for the community at the committee table. The committee unanimously supported the Teepee project, and further, members began to inquire more learning opportunities and education on learnings for Truth and Reconciliation.

6. What resources were involved?

There is the saying that it takes village to raise a child. In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, and the culmination of these projects across the City of Yorkton, the many groups of staff, volunteers, and citizens that came together in attendance at each and every initiative was what enabled ideas to grow into something bigger. For the metal teepee structure, resources included design and engineered drawings from CA Reed Consulting. Materials and building of the metal structure was done by Irontown Manufacturing Inc. (Irontown also did the work on the new bike locks as abovementioned). For the wooden teepee structure at the Tourism building, Yorkton Tribal Council sourced the wooden poles from Cree Star Gifts (Swan River, MB). When the Yorkton Public Library went about purchasing the new books, they reached out to other libraries in the province who have developed comprehensive Read for Reconciliation lists – those books were contributed by YTC. The Yorkton Public Library used top books and authors, in addition to reports of what people were requesting. All parties gave staff resources to this project, which could not have been done otherwise.

7. How was the project or practice developed?

The story of Reconciliation within the City of Yorkton began with the concept for change. Positive change is made possible only when two parties agree there is a need. In the mannerism of our ancestors creating Treaties, the City of Yorkton and Yorkton Tribal Council created that change. After approval of the project and the formation of the planning committee, meetings were immediately underway to discuss the final design of the teepee structures, and placement at the two locations: City Centre Park and the Tourism Yorkton building. Many Yorkton Tribal Council staff were involved in different aspects of the project. After design and placement were finalized, and a timeline was understood, focus turned to incorporating a grand-opening event into celebration plans for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. Yorkton Tribal Council's involvement in community initiatives expanded as plans went on, leading to additional partnerships with Yorkton Public Library with the creation of an Indigenous section within the library, as well as sponsorships with Yorkton Exhibition on multiple events and Yorkton Brick Mill Heritage Society. Teepee teachings are now included for public education through www.yorktontribalcouncil.com/teepee-teachings. The ultimate culmination of hard work manifested on September 29th and 30th, 2022 with the grand openings of the Indigenous library section and metal teepee structure, and then Orange Shirt Day hosted around the new teepee.

The Results

8. What effect did this project or practice have on the community?

Unity and understanding comes to mind when undertaking a project this meaningful. The teepee project at the center of the Reconciliation initiative is a visual representation of the City's commitment to long-term relationships. The smiles, tears and laughter as the City and Tribal Council progressed through project after project was the epitome of true Reconciliation. The effects will be generational acceptance, that our diverse community can thrive when we acknowledge our shared vision, creating a safer world for our children.

9. Was a formal evaluation done after the project or practice was completed? Please explain.

There has been no formal evaluation completed, however, a pause for celebration and recognition did take place between those who worked towards this partnership throughout the year. During this reflection, a commitment was also agreed upon to keep the partnership alive moving forward, with joint events and quarterly meetings between the City and YTC. This project and the practice of Reconciliation is ongoing and ever-evolving. Changes are still to be made to the permanent teepee structures and library section as well including educational pieces and commemorative plaques.

10. Describe any challenges faced.

The topic of Reconciliation is always challenging. Challenges came with different groups and ideas all coming together in one partnership, with many differing opinions being voiced, as well as the constraints of materials and timelines.

Lessons Learned

11. What lessons were learned and what would you recommend doing differently?

In the spirit and intent of Reconciliation, there is so much more that we can do together, and it does not stop here. It takes just one person or action, and the confidence or willingness to step forward. The unification of the City of Yorkton and Yorkton Tribal Council will continue as long as leadership keeps an open mind and open dialogue for change and ingenuity. We will increase communications and education leading up to a public display like these projects were. We will remain transparent and raise awareness for the intentions of positive and peaceful impact. We will share these accomplishments outside the borders of the City, hoping to inspire similar relationships elsewhere. We will continue to lead by example, together.

All nominations will be listed on the Saskatchewan Municipal Awards website as a resource for other municipalities. Be sure to include specific information.

Please submit your completed nomination package to:

E-mail: awards@municipalawards.ca (preferred)

Fax: Attn: Saskatchewan Municipal Awards Program

Mail: Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Unit 305 – 4741 Parliament Avenue, Regina, SK S4W 0T9

Questions?

Contact Stephanie Bourassa at 306-525-4318.

***Thank you for submitting a nomination for the
16th annual Saskatchewan Municipal Awards.***





City of
Yorkton





