

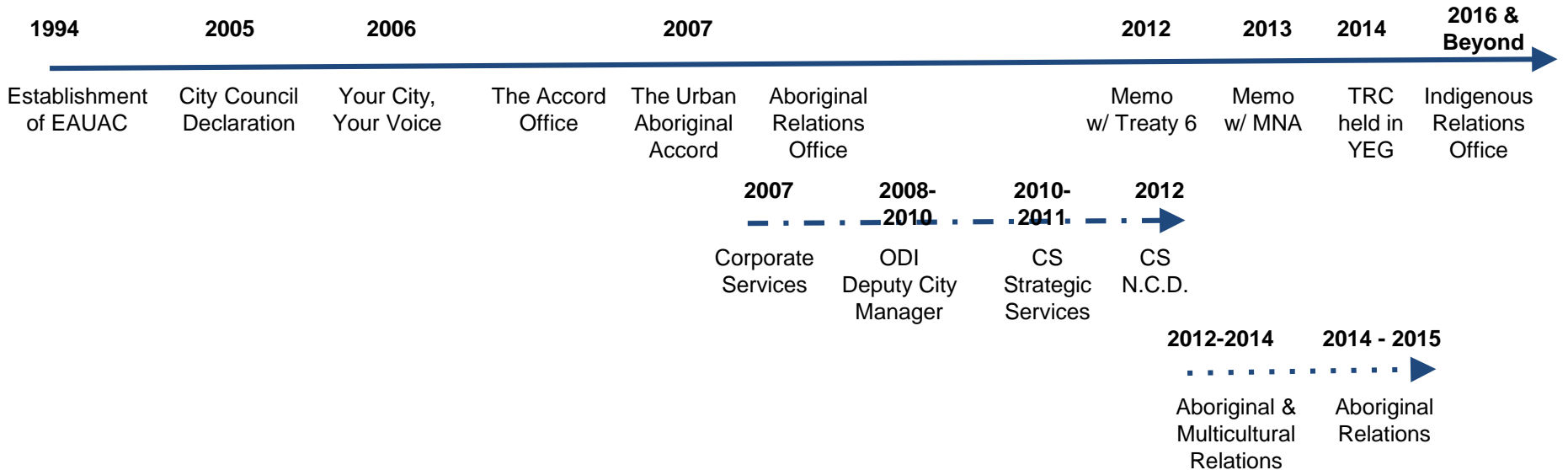
# Understanding Indigenous Relations

A brief presentation outlining the evolution in understanding and application of Indigenous Relations Strategies and Processes at the City of Edmonton

Indigenous and Aboriginal used in the presentation reflect a relation to time and place.

Introduction - Rob Houle

# The Context for 'The Corporation'



# Prior to Contact

Indigenous people thrived in numbers and populations, which some scholars estimate at the 100 Million mark. Meccas like Cahokia, the Eastern and Western Coasts allowed populations to thrive across Turtle Island.

Indigenous peoples created complex social, legal, economic, spiritual processes and laws to govern the diverse Nations with some of the key tenets being matriarchy, collectivism, reciprocity and spirituality.

These constructs served as the template and guiding process for initial trade with Europeans, and ultimately Treaty arrangements. They included the Seven Sacred Teachings.

# Treaties and Section 35

As settlement continued, the Crown entered into arrangements with the Indigenous Nations through Peace and Friendship and the 11 Numbered Treaties. Basic guidelines were established through the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and Treaty of Niagara of 1764.

Many complex legal and political conversations would occur throughout the years. With the Constitution Act of 1982, the Indigenous leaders fought to have Aboriginal and Treaty Rights enshrined into the laws of the Canada.

Subsequent legal cases and court decisions continue to dictate how and when Indigenous groups will be consulted and engaged.

# Aboriginal program evolution

As the rights and legal jurisdiction discourse continued after 1982, and rights determination continued to fill the “open box” that was section 35; groups and organizations began to benefit from the ongoing discussions.

Leadership groups and governance models were created around every facet of Aboriginality, with some emphasis being paid to Urban Aboriginal Dialogue.

Eventually another paramount ruling in *Corbiere v Canada (1999)* would again define a new interpretation of Aboriginal Rights.

# Urban Aboriginal Paradigm

Following *Corbiere v Canada*, urban aboriginals continued to be passed between jurisdictions of federal and provincial authorities. Governance models created and unfolded with investments on a service provision model.

Parallel to this discourse, internationally other conversations were taking place with Indigenous leadership for the creation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) which sought to restore traditional constructs that existed pre-contact.

# Dispelling Myths

With these dialogues ongoing, certain tropes and myths began to fill the thought streams of Canadians.

Myth	Reality
Indigenous People do not pay taxes	Majority of Indigenous monies is spent off-reserve in urban centres. Employment levels low on-reserve
Edmonton's Indigenous populations are only ~1%	In the case of Edmonton, within 1 hours drive there is approximately another 25,000 Indigenous people affected by the policies we create
Indigenous People are a Federal Responsibility	Treaty agreements were entered into between the Treaty Nations and the Crown, on behalf of her subjects and future subjects. Big and Little Crown becoming more blurred.

# Examples of Collaboration at the Provincial level

## Memorandum of Collaboration and Cooperation with Alberta

- Signed on May 23, 2013 between the Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton
- Priorities focus and align with the Council Initiatives chosen by City Council which include;
  - Transitions
  - Culture
  - Youth Leadership
  - Safety and Security of Indigenous Women
- Recent developments could place Economic Development back into conversations around the MCC



# Examples of Collaboration at the Federal level

Involvement in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada with End Poverty Edmonton

- Partnered Canadian Native Friendship Centre and Alberta Regional Office in the delivery of community conversations around the Urban Aboriginal Strategy
- Included the End Poverty Edmonton group from the City to examine possible alignment of priorities with UAS priorities
- Hosted the Ottawa INAC branch, with Alberta Regional office to provide input around the UAS assessment currently underway

# How the IRO has come to Understand Indigenous Relations

Following the UNDRIP process, governments and institutions began to evaluate their engagements based upon service provision and scope of authority. Legal victories continued to shape how and when Indigenous peoples would be engaged and in what context.

The IRO sees two streams developing out of these discussions and work deployment;

1. Needs Based Groups - front line service provision
2. Rights Based Groups - political discussions and relationship building

# Needs Based Construct and Approach

Community based work which focuses on the service provision aspect, through an Indigenous lens, including but not limited to;

- Crisis Intervention
- Preventative Social Services
- Financial Services
- Poverty
- Referral

Engagement in these areas usually involve community organizations and those engaged in the day to day interaction with Indigenous Peoples

# Rights Based Construct and Approach

Politically charged work involving many levels of government and rooted in formal arrangements and historical documents, including but not limited to;

- Education
- Health
- Land use
- Child Welfare
- Justice
- Housing
- Duty to Consult
- History
- Language and Culture
- Agriculture
- Economic Development
- Travel
- Hunting, Fishing and Trapping

Engagement on these topics usually carried out in Nation-to-Nation fashion with Rights and knowledge holders.

# How the Indigenous Relations Office Tries to Navigate

At the beginning of every process and project, consideration should be given as to where the process or project falls in a “Needs” and/or “Rights” based paradigm.

Once determination has been made, effort should be made to reach out to said engagement group as the preliminary step, and upon their advice, further outreach conducted.

Recognition must be paid to the traditional territory and existing arrangements, as these are key to Indigenous Relations. Engagement must be wary of political outfall regardless.

# Moving Forward

The City of Edmonton continues to engage with both the Rights Based and Needs Based organizations and leadership. Efforts are being made to begin to blur the rigid City boundaries with initiatives like End Poverty Edmonton seeking input from Indigenous elected leaders.

Interesting opportunities and programs are being explored like the FCM/Cando CEDI partnership with Enoch Cree Nation. This partnership is in the beginning stages and shows much promise for both parties.

Focus is being spent on understanding the true history of the territory and lands upon which we reside and completing the narrative.

Work is being undertaken with the understanding that “We are all Treaty People”, and all have obligations under said Treaties.

# Thank You

Hiy Hiy  
Ishnish  
Mahsi Cho  
Miigwech