

People, Innovation & Collaboration Services Report to  
Executive Committee  
2024 December 05

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
EC2024-1320

## Agreement Request - Tsuut'ina Nation

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### PURPOSE

This report presents Tsuut'ina Nation's request to develop a Memorandum of Understanding, also referred to as a Protocol Agreement, with The City of Calgary. Administration is seeking Council's approval to proceed with the development of this agreement, which may also result in potential updates to existing service agreements.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

The request for the development of a Memorandum of Understanding is new and therefore has no previous Council direction.

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive Committee recommend that Council direct Administration to commence Memorandum of Understanding development with Tsuut'ina Nation with the potential to explore recommendations for service agreement updates, and report back to Council through the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee with the agreement for approval, upon completion.

### CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

General Manager Chris Arthurs concurs with this report and recommendations.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Tsuut'ina Nation has requested that The City of Calgary enter negotiations to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) proposing Economic Development, Fire and Emergency Services, Transit Services, Water Infrastructure and Tourism as key areas of interest.
- Protocol Agreements (also referred to as a Memorandum of Understanding), are legally non-binding agreements that outline how Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments engage with one another and establish a cooperative relationship.
- This is the second request The City has received for a Protocol Agreement. On 2024 September 23, Council directed Administration to proceed with the development of a Protocol Agreement with the Blackfoot Confederacy. Development of this agreement is currently underway. Concurrently, Administration is also seeking Council direction to consider a request from Bearspaw Nation for a Protocol Agreement (see EC2024-1323).

### DISCUSSION

#### Background

Tsuut'ina Nation is located along the southwest border of Calgary and is home to 2,701 registered members (as of October, 2024)<sup>i</sup>. Governed by one Chief and 12 Minor Chiefs, the Nation provides community and recreation, social development, education, public works, lands administration, enterprises, and language and cultural services to its citizens. With its close proximity to Calgary, Tsuut'ina has several properties known and visited by Calgarians, such as Grey Eagle Resort and its more recent Taza development of Buffalo Run.

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### **Request**

On 2024 November 25, the Mayor's Office received a letter from Tsuut'ina's Chief requesting that The City of Calgary develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Nation (Attachment 1).

Although the request for a MOU is a new mechanism for strengthening and formalizing Tsuut'ina's relationship with The City, this builds on an existing relationship with the Nation. The City remains in ongoing dialogue with the G4 Nations' Chief Executive Officer regarding opportunities to advance the economic development and housing priorities of Tsuut'ina Nation and Stoney Nakoda Nations. Through ongoing conversations with the Chief, Minor Chiefs and staff from the Nation, projects of shared interest are discussed regularly, including conservation measures related to the water feeder main crisis during the summer of 2024. Calgary's bid for the 2027 North American Indigenous Games also facilitated relationship building through its competitive bid process led by Tourism Calgary, Tsuut'ina Nation, Calgary Arts Development Authority, among others.

Many municipalities across Canada have MOUs or Protocol Agreements with surrounding Nations, along with some provincial governments. The Government of Alberta has reached three agreements with Tribal Councils across Alberta and provides ongoing support through a dedicated Protocol and Relationship Secretariat Office.

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

MOUs (also referred to as Relationship, Protocol, and Friendship Agreements), are legally non-binding agreements that outline how Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments engage with one another and establish a cooperative relationship. Each Agreement will vary depending on the aspirations of its signatories, however, may include guiding principles, areas of mutual interest and convening conditions for meetings and discussions. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities<sup>ii</sup> recommends that municipalities establish Agreements with surrounding Nations because they:

- Present a clear long-term joint vision for the community-to-community relationship;
- Show a willingness to heal past wrongs and renew the relationship between communities;
- Create a formal commitment that protects the relationship from a change in leadership, and signals its importance to staff; and
- Brings together community members in joint celebration to build positive interpersonal relationships.

To date, only the Blackfoot Confederacy has requested an Agreement with The City, which is currently under development. The City is committed to ensuring equal opportunity for local First Nations to request and develop Protocol Agreements, should they wish. This process involves a letter of request from a Nation's Chief to the Mayor, followed by the presentation of the request to Council through Committee (Attach 2).

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### EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

### IMPLICATIONS

#### Social

MOUs create conditions for mutual respect and sustained collaboration with local First Nations. By building trust and strengthening communication, The City is a better neighbour and partner to Tsuut'ina. MOUs are intended to be longstanding commitments that extend beyond political terms. They are a mechanism that ensures social, environmental, and economic priorities are regularly discussed and advanced for both partners.

#### Environmental

MOUs can facilitate joint environmental initiatives and practices that result in more effective environmental stewardship.

#### Economic

In 2021-2022, Indigenous-owned businesses generated approximately \$552 million<sup>iii</sup> in revenue in Calgary and on Treaty 7 First Nation lands. Indigenous-owned businesses operate on and beyond First Nations lands and are active across every sector. In building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Nations, agreements offer an opportunity to diversify and expand the city's economy through new businesses and partnerships.

#### Service and Financial Implications

Existing operating funding - one-time

In September 2024, Council directed Administration to develop a sustainment plan for Protocol Agreements beyond 2026 and report back to Council through the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee in Q1 of 2026. (Refer to IGA2024-0941.) That said, the current pace of requests for agreements is exceeding what Administration had forecasted and may cause some capacity challenges. To manage in the interim, work will be initiated on agreements in order requests are received and as capacity is created.

### RISK

- There is a reputational and relational risk for The City if it declines this request or does not invest adequate resources in the process. This may be perceived as disrespectful and erode trust in The City's commitment to Reconciliation and its collaboration with First Nations.

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- There is a risk that by not advancing this request, Tsuut'ina will view The City's approach with Nations as unfair considering its recent approval of the Blackfoot Confederacy's request.
- There is a risk that once this Agreement is complete, other local First Nations may request an agreement, resulting in resource limitations and capacity constraints.

### ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter of Request
2. City Process for Indigenous Agreement Requests
3. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Chris Arthurs	People, Innovation & Collaboration Services	Approve

Author: Government Relations

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<sup>i</sup> [Registered Population as of October 2024 – Tsuut'ina](#), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, [First Nation Profiles](#)

<sup>ii</sup> [Strong Together Tool Kit](#), September 2015, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, p.18. [stronger-together-toolkit-cedi.pdf](#)

<sup>iii</sup> [Indigenous Economic Contribution Study](#), December 2023. Calgary Economic Development, The City of Calgary and MNP LLP, p. 19. [CED2023\\_Indigenous-Economic-Contribution-Study.pdf](#)