



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2022

SUBJECT First Nations Relations Communications Framework

ISSUE SUMMARY

To update the Board on a guidance document to support staff in developing positive and collaborative relationships with First Nations in the region. The First Nations Relations Communications Framework provides a guide for CRD employees on the essentials of respectful, concise, constructive and professional internal and intergovernmental communication with First Nations.

BACKGROUND

While assisting CRD departments in their day-to-day service delivery activities, the First Nations Relations division frequently responds to similar queries from across the organization regarding how and when to engage First Nations. In response, the First Nations Relations Communications Framework was developed as a resource to support staff in all divisions by providing clear, baseline information that bridges different levels of understanding about the need for communications with First Nations and considerations when undertaking that work.

In a large, complex organization like CRD, which has a number of decentralized operations, Nations may receive referrals and consultation requests from different areas of the organization without central coordination or oversight. Through this framework CRD staff can be more strategic internally on how and when to engage the Nations, and to be more effective and consistent in how to engage the Nations externally, so as to support respectful, positive relationships.

The document will be updated as needed to reflect the dynamics of our evolving relationships with First Nation governments in the region.

IMPLICATIONS

Intergovernmental Implications

Diplomatic intergovernmental communication may have several desired outcomes including to inform, consult, collaborate and empower. All external messages need to be considered and appropriately communicated to ensure effective delivery and intended impact.

Knowing what to communicate and who to communicate it to will determine how to send messages with appropriate consideration of language, communication styles, intergenerational trauma and other legacies of colonization such that staff can assist in strengthening the government-to-government relationship between the CRD and First Nations. The First Nations Relations Communications Framework can support staff to be more strategic on when and how to reach out to First Nations, with tips on language and approach.

By providing tangible and informative suggestions for how to communicate in a way that supports respectful relations with First Nations, the framework document complements the cultural competency training that CRD staff are receiving. Further work is underway to develop a guidance

document specific to working with Indigenous elders, as an additional educational resource for staff.

Service Delivery Implications

Many CRD staff across the organization interact with First Nations, including but not limited to capital works, park management and programming, heritage site conservation, bylaw enforcement, watershed operations, service agreements, and planning. The Communications Framework will support staff across all divisions to communicate with the Nations in respectful ways that may enhance collaboration in service delivery. The document provides guidance on such considerations as approach, accessibility, appropriateness, writing style suggestions, Indigenous spelling, and on who and how to reach out, in order to support effective, respectful communications.

Alignment with Board Priorities

The First Nations Relations Communications Framework serves to increase awareness amongst all CRD staff of Board Priorities related to Reconciliation with First Nations and the CRD Statement of Reconciliation, and to assist all staff in implementing these priorities.

CONCLUSION

The First Nations Relations Communications Framework provides a guide for CRD employees on the essentials of respectful, concise, constructive and professional internal and intergovernmental communication with First Nations. Through this framework, staff are supported in developing positive and collaborative relationships with First Nations.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Submitted by: | Caitlyn Vernon, MES, Manager, First Nations Relations |
| Concurrence: | Kristen Morley, J.D., General Manager, Corporate Services & Corporate Officer |
| Concurrence: | Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer |

ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: First Nations Relations Communications Framework