City of Seattle

Tribal Nations Summit

One-Year Update

AUGUST 2024

CITY OF SEATTLE, OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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"Honoring Our Connection" story pole presented to the City of Kobe, Japan, by the City of Seattle, Port of Seattle and Seattle-Kobe Sister City Association in partnership with members of the Lummi Nation and Puyallup Tribe of Indians. Photo credit: Brian Chu Photography.

Overview

On May 2, 2023, the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR) coordinated the inaugural City of Seattle | Tribal Nations Summit. It was the first time in the city of Seattle's history that it convened an official government-to-government meeting of city-elected leaders and senior officials with multiple federally recognized Tribes in the state of Washington.

The summit had two key goals: 1) Identify actions and desired outcomes that uphold the sovereignty and treaty rights of federally recognized Tribes, and 2) Build partnerships, strengthen collaborations and enhance diplomacy. **At the summit, participants identified 23 initial actions to help meet these goals.**

The summit represented a significant initial step in the City's journey to better honor and respect Tribal sovereignty in local governance and engage Tribal Nations as sovereign governments and regional partners. **The purpose of this report is to share an update on how these commitments have progressed over the past year.** This is one step in the City's larger effort to strengthen relations, build trust, and remain an accountable, committed partner to Tribal Nations and Native communities.

Seattle Parks and Recreation, Tribal Nations Gathering participants at Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center. Photo credit: City of Seattle.

Recap of 2023 Tribal Nations Summit

From left to right: Jeremy Takala*, councilmember, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation; Josh Bagley, vice chair, Suquamish Tribe; Jay Mills*, councilmember, Suquamish Tribe; Greg Hitchcock, general council vice chair, Cowlitz Indian Tribe; Donny Stevenson, councilmember Muckleshoot Indian Tribe; Tiffany Washington, deputy mayor, City of Seattle; Monisha Harrell, former senior deputy major, City of Seattle; Scott Schuyler, policy lead, Upper Skagit Tribe; Suzanne Sailto, former councilmember, Snoqualmie Indian Tribe; Debora Juarez, former president, Seattle City Council; Bruce Harrell, mayor, City of Seattle; Jaimie Cruz, councilmember, Squaxin Island Tribe; Tim Reynon, Tribal relations director, City of Seattle; Greg Wong, deputy mayor, City of Seattle; Denita Holmes, treasurer, Suquamish Tribe; Leonard Forsman, chair, Suquamish Tribe; Chayannah Squally, former councilmember, Nisqually Indian Tribe; Steve Edwards, chair, Swinomish Tribal Community.

*Member of Indigenous Advisory Council, City of Seattle. Photo credit: City of Seattle.

The City was humbled to host elected leaders and staff from **11 federally recognized Tribal Nations** at the 2023 summit. All 29 federally recognized Tribes in Washington state received an invitation, especially given that Tribal interests in local government extend well beyond the geographic boundaries of local jurisdictions and reservation boundaries.

Additionally, the City hosted leaders from **six urban Indian organizations (UIOs**) that are recognized as American Indian and Alaska Native service providers, advisory bodies, public health authorities, or public development authorities through local, state, or federal statute. The relationship and engagement of these recognized providers is distinct from government-to-government engagement, but represents the on-going trust obligations to Tribal citizens, regardless of where they live.

The summit was attended by staff from **17 City departments, executive and legislative representatives, and two county and regional partners.** This included Mayor Bruce Harrell, former Seattle City Council President Debora Juarez, current Seattle City Council President Sara Nelson, Councilmember Dan Strauss, and others.

During the summit, Tribal leaders shared their priorities with Mayor Harrell and deputy mayors through **a listening session** followed by an opportunity for City leadership to **listen and learn directly from Tribal leaders on how to work together more effectively** as governments and regional partners. Tribal and urban Native leaders then engaged in **direct talks and candid conversation focused on** three areas of shared concern: **housing and homelessness, natural and cultural resources, and public safety**.

As a result of these conversations, **23 initial commitments were identified in partnership with City departments, the mayor's office, and other City stakeholders**. The 2023 Summit Summary Report shares more detail on these commitments, which are also included in Appendix A.

Seattle Public Schools partnership with Muckleshoot Indian Tribe to serve locally sourced salmon school lunches with support from Office of Sustainability & Environment's Healthy Food in Schools initiative. Photo credit: Office of Sustainability & Environment.

Key Takeaways

City of Seattle Tribal Nations Summit. Photo credit: City of Seattle.

The efforts summarized in this report mark progress in the City's commitment to strengthen government-to-government relationships with Tribal Nations and to define its role in fulfilling trust and treaty obligations to Tribal citizens, regardless of where they reside. These actions help lay the groundwork for growing trusted partnerships and fostering greater collaboration, yet we acknowledge that significant work remains ahead.

In the past year, the following eight key takeaways were identified by City partners:

- The City has made significant strides in its commitment to Tribal engagement, such as increasing Tribal representation in major city planning efforts and increasing requests for Tribal consultation. As the City plans for a citywide policy to formalize Tribal relations, we understand that developing a systemized and standardized protocol for Tribal engagement through a government-to-government framework is a crucial step and a priority action.

- Tribal consultation has become more consistent and frequent, with numerous departments engaging with Tribes on various policies, projects, and initiatives. At the same time, Tribal consultation is still often integrated into a public community engagement process that fails to honor and recognize Tribal sovereignty. Tribal representatives have expressed the need for direct City-Tribal relationships, and continue to stress the importance of early and often consultation on anything affecting Tribal Nations and Tribal interests.
- There is demonstrated commitment to reflecting Indigenous values, cultures, and priorities in City projects and policies.
- The City is taking a more collaborative approach to cultural resource stewardship by expanding outreach across numerous environmental projects, programs, and initiatives and demonstrating a commitment to environmental justice.
- The City fosters numerous partnerships to support culturally responsive housing and emergency shelter services, as well as gender-based violence response and other services that support community resilience for Tribal citizens and all urban Native residents.
- The City made strides in increasing education and understanding of Tribal histories, governments, and priorities by visiting Tribal communities, hosting City-sponsored gatherings, developing.
- The formation of a City-Tribal workgroup and the development of tools to better track Tribal engagement across City projects and programs mark foundational and critical steps to more effective Tribal relations and consultation.
- Building staff skills and capacity for more effective Tribal relations across City departments is a crucial step to moving this work forward and needs to be adequately planned for, budgeted, and resourced.

Seattle City Councilmember meeting with Lummi Nation delegation on interjurisidictional responses to fentanyl. Photo credit: Office of Intergovernmental Relations.

Progress Updates

City of Seattle visit to Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe. Photo credit: Office of Intergovernmental Relations.

The commitments from the summit spanned the areas of 1) Effective Tribal relations and Indigenous engagement, 2) Cultural visibility and vitality, 3) Collaborative cultural resources stewardship, and 4) Culturally attuned systems of care.

The following updates share more information on actions taken within these categories. For simplicity, each action is listed only one time, though natural overlap occurs across categories.

These updates represent a fraction of City engagement and funding that supports American Indian and Alaska Native residents in Seattle. The City of Seattle fosters relationships and provides funding to numerous urban Indian organizations and Indigenous groups in the Seattle area that are not fully captured in this progress update. The items featured in this report are reflective of engagements with federally recognized Tribes and statutorily recognized American Indian and Alaska Native service providers and advisory bodies that serve Tribal citizens, regardless of where they reside.

While detailed, the City recognizes that this is not an exhaustive list of every action it has taken over the past year and is actively improving its internal tracking systems and processes to better coordinate Tribal outreach and engagement across the City.

The City acknowledges that these actions only mark the beginning of our efforts to strengthen government-to-government relationships with Tribal Nations and to define our role in fulfilling trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations and Tribal citizens. We look forward to working with Tribal and urban Native partners in the months and years ahead to achieve and expand upon these items.

Effective Tribal Relations and Indigenous Engagement

At the City of Seattle | Tribal Nations Summit, Tribal and urban Native leaders clearly expressed the need for clear communication from City leaders and staff. Tribal leaders stressed the importance of early and often consultation and collaboration on anything affecting Tribal Nations and Tribal interests. In the past year, the City has made strides in learning about Tribal and urban Native priorities, engaging with Tribal Nations through a government-to-government framework, and identifying and planning internal process improvements.

- The Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR) began conversations on codeveloping a citywide policy to formalize Tribal relations and will convene a City-Tribal workgroup in summer 2024.
- Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) hosted a Tribal Nations Gathering in January 2024 to dig deeper into parks and open space issues. See more in the collaborative cultural resources stewardship section.
- OIR implemented a citywide tool to track Tribal engagement across City departments, projects, policies, and programs.
- Seattle Human Resources (SHR) collaborated with OIR and will engage the Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC), other departmental staff, and Tribal subject matter experts as advisors to begin the development of an eight-module Tribal Nations training curriculum. The first two modules will be launched this year.
- Seattle City Light (SCL) representatives are completing a certificate in Tribal relations at Portland State University and are attending regional Tribal events led by the National Congress of American Indians and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians to build a more robust Tribal relations framework for the utility.
- The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has reached out to 16 Tribal Nations across the Puget Sound region in 2024 to discuss their potential involvement with the Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant resilience hub project. Several Tribes have responded with interest in the project.

- The Office of Economic Development has engaged two Tribal Nations and a Tribal enterprise to increase understanding and awareness of Tribal priorities and access barriers in the mass timber industry.
- The City coordinated nine visits to five Tribal communities or areas of significance to Tribal partners. Meetings included Tribal leadership and staff from the mayor's office, city council, and various City departments.
- City departments invited Tribal leaders into more City policy and decision-making spaces. For example:
  - The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) provides staffing and program resources for the Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC), which is comprised of nine representatives from Tribal and urban Native communities. The IAC convenes a Tribal caucus to support the unique needs of Tribal leadership serving on the public commission. The IAC appointed or reappointed three elected Tribal leaders, four UIO leaders, and elder and youth delegates.
  - The IAC has provided feedback to Seattle City Council and several City departments on legislative and budget issues, programs, and policies, including council budget actions, grant programs, departmental policies, and City plans.
  - Seattle City Council's Finance, Native Communities, and Tribal Governments Committee hosted an OIR and IAC briefing in March 2024 at which former Snoqualmie Tribal Councilmember and IAC member Suzanne Sailto copresented and in April 2024 at which Suquamish Tribal Councilmember and IAC member Jay Mills copresented.
  - OIR invited Tribal leaders to the table during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Third Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM3) meetings that took place in summer 2023. OIR worked with the U.S. State Department and APEC organizers to include Tribal leaders at meetings, and invited Tribes to share their culture and words of welcome to their ancestral homelands.

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and Suquamish Tribe representatives at honorary naming of Alaskan Way and Elliott Way to Dzidzilalich. Photo credit: Department of Neighborhoods.

- The City has increased frequency and consistency of Tribal consultation with at least 10 Tribal Nations. The most common consultation topics include cultural resource management, Tribal treaty rights, environmental stewardship, hydroelectric projects, mass timber, urban planning, public art and cultural placemaking, and economic development.
- The City has invited a number of Tribal Nations to collaborate and consult on state and federal policy priorities to better understand areas of mutual interest. The City has met with Tribal leaders and Tribal youth delegates to better understand and support Tribal Nations' efforts to address the opioid and fentanyl crisis and increase interjurisdictional communication and joint advocacy.
- The City increased Tribal and Native community outreach, engagement, inclusion, support and funding. Topics included local food systems, forestry, climate change, aging and disability services, emergency management, business and economic development, and transportation.

City of Seattle visit to the Skagit Hydroelectric Project with the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. Photo credit: Office of Intergovernmental Relations.

Cultural Visibility and Vitality

Tribal leaders have expressed the desire to revitalize local Coast Salish values, cultures, histories, stories, languages and art that generate a sense of belonging and connection among Native peoples to the natural and built environment in the City of Seattle. The following section highlights a few areas of cultural visibility and vitality through Indigenous placemaking, urban planning and educational awareness.

- In the past year, the City has increased Tribal engagement in public art, infrastructure and capital projects, including:
  - The Seattle Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) has partnered with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), SCL, and SPR to increase support for Native artists across numerous public art projects.
  - Ongoing support and investment in the Tribal Interpretive Center on the waterfront.
  - SDOT and SPR are exploring the development of interlocal agreements to commission Tribal art in public spaces, particularly places of cultural significance.
  - SPR and ARTS are coordinating with Tribal Nations to incorporate Tribal history, Tribal art, Lushootseed language, and traditional place names into parks and public space names, signage, and information materials. One example is the artwork at Licton Springs Park.
  - SDOT outreach to Tribal Nations to better understand their interests and areas of concern regarding SDOT capital projects.
- The IAC, Seattle City Council president, and the Seattle Design Commission cosponsored a public talk on Indigenous planning and design in public transit and advised on the City's design guidelines to Sound Transit.
- The Office of Planning & Community Development (OPCD) contracted a Native women-owned consulting firm to support the inclusion of Indigenous principles, treaty rights, and culture in the planning of urban centers.
- The Information Technology department and the Seattle Channel added nine new videos that feature stories from Tribal and urban Native communities.

Urban Native listening session to inform housing elements of the One Seattle Plan (comprehensive plan). Photo credit: Department of Neighborhoods.

Collaborative Cultural Resource Stewardship

Tribal leaders have continuously noted that all natural resources are cultural resources and that City policy, services, and utility infrastructure have far-reaching impacts for Tribal Nations and Tribal citizens who live, work, play, and exercise Tribal sovereignty and treaty rights in and around our City and across our region. The following examples highlight the City's efforts toward more robust, collaborative intergovernmental relationships and partnerships on natural and cultural resource issues, including:

- SPR hosted a Tribal Nations Gathering to dig deeper into parks and open space issues. Its summary report includes a range of Tribal priorities and concrete next steps and action items such as increased outreach and engagement of Tribal partners and the formation of an internal workgroup to systemize Tribal relations within the department.
- Several City departments (OIR, DON, OPCD, SPR, SPU, SCL, and Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections (SDCI)) are actively engaging with Tribal Nations on cultural resource protection efforts and urban forestry work.
- OIR, SCL, SPU and the mayor's office are consulting with Tribal Nations on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process for the Skagit and South Fork Tolt hydroelectric projects' Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing processes.
- OSE and SPU submitted a grant request to the Washington State Department of Ecology for funds to support floodplain restoration and sea level rise adaptation in the lower Duwamish River. OSE and SPU notified six Tribes with ancestral ties to the Duwamish River area and conducted targeted outreach to the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and Suquamish Tribe.
- SDOT has been awarded a U.S. Department of Agriculture urban forestry grant to work with Muckleshoot Indian Tribe on land and habitat restoration in the Longfellow Creek basin.
- SPU hosts standing meetings with Muckleshoot Indian Tribal Fisheries to discuss the sockeye salmon hatchery and salmon recovery.
- SPU supports ongoing implementation of the Muckleshoot – Settlement Agreement, which includes hunting and gathering in the Cedar River Watershed, wildlife studies, firewood gathering, and operation of the sockeye salmon hatchery.
- SPU participates with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe on the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) oversight committee and will be hosting a watershed tour in summer 2024.
- SPU hosted three engagements with two Tribal Nations at SPU properties of significant interest. These meetings included Tribal leadership, elders, and caretakers.

- SPU participates in the Tolt Fish Advisory Committee and Tolt Fish Habitat Restoration Group to manage fish and aquatic resources on the Tolt hydroelectric projects.
- SPU is implementing its forest management plan in the Cedar River Watershed in collaboration with Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and is consulting with the Tribe on decommissioning roads in the watershed.
- The City of Seattle is actively and collaboratively partnering in the area of environmental justice:
  - As part of the FERC relicensing process, SCL will include a cultural resources section in the relicensing process.
  - Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) and Seattle Police Department (SPD) are working with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and Suquamish Tribe as the City performs environmental corrective work at two city-owned properties.
  - SPU and SCL partner with King County and Boeing to construct the cleanup of the Lower Duwamish Waterway (LDW) Superfund site. With cleanup partners, they proactively coordinate with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and Suquamish Tribe to develop agreements that reduce and mitigate the construction impacts on Tribal fishing practices.
  - SPR and the Green Seattle Partnership partners with several urban Indian organizations and educators from Tribal communities to lead land and habitat restoration in parks and open spaces.
- The City is collaborating and supporting ongoing education among City staff and engaging in regional collaboration, including:
  - SCL sponsored and attended last year's Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Tribal Clean Energy Summit.
  - The City of Seattle sponsored and SDOT, SPR, SCL, DON, OPCD and OIR participated in the 2024 Cultural Resource Protection Summit.
  - Snoqualmie Tribal members and SPU staff attended wildland fire training.

City of Seattle visit to Swinomish Indian Tribal Community. Photo credit: Office of Intergovernmental Relations.

City of Seattle at grand opening of Chief Seattle Club's Sacred Medicine House. Photo credits: Chief Seattle Club and Office of Housing.

Culturally Attuned Systems of Care

Many Tribal leaders acknowledge the critical role of UIOs in addressing the social and economic needs of their citizens and a diverse range of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples who reside in Seattle. These culturally attuned service providers are essential partners in serving Tribal citizens regardless of where they reside. The following examples highlight a few of the City's investments in culturally attuned systems of care, including:

- The Office of Housing (OH) and the Human Services Department (HSD) have numerous active partnerships, contracts and grants to support culturally responsive housing and emergency shelter partnerships with Native community partners. Some, but not all, examples include:
  - Over the last two years, HSD worked with the King County Regional Homelessness Authority and two UIOs to support 93 units of culturally attuned shelter.
  - The Office of Housing supported a Chief Seattle Club affordable housing project that added 120 units of culturally attuned permanent supportive housing to the local housing stock.
  - In 2024, HSD will also resume administration of homelessness prevention programs administered by four UIOs to provide critical financial assistance.
- HSD has numerous active partnerships, contracts and grants with four UIOs to support Native providers in offering culturally attuned gender-based violence response services.

- City departments are engaging with Tribal public health experts to improve the collection, analysis, and reporting of race and ethnicity data:
  - SPD is working to procure a technology solution to better achieve this goal within SPD data systems.
  - SPD continues to build trust by engaging in partnerships with Tribal Nations and urban Indian organizations.
  - SPD has a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) data analyst who works with the statewide task force and subcommittees, as well as the Seattle Indian Health Board, to strengthen the department's work on MMIP.
  - HSD increased staff awareness on culturally appropriate data collection by meeting with leaders from Seattle Indian Health Board and Native-owned consulting firms.
- The Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) and DON have provided funding and support to five UIOs to support culturally attuned food access and food security programs.
- OSE helped facilitate the purchase of over 3,000 pounds of wild-caught coho salmon from the Muckleshoot Seafood Products Tribal enterprise by connecting Muckleshoot Seafood staff to Seattle Public Schools (SPS) and hunger relief program food purchasers. SPS plans to feature the salmon in dishes throughout the 2024-25 school year.

The City of Seattle reaffirms our commitments to and relationships with federally recognized Tribes and Native communities and looks forward to continuing this important work in the months and years ahead.

Seattle Parks and Recreation, Tribal Nations Gathering Tribal Leaders listening session at Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center. Photo credit: Department of Neighborhoods.

Appendix A: 2023 Commitments

Leaders gathered at the table to discuss top issues impacting Tribal and urban Native communities at the City of Seattle Tribal Nations Summit. Photo credit: Tim Durkan.

The following commitments mark the beginning of the City of Seattle's efforts to strengthen government-to-government relationships with Tribal Nations and to define our role in fulfilling trust and treaty obligations to Tribal and urban Native communities following the inaugural City of Seattle | Tribal Nations Summit in May 2023. For more information, view the detailed 2023 Summit Summary Report.

Effective Tribal Relations and Indigenous Engagement

1. Codevelop a City policy that outlines the City's commitment to working with Tribal Nations and UIOs to better fulfill trust and treaty obligations.
2. Convene additional gatherings, including future Tribal Nations summits and workgroups to dig deeper into the issues of interest to Tribal Nations.
3. Provide training and opportunities for City staff to learn directly and with reciprocity from Tribal and urban Native leaders about trust and treaty rights; Tribal sovereignty; Tribal governance; Native history, culture and protocols; and appropriate ways to engage with Tribes and UIOs.
4. Develop a citywide tool for tracking Tribal engagement to drive greater interdepartmental collaboration and lay the foundation for a more structural, systemic approach to Tribal engagement that better serves Tribal and urban Native partners.

5. Work with City staff to ensure Tribal Nations are consulted with early and often to ensure that Tribal sovereignty and treaty rights are recognized and respected throughout the many City policies, plans, projects, programs or actions that impact or may impact Tribal interests.

6. Enhance government-to-government relationships by establishing new expectations and commitments for City-Tribal engagement that increase meaningful and consistent engagement, constructive dialogue and collaboration between governments.

7. Increase the City's outreach and engagement with Tribal Nations, including visits to Tribal communities and inviting Tribal leaders to more City policy and decision-making spaces.

8. Support the Indigenous Advisory Council to fulfill their role as a culturally grounded advisory body of Tribal and urban Native leaders. Support other boards and commissions with dedicated seats for Tribal and urban Native leaders to further integrate Indigenous representation in local decision-making processes.

9. Learn and identify opportunities to support aligned local and federal policy priorities of Tribal and urban Native partners who encourage new resources and partnerships that better leverage City resources.

Cultural Visibility and Vitality

10. Encourage Seattle Public Schools to ensure that the City's students are taught the histories, cultures, and governments of our region's federally recognized Tribes.

11. Use Seattle Channel as a storytelling platform for Tribal Nations to educate the general public.

12. Support more opportunities for infrastructure and capital projects that showcase Tribal and urban Native cultures through art, story, language and facility space in the natural and built environments.

13. Engage Tribal and urban Native partners in better reflecting Indigenous values and priorities into the City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, which is managed by the Office of Planning and Community Development.

Collaborative Cultural Resource Stewardship

14. Explore collaborative intergovernmental relationships and partnerships on natural and cultural resource issues.

15. Be collaborative partners in the area of environmental justice, particularly the Duwamish River cleanup.

16. Conduct Tribal consultation on waterway street ends and other land use projects to address Tribal trust and treaty rights as well as cultural placemaking opportunities.

17. Draft a departmental policy statement to seek Tribal and urban Native input on emergency management practices and policies.

18. Convene a working group of emergency management partners that provides services to Tribal and urban Natives to seek input on incident response practices and community engagement initiatives.

19. Co-develop an emergency management engagement protocol with content specific to Indigenous communities, including Tribal and urban Native communities.

Culturally Attuned Systems of Care

20. Support culturally responsive housing and emergency shelter partnerships with Native community partners, including the many Native-led housing developments, cultural facilities, health care and climate resilience projects that are currently in the development process.

21. Create a systems navigator position within local law enforcement that can be a point of contact and support for people who experience violence and families who are impacted.

22. Engage Tribal public health experts to improve the collection, analysis and reporting of race and ethnicity data.

23. Invest in trust building through partnerships with Tribal Nations and UIOs.

City of Seattle, Port of Seattle and Seattle-Kobe Sister City Association participate in the 2024 Kobe Festival Parade as part of story pole dedication festivities. Photo credit: Brian Chu Photography.