



Reconciliation
Action Partnership



Reconciliation Action Partnership: A Pathway Forward



September 2024

Introduction

A message from RAP

Inspired by the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, the White Pine Tree of Peace Teaching, and the Anishinabek Seven Grandfather Teachings, "A Pathway Forward" uses a tree metaphor to represent the intentions and actions of the Reconciliation Action Partnership (RAP). This collaborative group of municipal representatives acknowledge, honour and learn from the Indigenous traditions and ways of knowing and doing, that are being embedded in our path forward.

Based in Waterloo Region, situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Chonnonton, and Haudenosaunee peoples, within the Haldimand Tract Treaty of 1784 and Between the Lakes Treaty (No. 3) of 1792, RAP is committed to planting and nurturing the seeds that will create and grow the roots, which will spread beneath the trunk to stand firm when supporting its branches. As the branches grow upward and onward so will our collective Spirit, Heart, Mind, and Body, amplifying respectful and meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities.

Like the Tree of Peace, this document symbolizes a shared path forward. To learn more about this partnership, visit rapwr.ca



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Table of Contents

Purpose and Approach	4
Section 1: Strategic Planning Sessions	5
Session #1: The Spirit and the Heart	5
Session #2: The Mind	6
Session #3: The Body	9
Section 2: Principles, Purpose, Goals, and Actions	13
Section 3: What Might be Helpful Next	18
Section 4: Supporting Documents	19
All My Relations	20
Anishinabek Seven Grandfather Teachings (Eddie Benton-Banai)	21
Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace	23
RAPs Timeline	24
Section 5: Glossary of Terms	26
Section 6: Citations	29

Purpose and Approach



Members of the Reconciliation Action Partnership engaged in three strategic planning sessions held on: March 7, March 21, & April 25, 2024. The sessions were facilitated by the Region of Waterloo's Strategic Planning team, and thoughtfully co-designed with the Region's Indigenous Advisor and Director of Truth and Reconciliation to be holistic and honour Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. Each session was built upon the previous one, beginning with the Spirit (purpose), moving to the Heart (assessment), then the Mind (tactics), and ending with the Body (implementation). Intentional self reflection, and Indigenous teachings and imagery were incorporated throughout.

This document was created to support RAP in the next steps of their journey and is laid out in four sections:

- The **first section** summarizes the sessions, including details of group exercises, Indigenous teachings, and references to supporting documents.
- The **second section** provides a draft of RAP's Principles, Purpose, Goals, and Action Plans, summarized from the results of the three sessions.
- The **third section** provides some key insights and ideas on what might be helpful for the group as they continue their work.
- The last section includes all supporting documents referenced.

Section 1: Strategic Planning Sessions

An overview of session plans, exercises, and grounding Indigenous teachings



Session #1: The Spirit and the Heart

The first session focused on the Spirit (purpose) and the Heart (assessment).

Storytelling is valued in Indigenous cultures and is seen as a primary means to pass on traditional knowledge over generations. During this session, the group reflected together on the history and importance of RAP's work and its current context. Sharing the story of RAP's journey so far set the stage for RAP members to envision a path forward.



Exercise 1: Our Journey Together so far

RAP members engaged in story telling and plotted past moments that have mattered and influenced RAP's journey on a timeline (2020; 2021; 2022; 2023; Present).

A summary of RAP's timeline 2020-2024 is included in the supporting documents.

Exercise 2: Visioning Our Path Forward

RAP members were asked to "imagine it's 2034 and RAP has made significant progress. What would be different?"

- What things should we start? (What new situations should we adapt to? What should we try?)
- What things should we stop? (What's not working very well? What's feeling impractical?)
- What things should we continue? (What do we like and want to keep? What is helping us make progress?)

Session #2: The Mind

The second session built upon the first, focusing on the mind (tactics).

Using white pine tree imagery and deep personal reflection, the group worked to determine RAP's purpose and goals.

Teaching on the Tree of Peace from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy:

"The Peacemaker was sent by the Creator to spread the Kariwiiio or good mind. With the help of Aionwatha commonly known as Hiawatha, the Peacemaker taught the laws of peace to the Haudenosaunee....Asking the Clan Mothers of each tribe to present their Chiefs, he placed deer antlers on each of their heads to symbolize their authority to the five nations."

"In the Onondaga community the Peacemaker planted a tree naming it the Great Tree of Peace. He directed the Chiefs of the council to sit beneath the shade of the tree and watch the council fire of the confederacy of the five nations. He told them that all issues concerning the confederacy would be discussed and deliberated under this tree.

The roots outstretching from the tree reached north, south, east and west and were labeled the Great White Roots. The Peacemaker declared that any nation choosing to follow the guidelines of the Great Peace should follow the Great White Roots and make themselves known to the Chiefs of the confederacy. If they promised to obey the laws of peace they would be welcomed beneath the shade of the tree.

Above the tree an eagle was placed to see far and alert the confederacy of approaching enemies. Beneath the tree the Peacemaker asked that all men throw in their weapons to bury any greed, hatred and jealousy. Finally the Peacemaker took an arrow from each of the five nations and bound them together. In this way the nations were united in their powers and the union was complete."

Source:

<https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/confederacys-creation/>



Exercise 3: Growing a Pine Tree

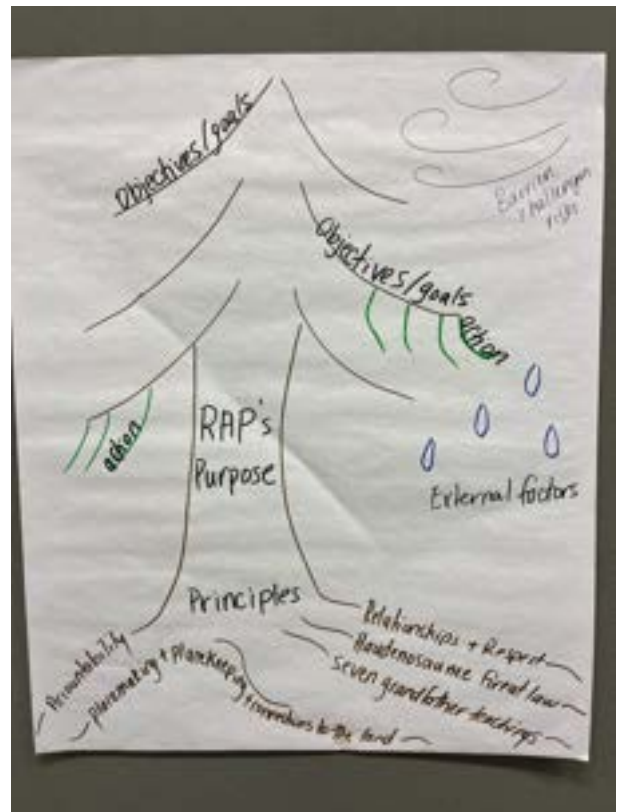
Inspired by the Thanksgiving Address and the teaching of the white pine tree of peace, this tree exercise challenged the group to use story and art to paint a picture of what RAP is and why its important.

Like, the tree of peace, the white pine the group created represented their shared path forward, principles, and commitments.

To ground the session, Paula Whitlow brought in pine needles and cedar to represent the tree of peace and two sacred medicines. Paula, Stephanie Bryenton, and Brian Hill shared that the White Pine represents the tree amongst the people – a tree of peace. Here, clans put away weapons and follow the roots to the tree of peace through understanding and togetherness. Five needles represent the 5 Nations.

Birch bark represents protection. In this difficult work, it is important to put protections in place to take care of ourselves, and reflect on how we will protect one another. Birch bark is also a sign of life. The bark is used to make cradle boards for newborns, canoes, and baskets to carry resources, and food.

Paula also shared a condolence staff, which served as a roll call of the Haudenosaunee Nations and Clans. If no consensus is reached, then they continue to discuss the matter.



On the staff, pegs and carved images depict positions in the Clan. As a new Chief raises up, he takes the position associated with that peg. The Clan mother is also represented by the peg's family decisions. The Deer antler at the end of the staff acknowledges the antler that adorns the Gustoweh (headdress) of those who are Chiefs. For Brian's Nation, this is made from Black ash splints, feathers and 3 Eagle feathers situated in a way that denotes the Oneida People.

In the exercise, the pine tree included the following components:

- Roots – Principles
- Trunk & bark (protection) – RAP's purpose. Why it's important.
- Branches – objectives or goals
- Needles – actions/activities
- External influences on to RAP – rain, clouds, wind, etc.

The template is pictured above.

Designing the Roots, Trunk and Bark

Principles, Purpose and Protections

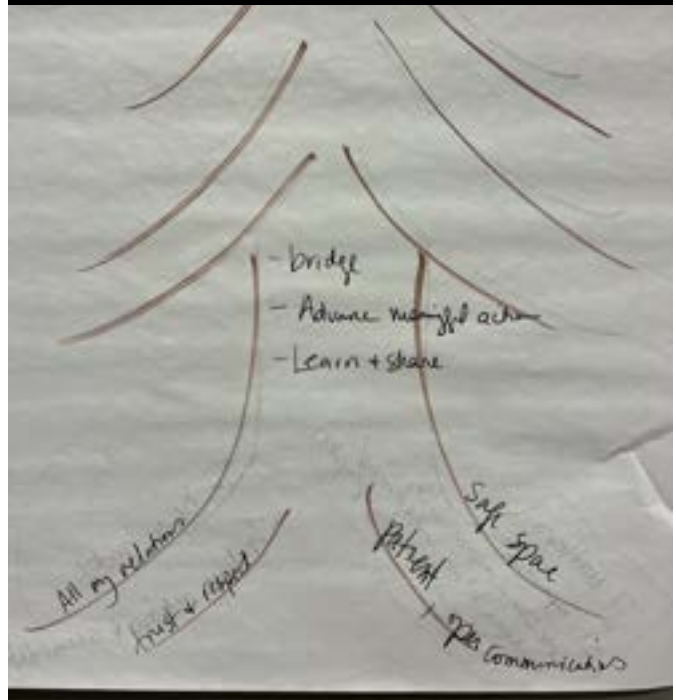
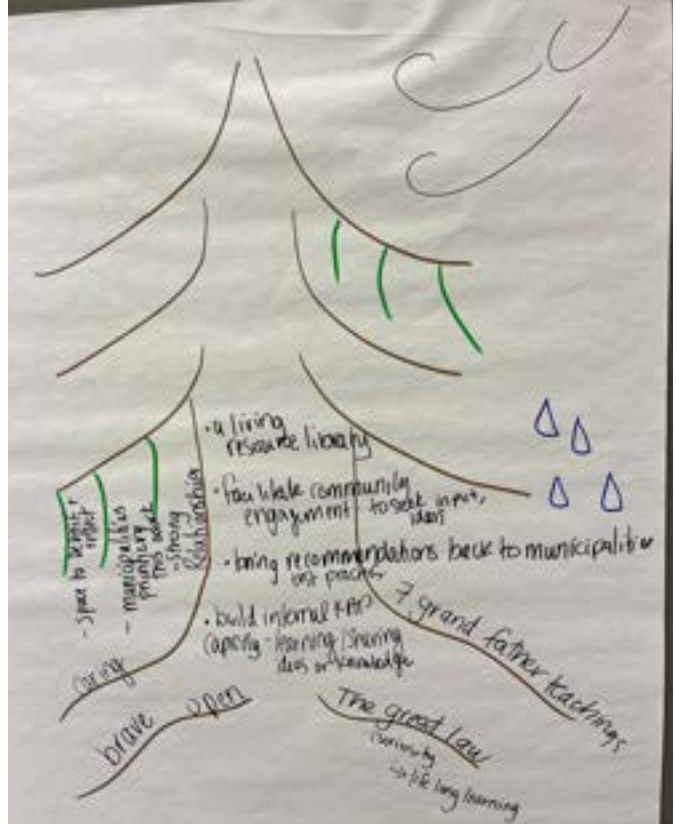
To help ground RAP's purpose and why its important, members were provided with a Personal Reflection Worksheet (included in the Supporting Documents Section) to self-reflect.

The reflection included the following questions:

- Why do you show up to do this work?
- What protections do you have/will you need to continue this work?
- How would you describe the partnership and who is involved?
- What do you want to RAP to drive?
Why does it matter?
- What need does it meet?

Following a time of personal reflection, facilitators supported RAP members to share their insights, perspectives, and ideas and to begin co-designing their trees in two separate groups.

This included discussing and co-creating RAP's principles, purpose, and protections. The two trees designed in these sessions are pictured on the right.



Session #3: The Body

The third session focused on the body (action planning).

In this session, RAP members continued to refine the roots (principles), trunk (purpose), and branches (goals) from session #2, and also added needles (actions) to their pine tree. The actions were prioritized and mapped onto the medicine wheel. At the start of the session, RAP members reflected on the 'seeds' they were bringing today-- what they were hoping would be planted. Squash, corn, and bean seeds were shared with the group.

Teaching on the Three Sisters from the First Nations Technical Institute:

"It is told that the earth began when "Sky Woman" who was with child, lived in the upper world. She wandered to find medicine from a tree which lived in her upper world. Beside the tree was a hole in the sky. She was curious and bent to look. She lost her balance and fell through the sky hole into an endless sea. The water animals who lived there saw her coming and told the birds to join their wings together and catch her. A giant turtle offered its big back for Sky Woman to stand upon. The birds lowered Sky Woman to the turtle's shell, while the water animals took soil from the bottom of the sea and spread it onto the back of the giant turtle for a safe place for her to land. When Sky Woman was falling, she grabbed at the tree in her world. When she landed on the turtle's back, her hands were full of seeds and strawberry plants. She planted them in the soil on the turtle's back.

The sacred strawberry grew and the seeds of corn, beans and squash sprouted. Thus this world of growing things is known as "Turtle Island", what we also call North America."

Source:

<https://fnti.net/three-sisters.php>

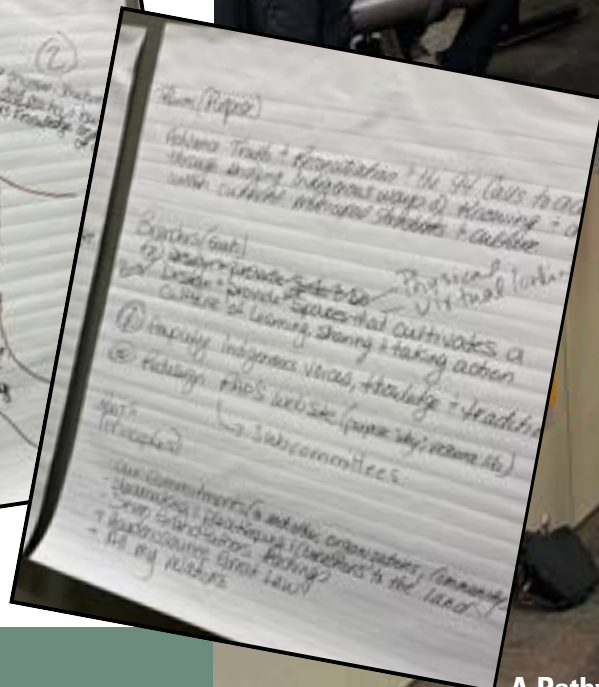
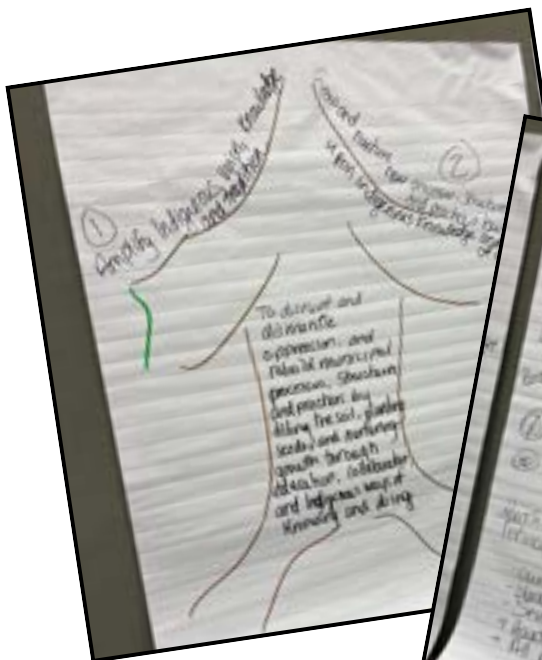


Exercise 4: Refining the Pine Tree

Based on the trees designed in the previous session, a new tree was provided by the facilitators that combined the ideas both groups surfaced in Session 2 to support refinement of the roots (principles), trunk (purpose), and branches (goals). In their small groups, RAP members were asked to reflect on the new tree and:

- Discuss the roots, what's missing or needs editing
- Discuss the trunk, what's missing or needs editing
- Discuss the branches, what's missing or needs editing

The facilitators supported the groups to refine their white pine trees. Following the small group exercise, the RAP members gathered as a large group to share their renewed trees and to build consensus around their branches (goals).



Exercise 5: Plotting the Seasons

Three medicine wheels were created, one for each branch (goal). The medicine wheels allowed the groups to plan and balance their actions (pine needles) across the seasons.

Teaching on the Seasons and the Medicine Wheel. Excerpts from Anishnabe Teaching Elder, Lillian Pitawanakwat:

"The Teachings of the Medicine Wheel are vast. There are seven teachings within each direction on the Ojibwe wheel, and all these have sub-teachings to them, such as where all the medicines like sweetgrass came from, and what they mean. The four directions of the Medicine Wheel remind us of many things, such as the need for balance in the world, and the balance we must strive for everyday within ourselves."

"The east is where we come from. It represents the springtime, and the spring of life. It is where we begin our journey as human beings coming from the spirit world into the physical world. This is Mother in here, the one that brings life. Our journey begins here, when Creator breathes the spirit of life into us. And the spirit is the one that motivates all that life in this great circle. We are a spirit on a physical journey, until our last breath."

"In the southern direction of the Medicine Wheel, everything is thriving. The trees have come awake, producing their leaves. Life itself is awake and dancing, because the summer stage is here, a time of continued nurturance for all of Creation, when everything is new and growing fast."

"The western direction is the adult stage, the berry stage. It is here that the growth from summer has come to ripen. It is the time of harvest, and so for much of creation the physical journey is over, and that life crosses back into the spirit world."

"In the Northern direction is the rest period. Some call it the remembrance period, because after death, you rest, and you contemplate what has happened. But rest is also used here to be mindful of the physical body, to remember to care for and nurture our physical bodies: when they are tired, rest them, just as in the winter the Earth rests from her labours....This is a time of reflection on being a child, a youth and an adult. And so it is here that we honor our Elders...They also help us make peace through embracing all those aspects of ourselves - the child, the youth, and the adult - so that we may be able to feel and experience the fullness of self...And so it is here during the winter months that the elders share their stories and teachings."



Source:
<https://fourdirectionsteachings.com/transcripts/ojibwe.html>

Refining the Branches (Goals)

As a group, RAP members built consensus on three branches (goals). A medicine wheel was created for each branch (goal) with the goal framed as a question to help members consider actions or next steps (pine needles):

1. How might we amplify Indigenous voices, knowledge and traditions?
2. How might we grow and nurture new processes, structures and practices built upon Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing?
3. How might we design and provide safer spaces that cultivate a culture of learning, sharing, and taking action?

RAP members were asked to visit a medicine wheel and plot potential actions onto the seasons, beginning in the East/Spring, and moving clockwise:

1. **East:** It's spring, what are the seeds you are starting to plant? (Actions you are planning or preparing to implement)
2. **South:** It's summer, what sprouts are your nourishing/caring for (Actions you are implementing and sprouting)
3. **West:** It's fall, what plants are fully grown and can be checked for harvest? (Actions that are growing and you are monitoring)
4. **North:** It's winter, what has come to bear? What fruits and plants are you harvesting? (Actions that are wrapped up, evaluating and reflecting back on at the findings. Making recommendations and preparing for next steps)

Using the medicine wheel helped the groups to balance their actions across the seasons and to follow the journey of beginning, nourishing/growing, harvesting, and reflecting on their work.

Following the session, the facilitations reviewed and refined the actions where possible, and updated the medicine wheels as shown on pgs. 15-17.



Section 2: RAP's Draft Principles, Purpose, Goals, and Actions

A summary of RAPs Path Forward, co-created in these sessions is shared below and within a White Pine visual on the following page. Planned actions are shared in medicine wheels on pages 15-16.

Roots (Principles)

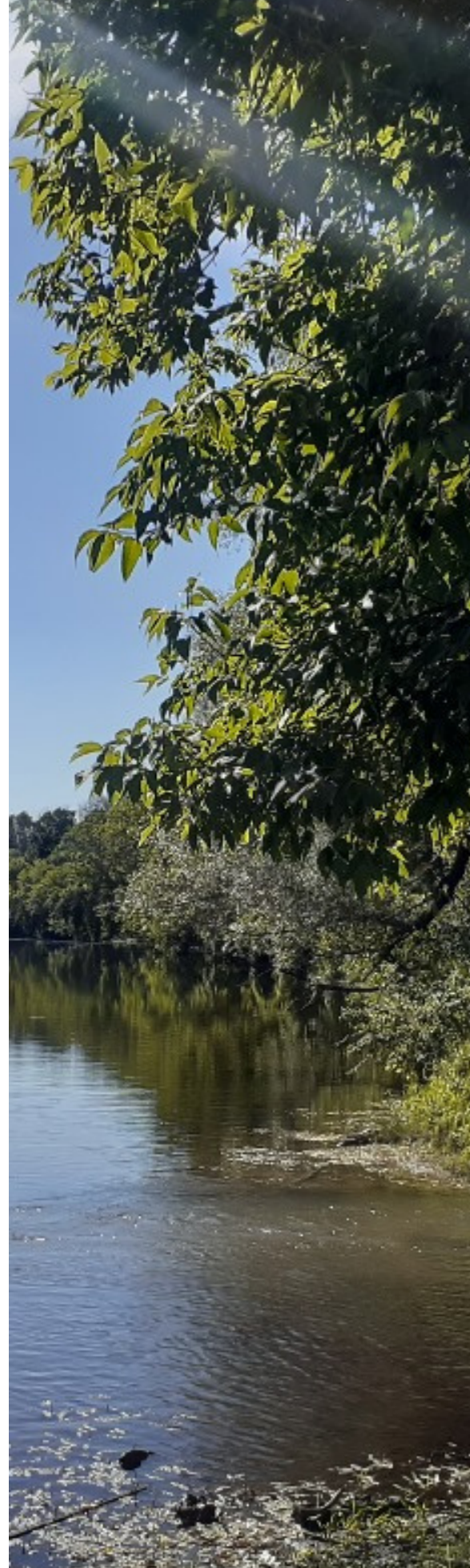
- Haudenosaunee Great Law
- Anishinabek Seven Grandfather Teachings
- All My Relations
- Placemaking & Place keeping, & Connection to the land
- Two Row Wampum

Trunk (Purpose)

- Why: To disrupt and dismantle oppression and rebuild municipal processes.
- How (Trunk): Through advancing Truth and Reconciliation and the 94 Calls to Action. We'll do this by tilling the soil, planting seeds, and nurturing growth through education, collaboration, and Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.

Branches (Goals)

- Amplify Indigenous voices, knowledge and traditions
- Design safer spaces that cultivate a culture of learning, sharing, and taking action
- Nurture new processes, structures and practices built upon Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing



Our pathway

Nurture new processes, structures, and practices built upon Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing

Nurture

Amplify

Amplify Indigenous voices, knowledge, and tradition

Design

Design safer spaces that cultivate a culture of learning, sharing and taking action

Why: To disrupt and dismantle oppression and rebuild municipal processes.

How: Through advancing Truth and Reconciliation, and the 94 Calls to Action, the MMIWG Calls to Justice, and UNDRIP. We'll do this by tilling the soil, planting seeds, and nurturing growth through education, collaboration, and Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.

Our Purpose

Our Principles

Haudenosaunee Great Law

Seven Grandfather Teachings

All My Relations

Placemaking and Placekeeping, and connection to the land

Actions

Goal 1: Amplify Indigenous voices, knowledge, and traditions



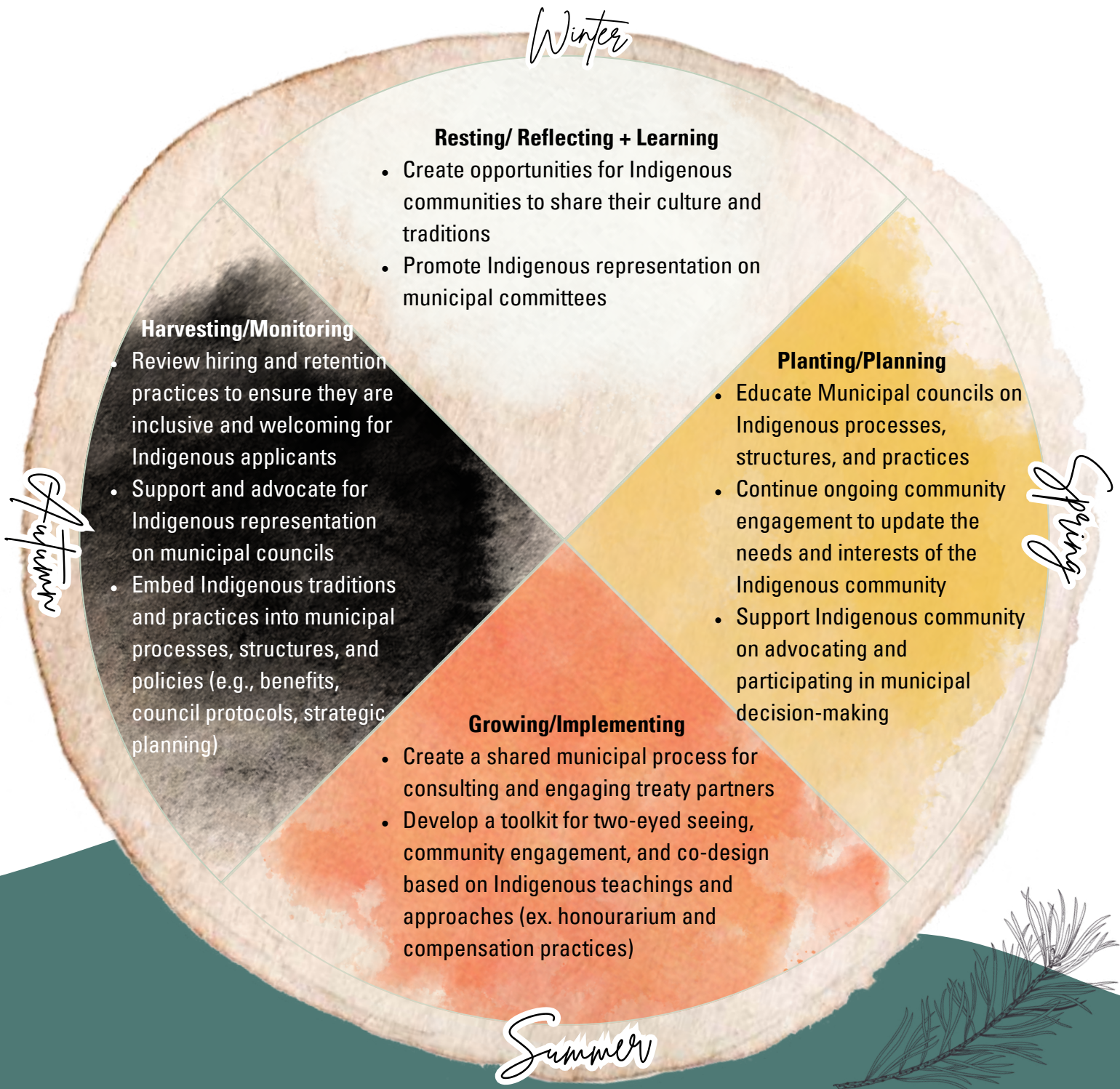
Actions

Goal 2: Design safer spaces that cultivate a culture of learning, sharing, and taking action



Actions

Goal 3: Nurture new processes, structures and practices built upon Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing



Section 3: What might be helpful next

Key insights and ideas on what might be helpful for the group as RAP continues their work.

Finalize RAP's Strategic Plan

- Reflect on the sessions and plans captured in this document. Review and finalize the Principles, Purpose, Goals, and Actions.
 - Are there any changes you would make to the purpose, goals, or planned actions?
 - Review all the actions and decide when they should start and who should lead them.
 - Consider: Should the strategic plan be called something different?

Review Sub-committees

- Review current sub-committees and assess whether they align with RAP's new Path forward.
- Determine if the sub committees should be realigned to better advance the new goals, if they should be included in the action plan, and how they will be prioritized.

Implement the Action Plan

- Establish a way to track the progress and outcomes of the actions.
- Consider the Firekeeper/Coordinator - supporting RAP's work would require both administrative and project management support to ensure actions are progressing and being evaluated along the way.

Review RAP Meetings

- Assess the current structure and purpose of the RAP meetings.
- Allow space for both reflection and action.
- Ensure continued learning, self-reflection and have protections (bark) in place.
- Build on RAP's timeline of important moments (might have a dedicated meeting to do this)

Plan for Evaluation

- Consider other methods to evaluate and determine/measure outcomes (e.g., the relational paradigm places greater precedence on relations or connections, emphasizing the importance of understanding how things are interconnected and how they influence each other.)





Section 4: Supporting Documents

- All My Relations

-
- Anishinabek Seven Grandfather Teachings
(Eddie Benton-Banai)

-
- Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace

-
- RAP's Timeline
-

All My Relations

Interconnection is a central core of First Nations, Inuit and Metis worldviews and ways of knowing. Some First Nations sum this up with the phrase “All my relations”. This mindset reflects people who are aware that everything in the universe is connected. It also reinforces that everyone and everything has a purpose, is worthy of respect and caring, and has a place in the grand scheme of life.

First Nations relationships fully embrace the notion that people and their families are strongly connected to the communities they live in, their ancestors and future descendants, the land they live on, and all of the plant, animal and other creatures that live upon it. They know they are stewards of the Earth and have traditionally lived in harmony with their environment for millennia. Their traditional practices boast amazing sustainability, ecological awareness and knowledge, and a strong scientific understanding of the earth, weather, cycles of the seasons, medicinal and food sources, marine foods and harvesting, and creating everything they need from nature’s bounty. Before colonization, these practices and systems worked perfectly and in harmony with the world around them. They left a very light footprint upon the earth.

The philosophy and practice of “All My Relations” can teach people a lot about relating to others and to themselves. When we take the time to really ‘be’ with someone we utilize our inner knowing to sense deep levels within the person. Listening attentively and respectfully to what others say, allows us to ‘know’ them better with much more than our rationale minds. This helps us to engage with others in holistic and meaningful ways that support health and well-being. By going further and regarding them as someone who is genuinely connected to us, we go even deeper to feel the inner essence of the person. It is this deep connection that serves as the foundation of relationship with our world, supported by interconnected knowing.

The interconnected relationships with all living things is called the Sacred Circle of Life. First Nations teachings guide us to show respect for all within this Sacred Circle. An intense and deep connectedness with all that surrounds us is a foundational concept of First Nations philosophy. This includes a connection to Mother Earth and all that the Universe contains, including other people (personal relationships, family, neighborhoods, communities, nations), all of the plant beings and four legged brothers and sisters, the finned and flying beings, and ultimately the Great Spirit that animates all.

From: <https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/confederacys-creation/>

Anishinabek Seven Grandfather Teachings (Eddie Benton-Banai)

according to benton-banai (1988), the seven grandfather teachings form the foundation of an Indigenous way of life. key concepts of respect and sharing are built into the seven grandfather teachings. there are many versions of the seven grandfather teachings. the following is a shortened version of the teachings as recounted by benton-banai (1988).

according to benton-banai (1988), the creator gave the seven grandfathers the responsibility to watch over the people. in this recounting of the story, the seven grandfathers, seeing that the people were living a hard life, sent a messenger down to the earth to find someone who could tell what ojibway life should be and bring him back. the messenger searched all directions — north, south, west and east — but could not find anyone. finally, on the seventh try, the messenger found a baby and brought him back to where the grandfathers were sitting in a circle. the grandfathers, happy with the messenger's choice, instructed him to take him all around the earth so the baby could learn how the ojibway should lead their lives. they were gone for seven years. upon his return as a young man, the grandfathers, recognizing the boy's honesty, gave him seven teachings that he could take with him. they are as follows:

nibwaakaawin (wisdom)

wisdom, a gift from the creator, is to be used for the good of the people. the term "wisdom" can also be interpreted to mean "prudence" or "intelligence." this means that we must use good judgement or common sense when dealing with important matters. we need to consider how our actions will affect the next seven generations. wisdom is sometimes equated with intelligence. intelligence develops over time. we seek out the guidance of our elders because we perceive them to be intelligent; in other words, they can draw on their knowledge and life skills to provide guidance.

zaagi'idiwin (love)

love is one of the greatest teachers. it is one of the hardest teachings to demonstrate, especially if we are hurt. benton-banai (1988) states that "to know love is to know peace." being able to demonstrate love means that we must first love ourselves before we can show love to someone else. love is unconditional; it must be given freely. those who can demonstrate love in this way are at peace with themselves. when we give love freely, it comes back to us. in this way, love is mutual and reciprocal.

minaadendamowin (respect)

one of the teachings around respect is that to have respect from someone or something, we must get to know that other entity at a deeper level. when we meet someone for the first time, we form an impression of them. that first impression is not based on respect. respect develops when one takes the time to establish a deeper relationship with the other. this concept of respect extends to all of creation. again, like love, respect is mutual and reciprocal — to receive respect, one must give respect.

Anishinabek Seven Grandfather Teachings (Eddie Benton-Banai)

aakode'ewin (bravery)

benton-banai (1988) states that "bravery is to face the foe with integrity." this simply means that we need to be brave to do the right thing even if the consequences are unpleasant. it is easy to turn a blind eye when we see something that is not right. it is harder to speak up and address concerns for fear of being retaliated against. oftentimes, one does not want to 'rock the boat.' it takes moral courage to be able to stand up for those things that are not right.

gwayakwaadiziwin (honesty)

it takes bravery to be honest in our words and actions. one needs to be honest first and foremost with oneself. practicing honesty with oneself makes it easier, to be honest with others.

dabaadendiziwin (humility)

as Indigenous people, we understand our relationship to all of creation. humility is to know your place within creation and to know that all forms of life are equally important. we need to show compassion (care and concern) for all of creation.

debwewin (truth)

"truth is to know all of these things" (benton-banai, 1988). all of these teachings go hand in hand. for example, to have wisdom, one must demonstrate love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth. you are not being honest with yourself if you use only one or two of these teachings. leaving out even one of these teachings means that one is not embracing the teachings. we must always speak from a truthful place. it is important not to deceive yourself or others.

Source: [Mount Royal University - the seven grandfather teachings](#)

Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy has been in place since time immemorial. The Peacemaker was sent by the Creator to spread the Kariwio or good mind. With the help of Aiionwatha commonly known as Hiawatha, the Peacemaker taught the laws of peace to the Haudenosaunee. Travelling from community to community they both succeeded in persuading the Chiefs of each nation to join in the Great League of Peace and founded the only government with a direct connection to the Creator.

Asking the Clan Mothers of each tribe to present their Chiefs, he placed deer antlers on each of their heads to symbolize their authority to the five nations. The Mohawks had nine Chiefs of the bear, wolf and turtle clans, the Oneida also had nine of the bear, wolf and turtle clans, Onondaga presented 14 of the turtle, snipe, bear, hawk, deer, wolf, eel, and beaver clans, Cayuga had 10 from the heron, deer, turtle, bear and snipe clans and finally Seneca presented eight Chiefs from the bear, snipe, turtle, wolf and hawk clans. The Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca and Onondaga accepted the long house as a symbol of their unity. In the Onondaga community the Peacemaker planted a tree naming it the Great Tree of Peace. He directed the Chiefs of the council to sit beneath the shade of the tree and watch the council fire of the confederacy of the five nations. He told them that all issues concerning the confederacy would be discussed and deliberated under this tree.

The roots outstretching from the tree reached north, south, east and west and were labeled the Great White Roots. The Peacemaker declared that any nation choosing to follow the guidelines of the Great Peace should follow the Great White Roots and make themselves known to the Chiefs of the confederacy. If they promised to obey the laws of peace they would be welcomed beneath the shade of the tree.

Above the tree an eagle was placed to see far and alert the confederacy of approaching enemies. Beneath the tree the Peacemaker asked that all men throw in their weapons to bury any greed, hatred and jealousy.

Finally the Peacemaker took an arrow from each of the five nations and bound them together. In this way the nations were united in their powers and the union was complete. Each nation retained their own council with Chiefs chosen by Clan Mothers of families holding hereditary rights to office titles. The rights and duties of Chiefs are explained to them as they stand up as Chiefs and it is the Clan Mother who maintains his moral obligations and keeps him in a straight line.

One by one the Peacemaker took wampum strings, one for each of the laws of the Great Peace and described what each signified. With this action the Great Confederation of the Five Nations was formed. With his mission fulfilled the Peacemaker vanished promising that if the Great Peace should fail the people were to call his name in the bushes and he would return.

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy thrives today and continues to enjoy the support of the Six Nations as their representative government even though an elective system was established in 1924.

Source: [Haudenosaunee Confederacy - Cnfederacy's Creation](#)

RAPs Timeline

External moments

2020

- COVID Pandemic
- Fischer-Hallman archeological find
- Prime Minister's Path
- Land Back Camp
- Cycle of not having Indigenous input and finding ways to get that
- Attempts to engage with community, continued hesitancy and ongoing learnings

2021

- Kamloops residential school graves
- Vaccine roll-out & opportunity to start working with community in a different way
- Black Lives Matter
- Residential Schools
- Anti-Asian hate
- London family attack - Creation of equity staffing in Kitchener in June 2021 as an immediate response
- Queen Victoria statue painted red in Kitchener – starts questions about statues, naming parks (Victoria Park vs Willow Road Park)
- Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan

Internal Moments

2020

- Municipal CAOs desire and realization to work together to move the work forward - sort of an issues group coming together
- Started with Kitchener and Waterloo staff meeting with Land Back, then Region of Waterloo (ROW) staff involvement
- Reconciliation Action Partnership (RAP) Working Group was formed
- RAP seen as a safe space within the bureaucratic political landscape (a learning and growing space)

2021

- RAP sub-committees form in May 2021 due to regularly coming across pieces of work that needed greater focus
- Planning for positive things (Indigenous Pride in June 2021) is shifted by the uncovering of graves
- RAP budget approved (ongoing)
- Indigenous Space Needs Engagement - came out of the engagement from CSWP
- Staff training with Dr. Thomas - first collective action of the Learning and Development Sub-committee
- Indigenizing Gaukel Street - pedestrianizing it with Indigenous representation, especially due to Land Back being in the park
- Permanent Indigenous Spaces (parks) - roll out
- Indigenous Hub to Regional Council, change.org petition created in Sept 2021 with 5 calls to action - relationship with community is looking different now

External moments

2022

- Upstream Fund launched
- Renaming Indian Road, renaming park by Land Back
- Queen Victoria engagement
- Municipal election (end of 2022) – growth period and transition for new Council
- James Cree donation
- Indigenous youth project received Upstream funding
- Regional Official Plan endorsement from Six Nations and Mississaugas. Endorsement includes protection of ground water.
- Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group – recommended creation of Director of Truth & Reconciliation role.

2023

- Land Back secures location
- Charles Street Terminal
- Intimate Partner Violence & MMIWG – the CSWP is the first to include MMIWG
- Archeology projects - Region of Waterloo going above and beyond for consultation, disrupting thinking of the doctrine of discovery, mindful of working with Indigenous communities

Internal Moments

2022

- Days of significance
- Director of Truth & Reconciliation role created (Sept 2022) - Edge of Woods ceremony for Paula. Fractioned Indigenous community came together this day
- RAP Working Group changes name to RAP
- Governance sub-committee – first in person RAP meeting to create a new vision, a turning point for RAP
- RAP Supported Pow Wow – \$40,000. First big spending of funds
- Every Child Matters cross walk
- RAP funded Indigenous Space Needs report
- Honourarium Working Group met with Finance staff
- Phyllis Webstad visit - official unveiling of crosswalk. Council members attended as well and heard about residential schools and Orange Shirt Day

2023

- ROW Indigenous Advisor role is filled
- Community Feast - 40-50 attendees (CAO, Council, municipal staff + community). Good opportunity for community to meet RAP, relationship with community continues improving
- Community petition to keep the Every Child Matters bus wrap came out of the Community Feast
- Bus wrap launched (Sept 2023)

2024

- Region of Waterloo Smudging policy created
- Regional council approves bus wrap for the year
- Indigenous live art, Indigenous kids in care
- Indigenous language greetings in the ROW lobby
- RAP Strategic Planning
- Third Annual RAP Community Feast
- Plans to develop a sacred fire location begin



Section 5: Glossary of Terms/Resources

Between the Lakes Treaty of 1784 and updated in 1792 (Treaty 3) - The Between the Lakes Purchase was signed on December 7, 1792, by representatives of the Crown and Mississaugas of the Credit. The territory described in the written treaty covers approximately 3 million acres. The original Between the Lakes Purchase was signed in 1784. Due to uncertainties with the description of the lands in the original surrender, Treaty 3 was entered into in 1792 to clarify what was ceded. The Between the Lakes Purchase was named as such because it included all the land “lying and being between the Lakes Ontario and Erie.” Current communities in the area include Waterloo Region, Hamilton, St. Catharine’s, Guelph and Simcoe.

Haldimand Tract Treaty of 1784 - The Haldimand Tract refers to the stretch of land granted to the Mohawk (Haudenosaunee) people in return for their allegiance to the Crown during the Revolutionary War. The land was purchased from the Mississauga's of the Credit in broader agreement under what is known as the Treaty Between the Lakes. This allotment of land included 55,000 acres along the path of the Grand River from its source near Wareham, Ontario, to its mouth on the shore of Lake Erie. The boundary was altered to take into account the many twists and curves that the Grand River follows to a more defined but still encompassing line of demarcation.

Haudenosaunee - The Haudenosaunee, or “people of the longhouse,” colonially referred to as Iroquois or Six Nations, are members of a confederacy of First Nations people known as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. Originally a confederacy of five nations inhabiting the northern part of New York state, the Haudenosaunee consisted of the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga and Mohawk. The Tuscarora joined the confederacy early in the 1700’s at which time the group was referred to colonially as the Six Nations.

Hereditary Council – Before the current electoral system was imposed on many First Nation communities, there was a system whereby Leadership was selected. Many communities followed a process where Leaders were chosen through a hereditary lineage system which was passed down intergenerationally through clan or house lines, hereditary chieftaincies are rooted in traditional forms of Indigenous governance.

Section 5: ...Continued

Knowledge Keeper - Knowledge Keepers are not defined by age, but through the experience and wisdom gained by learning, living and modeling a good life. They carry the knowledge and teachings of their community passed down to them in stories, songs, ceremony, and traditions, sharing what they have learned with those that seek their wisdom and advice. Oral history is critical to Indigenous communities and aids in sustaining ceremonies and traditions, and the collective well-being of Indigenous communities.

MMIWG - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls - A National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls published its Final Report in 2019, including 231 Calls for Justice intended to address the root causes that sustain violence against First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse people.

Source: [Call for Justice 1.7 Final Report](#)

Placekeeping - Weaves together a diversity of perspectives, methodologies, experiences, and creations from across the discourses and practices of urban placekeeping and Indigenous engagement (in Canada).

Source: [Civic-Indigenous Placekeeping and Partnership Building Toolkit](#)

Placemaking - The restoration of an Indigenous presence within the natural and built environment that may be expressed through language, art and design that is rooted in Indigenous Knowledge and is approached through Indigenous participation and collaboration.

Source: [University of Toronto - Indigenous Place-making](#)

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) - The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was created through a legal settlement between Residential Schools Survivors, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives and the parties responsible for creation and operation of the schools: the federal government and the church bodies.

Source: [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation - University of Manitoba](#)

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: 94 Calls to Action - The TRC issued a list of items which are known as the 94 Calls To Action that should be utilized the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation." The proposed actions call on all levels of government to work together to repair the harm caused by residential schools and begin the process of reconciliation.

Source: [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)

Section 5: ...Continued

Treaty Partners – Many people think of treaty rights as “special” indigenous rights however, all people living in Canada are treaty people with their own set of rights and responsibilities. Treaties are a foundational part of Canadian society. Every road, house, building or business that exists today in a treaty area was made possible because of a treaty. The existence of treaties is proof that the first settlers of what is now Canada respected First Nations as sovereign people and negotiated Nation to Nation. By understanding the colonial history of Canada we can renew our relationships with each other and move towards meaningful reconciliation.

Source: [University of Toronto OSIE - We are All Treaty People](#)

- **SNGR - Six Nations of the Grand River** - The SNGR unifies all Haudenosaunee peoples under the Great Tree of Peace. We are currently the only First Nation community that includes all six Haudenosaunee nations. Located along the banks of the Grand River, the Six Nations of the Grand River is the most populous First Nation in Canada.
- **MCFN - Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation** - In the Mid-Eighteenth Century, the Ojibwe occupied almost all of Southern Ontario. The Mississauga people’s ancestors themselves claimed territory from Long Point on Lake Erie to the headwaters of the Thames, Grand, Humber and Rouge Rivers. The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation reserve near Hagersville, Ontario, is approximately 6,100 acres. This small land holding in Southwestern Ontario is all that remains of their once expansive property.

UNDRIP - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - The UNDRIP is a human rights instrument that sets out the rights of Indigenous peoples around the world. Human rights instruments include declarations, conventions and treaties intended to define and uphold human rights in international law.

Source: [Canadian Museum for Human Rights - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)



Section 6: Citations

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