

Staff Report

Presented By: Heather Hyde, Economic Development Officer
Meeting Date: October 27, 2025
Subject: Saugeen Friendship Accord Partnership Annual Report
Attachment(s): Wijiwenyidiwaad Miinwa Zgaabiignigan 4 Pillars

Recommendation

That Council receive the Saugeen Friendship Accord Partnership (SFAP) Annual Report for information.

Report Summary

The Saugeen Friendship Accord Partnership (SFAP), formerly part of the Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI), continued to advance 4 Pillars of joint initiatives in 2025 through monthly meetings of representatives from Saugeen Shores and Saugeen First Nation. Annual progress updates will be provided to both Councils until the current initiatives are complete, after which new collaborative projects will be developed.

Background/Analysis

Saugeen First Nation and The Town of Saugeen Shores were one of eight partnerships in Canada in 2022 to embark on a three-year First Nation-municipal collaboration program between 2022-2025. The Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI) supports First Nations and neighbouring municipalities to build respectful and equitable partnerships, and to develop capacity for long-term planning for joint community economic development and land use. On January 25, 2025, Saugeen First Nation and Saugeen Shores signed the historic Wijiwenyidiwaad Miinwa Zgaabiignigan (Friendship Accord). A summary of the 4 Pillars is attached.

Since Graduating the CEDI program in January 2025 a new partnership name "Saugeen Friendship Accord Partnership" or SFAP has been created to continue the work started during the CEDI program. December 2025 marks the end of the first year of the new partnership. The accomplishments, guided by the 4 Pillars, made in 2025 are outlined in this report.

Pillar 1: Increasing Connection

- Official CEDI Graduation Ceremony January 2025.
- Mayor and Chief participate in the Ice Bucket Challenge May 23, 2025.
- Southampton Mural “*The Land That Raised Us*” (Bell Utility Building) by Artists: Emily Kewageshig and Taylor Cameron – Official unveiling event September 17, 2025.
- Participating in neighbouring community events:
 - Saugeen First Nation Pow Wow;
 - Unveiling of the residential school remembrance plaques;
 - Amphitheater project kick-off in Saugeen;
 - 25th anniversary celebration;
 - Pride flag raising ceremony in Saugeen Shores; and
 - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Event at Zgaa-biig-ni-gan bridge in Southampton September 30, 2025.

Pillar 2: Shared Tourism Initiatives

- Joint Tourism Strategic Planning including a Water-Focused Tourism Strategy that promotes cultural education and environmental stewardship starting Q1 2026 (Pending TOSS Council budget approval).
- Rural Ontario Development (ROD) funding application submitted for the Town’s Tourism Strategic Plan and the joint Water-Focused Tourism Strategy.
- Joint community Map highlighting culturally significant areas is in its design phase.

Pillar 3: Building Complete Communities

- Conduct a joint economic development partnership study to support long term growth planned for 2026-2027.
- Ongoing discussion between Saugeen First Nation and The Town around water and sanitary sewer master planning.

Pillar 4: Business Development Collaboration

- Shared OneDrive between Saugeen First Nation and Town of Saugeen Shores staff for SFAP files and joint work.
- Revised Terms of Reference.
- Monthly partnership meetings.
- A dedicated staff resource to support the work of the partnership.
- Town of Saugeen Shores June episode of the Shore Report highlighting Saugeen First Nation’s Independent Business Association’s (IBA) upcoming events.
- Sharing of Saugeen First Nation posts on the Town’s social media channels.
- Town of Saugeen Shore webpage: ‘Indigenous Partnerships’ dedicated to the work being done by the partnership.

2025 has seen significant progress in the partnership and the Town looks forward to continuing this positive relationship into 2026 and beyond with Saugeen First Nation staff, Council and the broader community.

For more information on the SFAP and the 4 Pillars we encourage community members to visit the [Indigenous Partnerships webpage](#) on the Town of Saugeen Shores website.

Linkages

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 3: Building Valued Relationships
- Business Plan Alignment: Development Services Business as Usual

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

No costs or revenue is associated with this report.

Prepared By: Heather Hyde, Economic Development Officer

Reviewed By: Mark Paoli, Director, Development Services

Approved By: Kara Van Myall, Chief Administrative Officer