

September 21, 2020

Declaration in Support of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Today, City Council passed a [Declaration in Support of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) to promote and strengthen mutually respectful relationships with the urban Indigenous community in St. John's and with all other First Peoples in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

"The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, of which the City of St. John's is the capital, exists on the ancestral homelands of the Inuit, the Innu, the Mi'kmaq and the Beothuk, and has the fastest growing urban Indigenous population in Canada" said Mayor Danny Breen. "With this declaration we recognize and celebrate the many contributions that Indigenous peoples have made and continue to make to St. John's."

The declaration outlines the city's commitment to take many important actions to strengthen its relationship with Indigenous Peoples, including a commitment to maintain membership in First Voice. A coalition led by First Light in collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada, First Voice brings together Indigenous Peoples, service providers, and all levels of government to advance truth and reconciliation in St. John's.

"All levels of government have a key role to play in advancing truth and reconciliation," said Justin Campbell, Manager of Research and Advocacy Programs with First Light. "With today's declaration, the City of St. John's has made a clear commitment to show leadership on urban Indigenous issues in Newfoundland and Labrador. We're pleased to welcome the City as a partner in First Voice and look forward to working more closely together."

Councillor Ian Froude and Councillor Maggie Burton, Council representatives with the [First Voice Partnership Table](#), have been instrumental in working with representatives of the Indigenous community through First Voice in order to bring this declaration to City Council.

"On behalf of Councillor Froude and I, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the members of the Partnership Table as well as the Community Advocates for the continued dialogue about advancing systemic change in key areas as identified by the coalition and urban Indigenous community. We look forward to future discussions," said Councillor Maggie Burton.

The City is committed to supporting inclusion for all residents of the City, and the urban Indigenous community, through the Inclusion Advisory Committee and associated working groups. City Council looks forward to building relevant components of First Voice's Community Action Plan into the St. John's [Healthy City Strategy](#).

The official signing ceremony will take place on Thursday, Sept. 24 at the First Light Centre for Performance and Creativity.