



Dear Resident of Dryden,

As you are likely aware, the City of Dryden completed its new Strategic Plan this past year. During the planning process, both City Council and staff recognized that the municipality has a large and growing Indigenous population. It was also recognized that having a diverse and inclusive community is a cornerstone of a forward thinking, strong and sustainable community.

In order for the City to strengthen and build on its relationships with its Indigenous community members, our neighbouring First Nations communities and the Metis Nation of Ontario, it was felt that a new, more inclusive approach was required. To that end, a committee of Council called "The Working Circle" was formed. The Working circle is comprised of five Indigenous community members and five senior City representatives, including three Councilors, the City CAO and HR Manager.

The mandate of the Working Circle is to:

- Identify issues important to Dryden's Indigenous Community
- Recommend actions the City can take to improve the experience of Indigenous residents
- Propose ways the community can bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents

One of the early recommendations to Council from the Working Circle, is to rename a prominent street in town, namely, Colonization Avenue. We know this has been talked about for many months, if not longer, and has illicit strong opinions and reactions from people, both for and against the possibility.

We recognize that change is difficult, especially when it involves one personally. The Working Circle is providing this package of information to provide some background and an explanation for our recommendation to Council. It is not intended as much to "sell" anyone on the idea as it is to solicit your understanding and support for the change. Although Colonization may

be just a name to some, to many of the Indigenous members of our community and indeed across the country, it is representative and symbolic of an experience that was less than positive, and one which has had lasting negative effects, even up to the present time. The historical effect of colonization on Indigenous people in Canada, including the legacy of residential schools, is well documented in the country's "Truth and Reconciliation Report". We encourage you to read the report to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of colonization on Canada's Indigenous population. Another way to consider the impact of colonization is to recognize that the perspective of those doing the colonizing is likely to be different than those who are being colonized. As we move forward, we believe we need to remove monikers that constantly remind people of a painful past and instead, work together on initiatives that bring people together. We propose that having the community help select a new name for Colonization Avenue may be a good starting point.

We hope you will find the attached links to the videos both interesting and informative. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to any of the Working Circle members, City Council or the City's CAO.

Yours respectfully,

The Working Circle