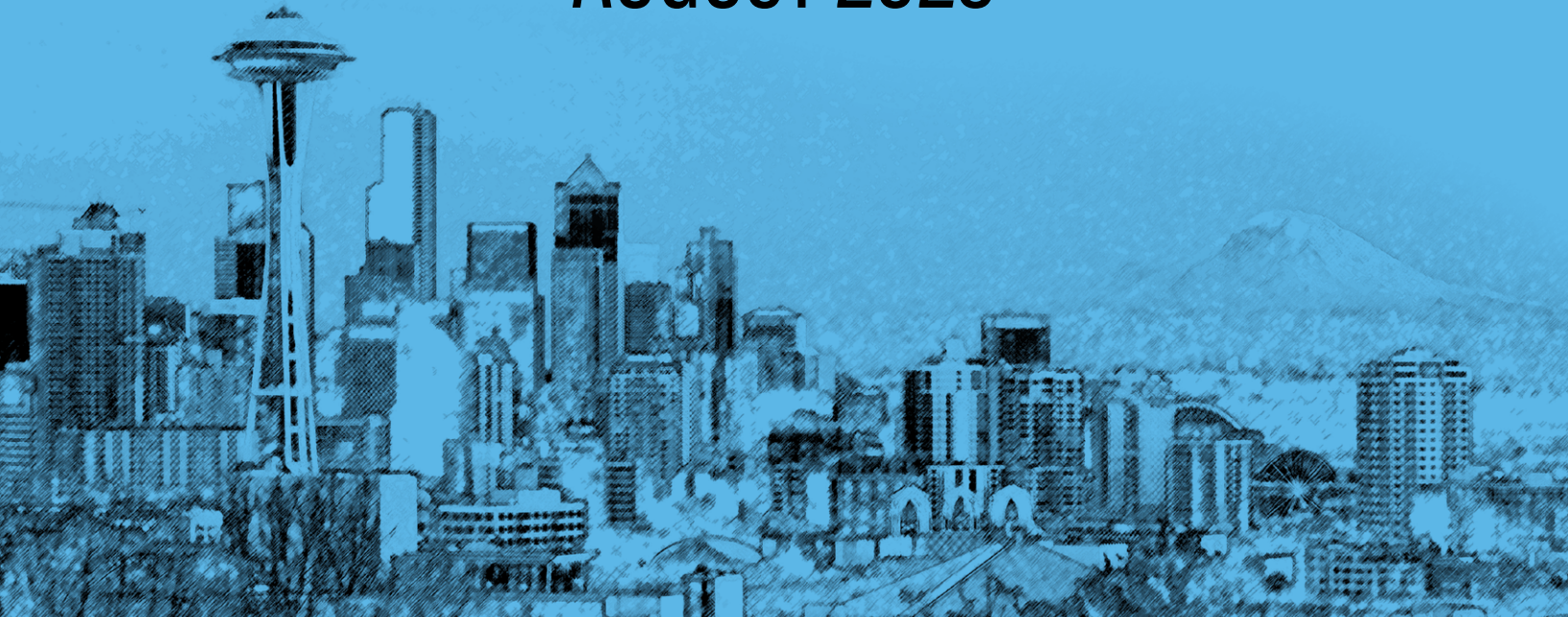




City of Seattle

Tribal Nations Summit

Summary Report
AUGUST 2023



CITY OF SEATTLE, OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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Left to right: Donny Stevenson, vice chair, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe; Monisha Harrell, senior deputy mayor, City of Seattle; Debora Juarez, president, Seattle City Council; Bruce Harrell, mayor, City of Seattle; Tim Reynon, Tribal relations director, City of Seattle; Leonard Forsman, chair, Suquamish Tribe



Working Together More Effectively

The City of Seattle Tribal Nations Summit that took place on May 2, 2023, was a historic event in the City's 154-year history. The gathering marked the beginning of our City's journey to more authentically honor and respect Tribal sovereignty. Notably, it is the first time in the City of Seattle's history that we've 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 comes 168 years after Tribal representatives were coerced into gathering at Muckl-te-oh (bəq+tiyu?) to sign the Treaty of Point Elliott. We acknowledge the City of Seattle's role in the lasting legacy of forced removal, erasure, and environmental harm placed on the Original, Indigenous Peoples of this land, and the ongoing marginalization of Native peoples in our City and beyond.

At the Tribal Nations Summit, elected leaders and staff from 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations and six urban Indian organizations (UIOs) sat face-to-face at the table with us: your Mayor and City Council President, senior leaders in the mayoral administration, heads of 16 City departments, and members of the City Council. With deep respect, humor, wisdom, and honesty, they told us how we at the City can be better partners with Tribal Nations, the urban Native community in Seattle, and beyond.

The Tribal Nations Summit is an important first step in creating more robust and authentic government-to-government relationships that engage Tribal Nations as sovereign governments and regional partners. As a City, we strive to better serve the roughly 46,000 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian people that reside in Seattle today.

With the counsel and partnership of Tribal leaders, we commit to embarking on this journey together in the weeks and years ahead, and to our One Seattle vision of making our City a thriving community for all.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Harrell".

Mayor Bruce Harrell



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debora Juarez".

Council President Debora Juarez
(Blackfeet Nation)

Acknowledgements

We thank the elected leaders and staff from Tribal Nations who shared their wisdom, lived experiences, and insights with City leadership and staff. We thank the representatives from UIOs who provide essential services for Native community members, and whose expertise informed conversations on top issues impacting Native peoples.

We thank City of Seattle leadership, departments, and staff who attended, listened, and helped organize this remarkable, inaugural Tribal Nations Summit.

We thank the members of the Indigenous Advisory Council at the City of Seattle, whose ongoing counsel helps shape public policy informed by Indigenous knowledge, values, and priorities.

We thank representatives who attended from King County, essential partners in regional collaboration.

The following attended the Tribal Nations Summit:

Tribal Nations

- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians
- Snoqualmie Indian Tribe
- Squaxin Island Tribe
- Suquamish Tribe
- Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
- Tulalip Tribes
- Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs)

- Chief Seattle Club
- City of Seattle Indigenous Advisory Council
- Seattle Indian Health Board
- Seattle Indian Services Commission
- United Indians of All Tribes Foundation
- Urban Indian Health Institute

City of Seattle

- Mayor Bruce Harrell
- Seattle City Council President
Debora Juarez
- Senior Deputy Mayor Monisha Harrell
- Deputy Mayor Tiffany Washington
- Deputy Mayor Greg Wong
- Representatives from Seattle
City Council
- Department of Neighborhoods
- Human Services Department
- Office of Arts and Culture
- Office of Emergency Management
- Office of Housing
- Office of
Intergovernmental Relations
- Office of Planning and Community
Development
- Office of Sustainability and
Environment
- Office of the Mayor
- Office of the Waterfront and
Civic Projects
- Seattle City Attorney's Office
- Seattle City Light
- Seattle Department of
Transportation
- Seattle Fire Department
- Seattle Parks and Recreation
- Seattle Police Department
- Seattle Public Utilities

Indigenous Advisory Council

- Position 1: Donny Stevenson, vice
chair, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Position 2: Jay Mills, councilmember,
Suquamish Tribe
- Position 3: Jeremy Takala,
councilmember, Confederated Tribes
and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Position 4: Cece Hoffman (Umatilla),
president, Headwater People
Consulting
- Position 5: Suzanne Sailto,
councilmember, Snoqualmie
Indian Tribe
- Position 6: Esther Lucero (Diné),
president and CEO, Seattle Indian
Health Board
- Position 7: Derrick Belgarde (Siletz
and Chippewa-Cree), executive
director, Chief Seattle Club
- Position 8: Asia Tail (Cherokee),
founder, yəhaw' Indigenous Creatives
Collective
- Position 9: Jaci McCormack (Nez
Perce), founder, Rise Above

King County

- King County Prosecuting
Attorney's Office
- King County Regional
Homelessness Authority

A Historic Gathering



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*, vice chair, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe; Tiffany Washington, deputy mayor, City of Seattle; Monisha Harrell, senior deputy mayor, City of Seattle; Scott Schuyler, policy lead, Upper Skagit Tribe; Suzanne Sailto*, councilmember, Snoqualmie Indian Tribe; Debora Juarez, president, Seattle City Council; Bruce Harrell, mayor, City of Seattle; Jaimie Cruz, vice chair, 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, councilmember, Nisqually Indian Tribe; Steve Edwards, chair, Swinomish Tribal Community

*Member of Indigenous Advisory Council, City of Seattle

On May 2, 2023, the City of Seattle hosted the inaugural [City of Seattle | Tribal Nations Summit](#) to bring together Tribal and City leaders to strengthen our regional community and better achieve mutual goals through government-to-government engagement. This historic gathering sought to identify actions and desired outcomes that uphold the sovereignty and treaty rights of federally recognized Tribes and to build partnerships, strengthen collaborations, and enhance diplomacy.

There was a time in our City's history, under Ordinance No. 5 of the Seattle Township (February 7, 1865), when Native peoples were banned from residing in the City. Tribal Nations historically have not been consulted on issues directly impacting Tribal trust and treaty rights, nor provided the opportunity to be at the table for critical decisions affecting the quality of life for all residents in our region.

"I want to emphasize the importance of today's gathering. This is the first government-to-government gathering between federally recognized Tribes and the City of Seattle. It wasn't all that long ago that our people were banned from even coming into the city by township ordinance."

- **Tim Reynon (Puyallup)**, Tribal relations director, City of Seattle

At the 2023 summit, the City was humbled to host leaders and representatives from 11 Tribal Nations, six urban Indian organizations, 16 City departments, as well as the legislative and judicial branches of City government.

During the summit, elected Tribal leaders shared their top 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.



Jeremy Takala, councilmember, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council



Left to right: Jaci McCormack (Nez Perce), founder and CEO, Rise Above and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council; Michael Bailey, deputy director, human services department, City of Seattle; Dan Strauss, councilmember, City of Seattle



Left to right: Steve Edwards, chair, Swinomish Tribal Community and Jaimie Cruz, vice chair, Squaxin Island Tribe



Left to right: Suzanne Sailto, councilmember, Snoqualmie Indian Tribe and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council member; Jay Mills, councilmember, Suquamish Indian Tribe and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council; Jeremy Takala, councilmember, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council

This historic gathering is a milestone in the recognition that Tribal interests in local government extend well beyond the geographic boundaries of local jurisdictions. City policy, services, and utility infrastructure have far-reaching impacts for Tribal Nations and Tribal citizens that live, work, play, and exercise Tribal sovereignty and treaty rights in and around our City and across our region.

The discussions at the first-ever summit between Tribal Nation and City of Seattle elected leaders represent a historic opportunity to shape a new future for City-Tribal government-to-government relations. For the first time, City and Tribal elected representatives met to honor our respective authorities to serve our people and protect the lands and waters we share.

The following sections outline the political context of this historic gathering, summarize themes and shared expectations from Tribal and urban Native leaders, summarize key outcomes from the event, and identify a series of initial commitments from the City of Seattle.

"It has taken 168 years for this historical meeting to take place ... The Treaty of Point Elliott was signed in January 1855 ... in exchange for hundreds of thousands of acres of land ... we were promised a reservation, healthcare, and even vaccinations ... These treaties are the supreme law of the land. That is why we are here today."

- Jay Mills, councilmember, Suquamish Indian Tribe and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council

Honoring Tribal Sovereignty

The Tribal Nations Summit is an exercise of the government-to-government relationship between the City of Seattle and the 29 federally recognized Tribes located in Washington state. (Elected leaders and staff from 11 federally recognized Tribes attended the 2023 event.) This gathering recognizes the political status of Tribal Nations and is modeled after best practices from the federal and state governments.

"For the first time in Seattle's history, we are charting a sustainable pathway for Tribal and urban Native engagement in public policy."

- **Donny Stevenson**, vice chair, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council

Tribal Nations are sovereign governments holding unique political and legal rights stemming from nation-to-nation relationships with the federal government. Through treaties, laws, court rulings, regulations, and executive orders, Tribal Nations and Tribal citizens are beneficiaries of unique trust and treaty relationships designed to provide for the health and well-being of the nations that ceded hundreds of millions of acres of land and resources to create and sustain the U.S. government. Since 1989, Washington state has recognized its government-to-government relationship with Tribal Nations through the [Centennial Accord and New Millennium Agreement](#). As a municipality within Washington state, the City of Seattle integrates these federal and state policies in our Tribal relations work.

The City of Seattle is also one of dozens of cities nationwide that was designated for urban Indian relocation by federal policies that sought to assimilate Native people. Today, roughly 46,000 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian people reside in Seattle. Given the political status of many urban Indians from a diversity of Tribal affiliations, portions of the summit engaged representatives from urban Indian organizations 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.

Chronic Underfunding of Trust and Treaty Obligations

The federal trust responsibility spans issues of housing, health, nutrition, economic development, education, and much more. Tribal Nations and many UIOs play a key role in fulfilling areas of federal trust responsibility through the provision of services. While Tribal Nations and UIOs utilize an array of resources, including Tribal and organizational revenues, funding from federal, state, and local governments, and other private funding sources, the [chronic underfunding of trust and treaty obligations at the federal level persists](#). When combined with institutional racism and inequitable practices of federal, state, and local governments, chronic underfunding fuels [economic and health disparities experienced by Native people](#).

Further complicating chronic underfunding is an ongoing obfuscation and devolution of the trust responsibility by the federal government. There are many examples of the federal government reforming and creating systems that increase states' rights and authority over systems (e.g., health care reform, law enforcement, public lands management). When this happens, it further complicates the fiduciary obligation of the federal government to fulfill the federal trust responsibility. Local and state governments often fail to recognize the political and legal status of Tribal Nations and Tribal citizens. Tribal and urban Native policy advocates continue to identify and address this ongoing practice by working to resource and support the self-determination of Tribal Nations and UIOs that provide services to Native people, especially when state and local governments deploy federal resources.

Left to right: Derrick Belgarde (Siletz/Chippewa-Cree), executive director, Chief Seattle Club and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council; Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), director, Urban Indian Health Institute and executive vice president, Seattle Indian Health Board



Federal Indian Law: A Legacy of Assimilation and Erasure

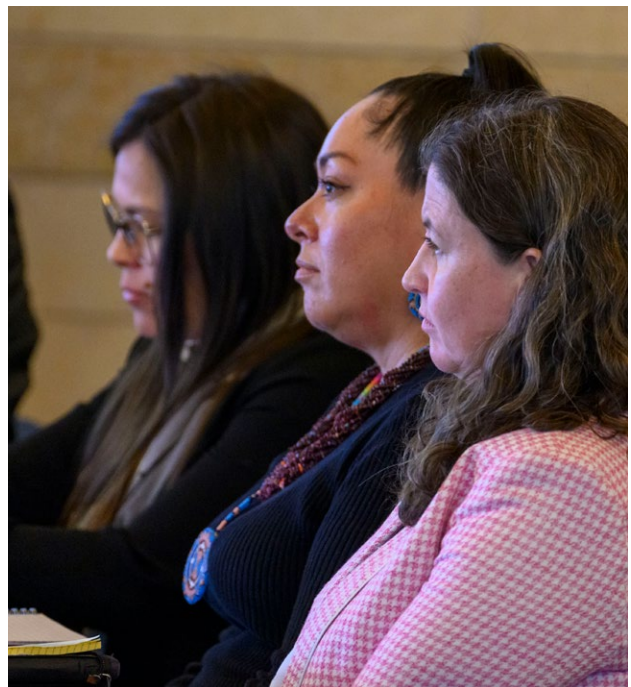
For generations, federal Indian law sought to assimilate Native people and erase entire cultures through forced removal, relocation, and termination. Since the 1970s, federal Indian policy has trended toward Tribal self-governance and enhancement of Tribal sovereignty. In this era of self-determination, Tribal and urban Native communities are revitalizing culture, tradition, language, traditional foods, and Indigenous lifeways to restore health and well-being to individuals and whole communities. As a local government, the City of Seattle recognizes and honors the sovereignty and self-determination of Tribal Nations and works to fulfill trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations and Tribal citizens through partnerships with Tribal Nations and UIOs.



Leonard Forsman, chair, Suquamish Tribe



Anna Bean, councilmember, Puyallup Tribe of Indians



Left to right: Temryss Lane (Lummi), summit moderator; Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), executive director of Urban Indian Health Institute and executive vice president of Seattle Indian Health Board; Aubony Burns (Choctaw), senior deputy prosecuting attorney, King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Summit Themes and Shared Expectations

Tribal and urban Native leaders shared powerful and inspiring words of wisdom, guidance, and instruction with the City. From the City's perspective, the following themes emerged from the Tribal Nations Summit discussions.

1. Intergovernmental Communication, Consultation, and Collaboration

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. Some examples shared during the summit included:

- **Engage early and often in consultation on any policy, plan, project, program, or action that impacts, or may impact, Tribal interests.** The City of Seattle lacks systemized and standardized protocols and resources for Tribal engagement. When City departments lack awareness, understanding, and protocols for engaging Tribal Nations in Tribal consultation, there are legal, political, and relational impacts to all parties. Meaningful consultation is founded in mutual decision-making, cooperation, and negotiation between governments. As the City strengthens its Tribal relations work, there are new opportunities to build internal systems and understanding that foster more authentic and sustained engagement with Tribal Nations.
- **Develop a citywide Tribal consultation policy based on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).** FPIC is an international policy principle supporting Indigenous self-determination in decision-making processes. The City of Seattle's Green New Deal [Resolution 31895](#) outlines citywide policy intent to support federal and local Green New Deal priorities and calls on the City to explore the creation of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent policies with federally recognized Tribes. Tribal leaders requested that the City fulfill the FPIC policy exploration outlined in [Resolution 31895](#).
- **Deepen engagement of natural and cultural resource management.** Tribal leaders have continuously noted that all natural resources are cultural resources. There is an expressed need to deepen engagement and make stronger commitments across this

issue area, including but not limited to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) re-licensing of hydro-electric projects, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) superfund site clean-up of the Lower Duwamish River, watershed management, and urban forestry and public land management. Federally recognized Tribes in and around the City of Seattle and City-owned lands and properties are essential partners in natural and cultural resource management.

- **Coordinate with City, County, and Tribal governments/agencies, as well as UIOs, on issues of mutual concern.** There are longstanding gaps among local governments (city and county) who fail to adequately and appropriately engage Tribal Nations and UIOs in issues of mutual concerns, including health, housing, education, nutrition, economic development, public safety, and more. For example, Tribal public health authorities carry similar responsibilities to local public health authorities, yet often lack access to data sharing and resources to strengthen public health service coordination. Other examples include issues of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP), such as interjurisdictional law enforcement coordination and data sharing, and culturally attuned systems navigation for individuals and families impacted by violence.
- **Engage in joint advocacy of Tribal policy priorities.** There is a shared understanding that City and Tribal resources alone will not adequately address the needs of Tribal Nations and UIOs. The City can identify and support aligned Tribally driven policy priorities to better leverage resources and improve interjurisdictional policy coordination. Examples ranged from support for federal appropriations and policy requests that resource Tribal Nations and UIOs, to expanded use of Indian Preference policy in the housing sector, to better coordination of regional issues, such as impacts of the short-term rental market on housing affordability and coordination of homelessness response systems.

" ... I think [one thing] any government needs to understand is who the Tribes are, what their treaty entails, and what rights do they have ... what we are seeing is a whole list of things that are impacting our treaty resources and what we are trying to tell governments is look, listen to the Tribes now before it becomes a public issue ... it is important to have the Tribes at the table when there's anything discussed whether it be natural resources, health, education, or budget spending plans. We want to be there and have a voice."

- **Jeremy Takala**, councilmember, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council

- **Work with Tribal Nations to improve education, outreach, and ecological restoration in the City's greenbelts, shorelines, and watershed areas** to advance protection of cultural and natural resources, including salmon. The City of Seattle is well-positioned to collaborate and partner with Tribal Nations that reserve treaty rights and are active stewards of cultural resources across our region. Through working groups, City and Tribal partners can develop deeper partnerships, co-create projects that drive innovation in cultural and natural resource management, and strengthen Indigenous lifeways.

"This is the beginning of many opportunities we'll have to listen, learn, and encourage dialogue that honors and respects our various roles and responsibility in serving our people."

-**Jaci McCormack (Nez Perce)**, founder and CEO, Rise Above and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council

2. Cultural Vitality and Visibility

Since time immemorial, Coast Salish Tribal communities have stewarded the land and water of this region, including today's federally recognized Tribes who continue to protect cultural resources in and around the City of Seattle. In recognition of these inherent relationships and unbreakable connections to this place, Tribal Nations must be included in the development of thriving ecological and cultural ecosystems within their homelands. Some examples shared during the summit included:

- **Invest in Indigenous cultural placemaking.** Tribal Nations expressed the desire to revitalize 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. Building a city reflective of Coast Salish cultures in turn benefits all residents and visitors who gain a more inclusive and representative connection to this place. There are a few examples of successful Tribal and urban Native collaborations, including the redevelopment of the waterfront and the Seattle Convention Center. Large capital and infrastructure projects offer a unique opportunity to engage Tribal governments in selection of artists to represent a Tribal perspective in placemaking and design. Tribal leaders expressed the need for Tribal Nations to tell their own stories. Future opportunities for cultural placemaking may include public transit expansion and parks and open space projects.

- **Support Indigenous cultural revitalization.** Native languages are a core component of Tribal identity, Tribal sovereignty, cultural tradition, and connection to place. Across our region, Tribal Nations preserve and revitalize local Native languages that were nearly erased by colonization. The City of Seattle is now uniquely positioned to begin to repair harms and support the work of Tribal Nations by leveraging innovations in the technology sector and encouraging and incorporating Native languages into early learning, public education, and public spaces in ways that honor the intrinsic relationship of Native languages to this place and to Tribal communities.

3. Education and Awareness

The first step to informed and respectful Tribal and urban Native engagement comes through education and awareness opportunities. Some examples shared during the summit included:

- **Provide City training and learning opportunities.** City leaders and staff need to better understand Tribal sovereignty, treaties, and Tribal rights, and learn best practices for working with Tribal and urban Native communities. Providing training on historical trauma and trauma-informed care was also expressed, particularly when it comes to law enforcement and community safety. Trainings and learning opportunities must also include opportunities for City employees to learn directly, and with reciprocity, from Tribal and urban Native leaders.
- **Improve accuracy, analysis, and sharing of data on American Indian and Alaska Native residents.** Native communities often experience higher rates of racial misclassification and inaccurate data collection, analysis, and reporting practices that lead to an undercount and/or gaps in data on American Indian and Alaska Native people. An essential component of improving data-driven decision-making is resourcing Tribal Nations and Tribal public health authorities to advise on best practices for improving data quality and data sharing in collaboration with non-Native institutions.

"We are born with these rights. We are born with this responsibility to the land. To be stewards to provide for the salmon people, the clams, for our oysters, for our geoduck, for our crab, because it is not just food to us. Our food is our medicine. The food that we gather helps feed our sq̓alalitut. It helps feed our spirit. It is more than just eating. It is what gets us to be where we are at today as Tribal leaders."

- **Jaimie Cruz**, vice chair, Squaxin Island Tribe

4. Trust Building

The lack of trust for City institutions among Native communities is directly tied to the ongoing impacts of colonization and systemic oppression. Repairing and building trust is an iterative process that takes sustained commitment, accountability, transparency, and reciprocity. Some of the examples shared during the summit included:

- **Repair trust by embracing vulnerability and discomfort of confronting institutional and systemic racism within City institutions.** Trust must be repaired between Tribal and City governments to better act as regional partners in a government-to-government capacity. Trust must also be repaired among Native community members and UIOs to address disproportionate harm to Native communities across housing, healthcare, and criminal legal systems.

"... quit talking about us like we are a problem to solve. [Native people] are not a problem to solve, we are every single answer. We are more at risk for homelessness because of a country that has been trying to kill us for more than 500 years and the City of Seattle has not only been complicit in that, [the City] has actually contributed to it. ... when we reframe ... that is when true equity has the opportunity to actually happen."

- **Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee)**, executive director of Urban Indian Health Institute and executive vice president of Seattle Indian Health Board

Left to right: Josh Bagley, vice chair, Suquamish Tribe; Bruce Harrell, mayor, City of Seattle; Leonard Forsman, chair, Suquamish Tribe



"The most important thing is building these relationships. We have had hundreds of hours of conversations. We have been on the [Skagit] River. We have seen these sites. It is just building this relationship and understanding that is the key to success ... we hope to see this continue on into the future."

- Scott Schuyler, natural and cultural resources policy lead, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

5. Equitable Resource Allocation and Partnerships

In recognition of the political status of Tribal Nations and some UIOs, there is a need to rethink local funding strategies. For many Native communities, equitable resource allocation honors political relationships and advances racial equity. Tribal and urban Native leaders expressed that equitable resource allocation and partnerships expand and scale culturally attuned service models through targeted investment and collaborative engagement. Some examples shared during the summit included:

- **Develop funding set-asides in recognition of trust and treaty obligations tied to federal and state resources.** When federal and state resources are divested into local government, there is an inherent obligation to fulfill trust and treaty obligations. Funding set-asides are a best practice of federal and state governments to ensure that Tribal Nations and UIOs are better resourced and can exercise self-determination to carry out their roles in the federal trust responsibility. A few examples of federal funding sources include block grants and competitive grants sourced from Department of Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, Department of Commerce, and National Endowment for the Arts.
- **Target investments to foster thriving Indigenous communities.** 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 Native peoples regardless of where they reside. Tribal and urban Native leaders have called on the City to target investments in proportion to need in the areas of youth development, gender-based violence, public health, cultural facilities, and low-barrier and affordable housing to scale culturally attuned models of care among UIOs.
- **Take the extra time to develop collaborative grants and reduce administrative burdens for culturally attuned service providers.** Native partners shared that too often City departments conduct outreach to Tribal Nations and UIOs to engage Native communities after a grant, program evaluation, and/or set of metrics have been

developed. As a result, many times these resources and tools created by the City do not work for Native communities. Examples include low Indirect Cost Rate caps and miniscule subcontract amounts that do not allow UIOs to adequately deliver results or grant eligibility guidelines that do not name Tribal governments as eligible applicants. Other examples include service models or program standards that are not trauma-informed nor conducive to tracking and evaluating the impacts of culturally attuned models of care that often do not rely on Western standards of success.

- **Engage Tribal Nations and UIOs early in Citywide initiatives.** City leaders often identify priority initiatives that have wide-reaching community and regional impacts.

There is a need to be aware of unintended consequences of City initiatives on the most vulnerable community members, including American Indian and Alaska Native residents. Urban Native leaders expressed concerns that local initiatives could lead to disproportionately negative impacts for Native people experiencing homelessness in downtown neighborhoods.

"Our data also shows that [American Indian and Alaska Native people] are least likely to accept or get services from mainstream systems ... it is going to take Native-led efforts to address it. We are going to need to be empowered ... to address homelessness in our Native community. We know if we solve that, we are going to solve homelessness for everybody."

- **Derrick Belgarde**, executive director, Chief Seattle Club and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council

6. Innovation

The 21st century demands bold and innovative ideas to address some of our most challenging issues as a regional community, particularly in the area of climate resilience. Native communities have long understood that incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, culture, tradition, and lifeways are essential components of fostering in a new era of innovation. Some examples shared during the summit included:

- **Commit to advancing Tribal priorities to protect cultural and natural resources.** Tribal and urban Native leaders expressed concerns that renewable energy projects are increasingly proposed in or around lands of Tribal interest and risk an ongoing extractive energy system that threatens the sovereignty, reserved rights, and cultural vitality of Tribal Nations. As regional partners, the City of Seattle must commit to exploring and amplifying Tribal priorities among regional partners and commit to fostering innovation and integration of Tribal priorities into City projects.

- **Issue an Executive Order or pass legislation to develop Indigenous knowledge guidance for City departments.** For generations, Tribal Nations and UIOs have advocated that Indigenous knowledge is practice-based evidence that must be valued and integrated into public policy decision-making spaces. In 2022, the Biden Administration developed the first-of-its-kind [Executive Order on Indigenous Knowledge Guidance for Federal Agencies](#) recognizing the contributions of Indigenous knowledge and providing guidance to agencies for integration through Tribal consultation. The City of Seattle is well-positioned to develop a local version of this concept in collaboration with Tribal Nations and UIOs.



"[The river] systems my people subsided on, fished, lived on for thousands of years, within 100 years, went away ... The innovation that it took to do those things is what it is going to take to fix the problems that we are looking at today. If you can figure out how to get rid of a river, reverse the flow of another river, and combine it with the flow of another river to meet your needs, you should be able to do the same thing to meet our [needs]."

- **Donny Stevenson**, vice chair, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council

Left to right: Donny Stevenson, vice chair, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council and Monisha Harrell, senior deputy mayor, City of Seattle

City Commitments

The goal of the inaugural Tribal Nations Summit was to identify concrete action items and commitments to ensure that the City is equipped to truly respond to the guidance shared by Tribal and urban Native leaders as we work together in the coming months and years. 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.

Effective Tribal Relations and Indigenous Engagement

- **Co-develop a City policy that outlines the City's commitment to working with Tribal Nations and UIOs** to better fulfill trust and treaty obligations.
- **Convene additional gatherings**, including future Tribal Nations Summits and work groups to dig deeper into the issues of interest to Tribal Nations.
- **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, protocols, and appropriate ways to engage with Tribes and UIOs.
- **Develop a citywide tool for tracking Tribal engagement to drive greater inter-departmental collaboration** and lay the foundation for a more structural, systemic citywide approach to Tribal engagement that better serves Tribal and urban Native partners.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

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

Cultural Vitality and Visibility

- **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.**
- **Use Seattle Channel as a storytelling platform** for Tribal Nations to educate the general public.
- **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 environment.
- **Engage Tribal and urban Native partners in better reflecting Indigenous values and priorities** into the City of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, managed by the Office of Planning and Community Development.

Collaborative Cultural Resource Stewardship

- **Explore collaborative intergovernmental relationships and partnerships** on natural and cultural resource issues.
- **Be collaborative partners in the area of environmental justice**, particularly the Duwamish River clean-up.
- **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.
- **Draft a departmental policy statement** to seek Tribal and urban Native input on emergency management practices and policies.

"My heart is heavy ... the stories that I heard today ... it is unacceptable. I hope the City hears these women today that spoke. We pray for this summit to be a summit of action. Not just these women to come and share their story and no action taken. ... let's be a solution."

- **Suzanne Sailto**, councilmember, Snoqualmie Indian Tribe and member of the City's Indigenous Advisory Council member

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

Culturally Attuned Systems of Care

- **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.
- **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.
- **Engage Tribal public health experts to improve the collection, analysis, and reporting of race and ethnicity data.**
- **Invest in trust-building** through partnerships with Tribal Nations and UIOs.

"We have heard loud and clear the need for continued partnership ... it is imperative that we find ways to work together. The answers to these issues ... lie within this room and within our community. If we will take the time to continue to build these relationships and continue to find ways to work together, we will find the answers to these issues we discussed today."

- **Tim Reynon**, Tribal relations director, City of Seattle



Left to right: Monisha Harrell, senior deputy mayor, City of Seattle; Debora Juarez (Blackfeet), council president, City of Seattle; Adrian Diaz, chief of police, City of Seattle; Tim Reynon (Puyallup), Tribal relations director, City of Seattle

The Work Ahead

The inaugural Tribal Nation Summit is a catalyst for the City of Seattle to re-invigorate our commitments and relationships with federally recognized Tribes. Building on the success of the 2023 Tribal Nations Summit, we will lean into continued engagement with Tribal Nations and UIOs to ensure we are accountable partners in making progress on our commitments. Through our Office of Intergovernmental Relations, we will continue to explore policy and systems changes that enhance our government-to-government relationships. Through the Department of Neighborhoods, we will engage the Indigenous Advisory Council as culturally grounded advisors for the City of Seattle.

"I think what you just saw ... with some of my brothers and sisters out there is how we speak to each other. That this is a safe place. That this is the people's house ... We start in a good way. We don't start out calling people names. We don't start out threatening people. We don't start out demanding that we want it now. Because the world just doesn't work like that. It doesn't, and we know that, as Native Americans, and as civil rights people, who have been there, and who have made change."

- **Debora Juarez (Blackfeet)**, council president, City of Seattle

Left to right: Monisha Harrell, senior deputy mayor, City of Seattle; Debora Juarez (Blackfeet), council president, City of Seattle; Bruce Harrell, mayor, City of Seattle; Tim Reynon (Puyallup), Tribal relations director, City of Seattle





Leaders gathered at the table to discuss top issues impacting Tribal and urban Native communities.

"We are intentional about developing government-to-government relationships. It's going to be based on meaningful and consistent engagement and constructive dialogue centered on the priorities that you are telling us need to be made. We want to provide opportunities for our city officials, our staff, and our residents to learn from the Native people of this land. We want to amplify the voices, experiences, priorities, and histories of the Indigenous peoples of this land."

- Mayor Bruce Harrell, City of Seattle