

Abstract

This research examines the factors that influence the emergence of cooperative municipal-First Nation relationships, and explores how these relationships can be sustained and built upon so that they are based on the principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility. Municipalities and First Nations are increasingly collaborating on land use planning, development, and services provision, and municipal officials, including planners, need to consider the role they can have in transforming organisational structures and land use planning practices in a way that will foster collaboration with First Nations. Strong relationships allow for mutually beneficial projects to be explored and undertaken, they reduce the chance for conflict and misunderstanding, and they play an important role in meaningful reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples

This research utilizes a case study of the City of Calgary and the Tsuut'ina Nation to examine municipal-First Nation cooperation, and centres on how the relationship between the two communities evolved during negotiations to construct the southwest Calgary ring road through Nation land. Document review, policy analysis, and semi-structured interviews were used to determine the factors that encouraged the emergence of a cooperative relationship between the two neighbours. The research points to the importance of visionary community leadership in building trust and respect between First Nations and local governments, and in arriving at mutually beneficial outcomes.

Since political turnover, conflict, and changing priorities can threaten relationships, this thesis also explores how the City of Calgary can work toward organisational arrangements to sustain and build upon its relationship with the Tsuut'ina Nation. Municipal politicians and employees have a

responsibility to pursue active reconciliation with First Nations, and this research suggests practices, processes, and values that municipal governments, planners, and other officials can strive to adopt. This research suggests that comprehensive strategies, developed in partnership with First Nation neighbours and targeted at the levels of planning practice, policy, and culture, have the potential to enable municipal governments, planners, and other officials to respectfully and effectively engage with First Nations.