FORTFRANCES

RECONCILIATION POLICY

GOVERNANCE/COUNCIL 9.3

POLICY

Created: 2025-10-02

Revised:

Authorized: By-Law 66-26 2026-11-09

Superseded:

1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Town of Fort Frances (Town) respects and truly acknowledges that we are on Treaty #3 territory, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe and the Métis Nation. We give gratitude and honour to the Ancestors, Elders and all Anishinaabe and Métis People for sharing their resources and knowledge.

2. TRUTH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This policy is to guide the Town towards the goal of reconciliation and shared prosperity with the Indigenous people of the Treaty #3, as well as to guide the Town towards reconciliation and partnerships wherever possible with all Indigenous people. The Town acknowledges the truth of the harms done to the Indigenous people across Turtle Island (North America), including the Anishinaabe and Métis of the area in which the Town now resides. The wrongdoings from colonialism include the Residential Schools, forced assimilation policies, the Sixties Scoop, the loss of land, language, culture, and the ongoing inequities and racism that continue to impact Indigenous people today.

3. INTENT

This policy is a work in progress, and intended to be a living document, that we envision changing input is provided.

We invite all residents, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to contribute their thoughts on what reconciliation for the Town should look like.

It is our intent to keep revising this document as we listen with respect to the thoughts and wishes of those we serve.

This document is intended to be a legacy document and will be passed to future councils with the intent that they look and listen with respect to the voices of those that council serves.

4. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Reconciliation Policy is to guide the Town in fostering respectful relationships with all Indigenous Peoples, especially the local Anishinaabe and Métis of the Southern Treaty #3. This policy provides a framework for collaboration, learning, and accountability, ensuring that reconciliation is reflected in Town decision-making, services, and community partnerships. By embedding reconciliation into its practices, the Town seeks to create a more inclusive and equitable community for current and future generations.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

The Town is committed to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through respect, listening, collaboration, partnerships, and action. The Town will work collaboratively with Indigenous communities and organizations to ensure that Town programs, services, and decision-making processes recognize Indigenous rights, cultures, and voices. Reconciliation is an ongoing journey, and the Town pledges to embed these principles in our governance, operations, and community relationships, fostering a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

6. DISCLAIMER

The Town of Fort Frances recognizes that Indigenous Peoples and communities hold unique perspectives regarding identity and history, including the local Anishinaabe and Métis people and their Treaty relationships. This is a complex and delicate matter that is separate to the Town. The Town seeks reconciliation with all Indigenous people and does not seek to determine these matters.

7. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all Members of Council, Town Employees, Committees of Council, and Town volunteers acting on behalf of the Corporation of the Town. It also informs the Town's relationships with contractors, consultants, community partners, and other stakeholders engaged in Town projects, programs, or services.

8. DEFINITIONS

"Anishinaabe" The Ojibwe nation; the First Nation dominant group of people that make up the Treaty #3 territory.

"Anishinaabemowin" The language of the Anishinaabe people.

"Calls to Action" refers to the 94 recommendations issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) to guide governments, organizations, and individuals in addressing the harm caused by the residential schools and fostering reconciliation and positive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

"Colonialism" refers to the system and practice in which a foreign power asserts control over Indigenous lands and peoples, imposing its own culture, governance structures, and laws. In Canada, colonialism involved the displacement of Indigenous peoples and the establishment of European settler dominance.

"Indigenous" Collectively refers to the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people.

"Métis" A distinct Indigenous nation with their own culture, traditions, and language.

"Michif" The language of the Métis people.

"Residential Schools" were government-funded institutions, beginning in the 1880s, created to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture. Operated primarily by religious organizations, these schools were usually residential and separated children from their families, cultures, languages, and spiritual traditions. The system operated for more than a century, with the last school closing in the 1990s.

"Sixties Scoop" refers to the widespread practice, beginning in the 1960s, in which child welfare agencies removed Indigenous children from their families and communities and placed them in foster care or adopted them into non-Indigenous households across Canada and the United States. This practice continued into the 1990s.

"Southern Region of Treaty #3" refers to the areas referred to as the Rainy River District, including Ojibways of Onigagming First Nation which falls in the area referred to as the Kenora District.

"Town" refers to the municipality of the Town of Fort Frances.

"Treaty #3" The Treaty signed in 1873 by the Anishinaabe. This territory covers northwestern Ontario and southeastern Manitoba. The Town resides within the Southern Region of Treaty #3. In 1875, an adhesion to the treaty was made by people identified as "Halfbreeds", and is referred to as "The Halfbreed Adhesion". The Town acknowledges that many First Nations and Métis people and communities hold differing views regarding this adhesion and their relationship to Treaty #3.

"Truth and Reconciliation" refers to the process for healing relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, by acknowledging the historical and present-day impacts of injustices, particularly those experienced by Indigenous peoples through colonial policies and practices such as residential schools. It involves uncovering the truth, recognizing harm, fostering healing, and taking concrete actions to restore relationships and advance equity and justice.

"Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)" was an independent organization established under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to document the history and impact of Canada's residential school system on Indigenous People. The TRC, operating from 2008 to 2015, collected survivor testimonies and issued 94 Calls to Action to guide reconciliation efforts.

"UNDRIP" stands for **United Nations Declaration** on the **Rights** of **Indigenous Peoples**, which establishes minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the

Indigenous peoples of the world, and addresses topics like education, language, citizenship, and self-government. In 2018, UNDRIP was adopted into Canadian Parliament in their commitment to implementing a framework for reconciliation.

"Urban Indigenous" refers to Indigenous people that live in the Town of Fort Frances.

9. RESPONSIBILITY

8.1 The Head of Council (Mayor) is responsible for:

- Representing the Town in communications with the First Nation Chiefs, the President of the Métis Council of the Sunset Country Métis, and other Métis leaders.
- Providing leadership and acting as a role model in Indigenous relations to the Town.

8.2 Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring that Indigenous equity, relationships, and related issues are considered when making decisions for the Town.

8.3 The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for:

- Enforcement of this policy.
- Providing leadership and acting as a role model in Indigenous relations to the Town.
- Directing Senior Leadership as their roles pertain to this policy.
- Representing the Town in communications with First Nation and Sunset Country Métis Administration.

8.4 The Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee is responsible for:

- Providing guidance to Council on Town matters related to Indigenous equity, relationships, and all Indigenous issues.
- Reviewing and providing endorsement on Town policies relating to reconciliation and Indigenous relationships prior to being presented to Council for approval.

8.5 Senior Leadership (Management) is responsible for:

- Providing leadership and acting as a role model in Indigenous relations to employees and volunteers.
- Directing Employees and Volunteers as their roles pertain to this policy.
- Representing the Town in communications with First Nation and Sunset Country Métis Administration.

8.6 Employees and Volunteers are responsible for:

- Following this policy as it pertains to them and their roles.

10. THE FOUR DIRECTIONS OF THIS POLICY

For Reconciliation to happen, the Town must make every effort in moving forward toward positive Indigenous relationships. Activities that will be undertaken by all levels at the Town can be found under the four directions of this policy.

9.1 Policy & Governance

- The Town will endorse the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and will commit to actions that pertain to the municipal government level. The Town may further petition senior levels of government advocating for Provincial and Federal actions to be taken.
- The Town will adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and will commit to actions that pertain to the municipal government level. The Town may further petition senior levels of government advocating for Provincial and Federal actions to be taken.
- The Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee will review each policy as it relates to reconciliation and Indigenous relationships prior to it going to Council for approval.
- The flag honouring the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation will be flown at the Civic Centre during the month of September annually without the necessity of a request through Policy ADM 1.10 Flag Raising and Proclamation Policy.
- The Town will make an annual proclamation for the following annual days without the necessity of a request through Policy ADM 1.10 Flag Raising and Proclamation Policy:

- June 21, National Indigenous Peoples Day
- September 30, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

- Land acknowledgements recognizing the Town is on Treaty #3 land are vital. A land acknowledgement should be spoken from the heart, may be written and/or read, or the person who requires it may receive the standard Town land acknowledgement from the Office of the Clerk. The land acknowledgement will be included in:
  - All formal meeting agendas;
  - On the Town corporate website;
  - On job postings;
  - Public speeches;
  - Before any proclamation is verbally issued;
  - In reports as necessary (ie. strategic plans, annual reports, newsletters).
- During the Budget process, the Town will establish an Indigenous Relations budget to be used in reconciliatory efforts and to provide asema (tobacco), honourarium, and gifts as may be required.

9.2 Cultural Recognition & Integration

- Cultural practices that do not impact health and safety will be accommodated.
- Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Senators are recognized for their knowledge and gifts and will be engaged in a respectful and meaningful manner when cultural knowledge or protocol is required.
- Smudging of sacred medicines indoors will be accommodated. Procedures for smudging will be made available for the following Town facilities:
  - Civic Centre
  - Fort Frances Museum and Cultural Centre
  - Memorial Sports Centre
  - Senior Centre

- Other facilities as requested

- In any instance that the Town is in possession of cultural items, the Town will ensure that the cultural item is taken care of through proper cultural protocol (such as feasting). Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Senators will be consulted.

- The Town will repatriate cultural items as appropriate, and in consultation with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Senators.

- Anishinaabemowin and Michif, along with colonial languages (English and French) will be used in Town entryway signage. The English "Welcome", in these languages, translate to:

    - Bienvenue (Francaise)

    - Boozhoo (Anishinaabemowin)

    - Taanishi (Michif)

- Anishinaabemowin and Michif, along with colonial languages (English and French) are strongly recommended to be included in Town signage, documents, marketing as appropriate, including in (but not limited to): wayfinding signage, social media, pamphlets, posters, website, etc.

- Town employees are permitted to wear cultural attire that reflects their own heritage and culture (ie. a ribbon skirt) so long as it does not create a health or safety risk.

- The Town will be supportive of the revitalization of Indigenous language and culture.

- Where appropriate, the Town will facilitate Indigenous displays of public art and culture.

9.3 Community Engagement & Partnerships

- The Town recognizes the importance of the Seven Grandfather Teachings, including the Eighth Grandfather teaching as unique to our area. This list will be available to all representatives of the Town who are encouraged to review them before and during communications, including for community engagement and partnerships with local Indigenous people. As well, the teachings are significant in decision making. These teachings are:

- Nibwaakaawin (Wisdom)
- Manaaji'ikiwin (Respect)
- Debwewin (Truth)
- Zaagi'idiwin (Love)
- Dabasendizowin (Humility)
- Zoongide'ewin (Bravery)
- Gwekwaadiziwin (Honesty)
- Boonendamowin (Forgiveness)

- The Town will maintain ongoing dialogue with the intent to further positive relationships and partnerships with Agency One First Nations, comprised of the following First Nation communities:
  - Couchiching First Nation
  - Mitaanjigamiing First Nation
  - Naicatchewenin First Nation
  - Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation
- The Town will maintain ongoing dialogue with the intent to further positive relationships and partnerships with all First Nation communities of the Southern Region of Treaty #3, comprised of the following First Nation communities:
  - Anishinaabeg of Naongashiing First Nation
  - Chima'aganing First Nation
  - Couchiching First Nation
  - Manidoo Baa Witi Gong First Nation
  - Mitaanjigamiing First Nation
  - Mishokiminiziibiing First Nation
  - Naicatchewenin First Nation

  - Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation
  - Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation
  - Zhingwaago Zaaga'igan First Nation

- The Town will maintain ongoing dialogue with the intent to further positive relationships and partnerships with the local Métis people, as represented by the Sunset Country Métis.
- The Town will maintain ongoing dialogue with the intent to further positive relationships with the Urban Indigenous.
- The Town will endeavour to send a minimum of one representative to attend Sunset Country Métis and Agency One First Nations events and celebrations.
- The Head of Council, Council, the CAO, Senior Leadership, and other representatives of the Town as appropriate are encouraged to attend all local Indigenous events and celebrations where the public is invited.
- Indigenous languages such as Anishinaabemowin can vary from other regions and territories. Therefore, when the Town requires translation, only local fluent speakers of the Southern Region of Treaty #3 Indigenous people will be consulted.
- The Town will partner with local Indigenous communities as appropriate and as welcomed by that Indigenous community, to look at the potential for shared services.
- The Town will partner with the local Indigenous people as appropriate and as welcomed by the Indigenous group, to look at the potential for economic growth.
- The Recreation and Culture department will partner in service delivery and programming as appropriate with local Indigenous communities and organizations.
- The Town, as appropriate, will advocate for and/or support advocacy of the local Indigenous people, including advocating for Indigenous groups, organizations, and communities in delegations, and providing resolutions of support.
- The Town will actively engage with its Indigenous citizens and the Indigenous people of the Southern Region of Treaty #3 in all matters that affect them and their relationship with the Town.

- For as long as invited, the Town will remain a partner on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Planning Committee.

9.4 Education & Capacity Building

- Wherever possible, the Town will utilize local Anishinaabe and/or Métis people and programs for cultural/Indigenous learning and training.
- Cultural training will form part of New Council Orientation, as arranged by the Office of the Clerk.
- Human Resources will arrange cultural training as part of onboarding for all employees of the Town. Further cultural/Indigenous training may be arranged as deemed necessary.
- The CAO and Senior Leadership will be required to have annual professional development and/or training on Indigenous studies. This will be in consultation with Human Resources. Learning may be done through local Métis, local Anishinaabe Elders and Knowledge Keepers, through Associations, Post Secondary institutions, and any other teacher/institute as approved by the CAO. Topics may include, but are not limited to:
    - Cultural sensitivity
    - Cultural protocol and practices
    - Local Indigenous teachings
    - Local Indigenous history
    - Language learning (Anishinaabemowin or Michif)
    - Inclusive leadership
    - Anti-racism
    - Indigenous land rights
- Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) will form part of the Town hiring.
- Ancestry, colour, and race are protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Town will establish mechanisms for reporting and addressing racism both for internal staff and for members of the public that witness discriminatory acts of racism. Examples of racism could include, but are not limited to,

commentary, exclusion, providing inequal treatment. Policies followed, dependent on who is the alleged party, may include: Human Resources 3.9 Public Conduct Policy, and Health and Safety 5.34.1 Workplace Harassment Policy.

- The Town will put resources towards education and information for the public on Indigenous history and culture.

11. REVIEW

- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, as well as updated as deemed necessary by the Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee.
- This policy will be reviewed at minimum once per term of Council, as well as when recommended by the Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee.