

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

DATE: 2019 May 30

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION AND
CULTURAL SERVICES

FILE: 1750 20

SUBJECT: CORPORATE GUIDELINES FOR INDIGENOUS TERRITORY
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PURPOSE: To propose wording and process for Corporate Indigenous Territory
Acknowledgement.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Committee request Council to authorize staff to pursue the approach and process as outlined in Section 6.0 of this report.

REPORT**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) is outlined in *Schedule N* of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (2007)*, which is the agreement reached between former residential school students, the involved Churches¹, the Assembly of First Nations, other Aboriginal organizations, and the Government of Canada.

Resulting from a multi-year process, the TRC released its final report, *Honouring the Truth – Reconciling for the Future*², on 2015 December 15. This report includes sections outlining the history and impact of residential schools, including the experiences of Metis and Inuit peoples; provides estimates on the number of missing children and unmarked burials; and details the continuing impacts of residential schools felt by Indigenous individuals and communities today.

The report concludes with 94 ‘Calls to Action for Reconciliation’. The Actions are directed towards all parties of the Settlement as well as to individuals, other community institutions, and all levels of government including local government.

¹ Specifically: The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, and Roman Catholic Entities.

² A full copy of the report can be found at: <http://nctr.ca/reports.php>

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Action #47 of the TRC ‘Calls to Action’, references acknowledging the traditional territory of Indigenous Nations on the part of local government. Working towards implementing this action within the City of Burnaby was identified in a 2016 September report to Council. Since that time, staff have been working to initiate relationships with host communities, including commissioning research regarding ancestral and ongoing Indigenous presence on this land, hiring Indigenous Educators (at Burnaby Village Museum), and developing appropriate language for traditional territory acknowledgement. Burnaby Village Museum has taken a leadership role in this work.

Staff also reviewed the acknowledgment approaches of other local governments across B.C. Acknowledgment approaches differ across communities, reflecting both the approaches of specific City Councils, and the Indigenous Nations on whose traditional territory local governments are situated.

Stemming from this research, this report provides recommendations regarding acknowledging traditional territory for the Committee’s consideration.

2.0 POLICY SECTION

The City of Burnaby supports this information through the following Council-adopted policies:

- Equity Policy, approved by Council in 1994, which states that “The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect”;
- Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy, approved by Council in 2011, includes a primary goal of ‘Community Inclusion’. This goal is particularly concerned with ensuring the City is “welcoming of all cultures, identities and abilities”, which focus on “principals of economic and social security and justice”; and the
- Goals and sub-goals of the Corporate Strategic Plan through:
 - An Inclusive Community
 - Celebrate diversity –
Create more opportunities for the community to celebrate diversity
 - Serve a diverse community –
Ensure City services fully meet the needs of our dynamic community
 - Create a sense of community –
Provide opportunities that encourage and welcome all community members and create a sense of belonging
 - A Thriving Organization
 - Organizational culture –
Ensure that our core values are reflected in our policies, programs and service delivery
 - Human resources –
Foster an environment for teamwork, efficiency and excellence to deliver customer service in alignment with our core values

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- Communication –
Practice open and transparent communication among staff, Council and the community

3.0 LOCAL CONTEXT

Burnaby is located on ancestral, unceded, and shared Coast Salish territory, including the Katzie, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. These are hə́nqəmínəm [HUN keh-mee-num] speaking communities, with the exception of Squamish who speak Sk̓wxwú7mesh [Squ-HO-o-meesh] sníchim.

According to the 2016 Statistics Canada National Household Survey, approximately 4,195 individuals living in Burnaby self-identified as being Aboriginal. This accounts for approximately 1.8% of the total city population. Approximately 1,000 persons within this number self-identify as being Métis. Based on enrollment information from the Burnaby School District, the Burnaby neighbourhoods with the highest percentage of Indigenous families are the Heights, Edmonds, Cameron, and Stride.

4.0 BC TREATY PROCESS

Prior to the modern treaty processes, only twenty-two treaties were made with local Nations in BC. These are the 14 so-called Douglas Treaties on Vancouver Island, and 8 treaties in northeastern BC. This is in contrast to much of the rest of Canada, where treaties are largely in place. In 1990 the Federal Government, British Columbia and the Nisga'a Tribal Council agreed to negotiate a treaty together. These negotiations resulted in the Nisga'a Treaty, implemented in 2000. Out of this process, the BC Treaty Commission was created to oversee further negotiations. The BC treaty negotiations process is voluntary and open to all Indigenous Nations in British Columbia. Modern treaties provide Nations with autonomy over their land, and replace federal Indian Act jurisdiction.

A number of Nations that recognize Burnaby as within their traditional territory are engaged in the treaty process. However, except for the Tsawwassen Nation³, none have completed the process. As such, the land that Burnaby is on remains unceded – or territory that was never ceded through treaty, war or surrender by the original inhabitants. The BC Treaty Commission advises that acknowledging the unceded nature of the land Burnaby is on does not impact the City's potential future role or claim in Treaty processes that may impact Burnaby jurisdiction.

5.0 CORPORATE RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

Since the 2016 Council report noted above, staff have been working to initiate reconciliation efforts. As based on feedback from local Nations, recent efforts have largely focussed on education (internal and external), appropriate Indigenous acknowledgment and representation,

³ The Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement took effect on April 3, 2009.

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and the decolonization of the presentation of Burnaby's history – with leadership from Burnaby Village Museum.

Some highlights to-date are listed below. A more fulsome report outlining progress and opportunities for further action will be advanced to the Executive Committee and Council this calendar year.

- Burnaby Village Museum has/is:
 - Worked with Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish and Kwantlen First Nations to develop programs, provide opportunities for cultural presenters and performers, and has collaborated on historical research;
 - Created an 'Indigenous Learning House' on Museum grounds;
 - Hired five local Indigenous Educators⁴ who offer on-site programming; and
 - Updated school programs to reflect Indigenous content.
- City Archives has reviewed its records and provided copies of findings related to Indigenous peoples to the National Council for Reconciliation. This is an on-going process.
- Human Resources hosted a staff 'Lunchtime Learning Session' about reconciliation in 2018. As well, observance of Orange Shirt Day⁵ was initiated in 2018. Additional efforts are being explored for 2019.
- Burnaby Public Library has hosted 4 KAIROS blanket exercise workshops⁶ in 2019 April 2019 for staff and Library Board trustees.
- Since 2014 Council has proclaimed and recognized June 21st as 'National Indigenous Peoples Day', the national holiday recognizing and celebrating the many accomplishments and contributions of Indigenous peoples.
- On 2018 August 9, Council issued a proclamation recognizing the 'International Day of Indigenous Peoples' and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- The City supports and advertises National Indigenous Peoples day activities in Burnaby, with leadership from Burnaby Public Library.

6.0 RECOMMENDED INDIGENOUS TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGMENT – WORDING AND PROCESS

Through relationships with local Nations referenced above, the following territorial acknowledgement wording is suggested for the Committee's consideration. It is noted that the lower case letters are deliberate:

⁴ The positions created are part-time and contract based.

⁵ Orange Shirt Day is observed on or before September 30 every year to raise awareness, acknowledge and maintain open discussion about the legacy of residential schools in Canada and the reconciliation process.

⁶ The KAIROS Blanket Exercise program is a unique, interactive and participatory history lesson developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and educators. It is offered by KAIROS Canada, a non-profit society: www.kairosblanketexercise.org

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"Before we start, I would like to take a moment to recognize we are on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Skwxwú7mesh and traditional hə́nqəmínəm speaking people, and to extend appreciation for the opportunity to hold a meeting on this shared territory."

The reasons for this suggested wording are as follows:

- Coast Salish Territory, while technically correct, refers to a long swath of land ranging over much of the BC coast down into Washington/Oregon. Local Nations have advised that just using this phrase in territorial acknowledgments isn't grounded enough in southwestern B.C.; and
- Referring to the language groups has been recommended by some local Nations as a more specific option that still avoids listing Nation names, which is problematic in the event that one group is accidentally left out, or should another Nation indicate claim over all or part of the land on which Burnaby is situated.

It should be noted that City Council and Council Committees/Commissions are currently opening each meeting using a territory acknowledgement based on this recommended wording.

The following process suggestions have also been communicated by local Nations to City staff:

- The suggested language should undergo an annual review so that the evolving understandings and knowledge of staff regarding territorial acknowledgements can be reflected. Social Planning and Burnaby Village Museum staff can undertake this process;
- Audio clips should be provided to the relevant staff so that pronunciation of the words hə́nqəmínəm [HUN keh-mee-num] and skwxwú7mesh [Squ-HO-o-meesh], which are contained in the recommended wording, can be learned. Key staff are in receipt of audio clips and permission from the relevant Nations can be sought to share these;
- The territory acknowledgement should be used at the beginning of every City hosted public meeting or event where opening remarks are provided – for example, public consultation events, open houses, Victoria Day celebrations, Blues and Roots Festival. It is suggested that Social Planning and the Burnaby Village Museum work with Corporate Communications to develop City-wide messaging and background resources to support this work; and,
- The territory acknowledgement should be used at the beginning of Departmental staff meetings. This recommendation relates to another action contained within the TRC (#57) which references related awareness training for public servants. The use of the recommended acknowledgment in this setting is suggested to prompt discussion and learning amongst staff. It is suggested that Social Planning and Burnaby Village Museum staff produce a short 'backgrounder' on the topic to equip relevant staff to lead these discussions.

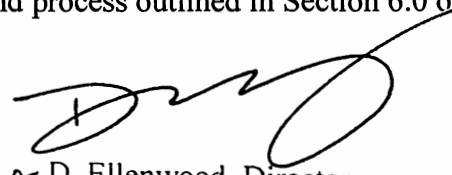
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7.0 CONCLUSION

Long standing policy(ies), the Social Sustainability Strategy, and the Corporate Strategic Plan support the City to take leadership in seeking and promoting reconciliation efforts with Indigenous Peoples. Pursuing a coordinated and respectful territory acknowledgement as a corporation is a further, appropriate step in implementing the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations for local governments. As such, it is recommended the Committee and Council authorize staff to pursue the approach and process outlined in Section 6.0 of this report.



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D. Ellenwood, Director
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RM:tn

cc: City Manager
Director Engineering
Director Corporate Services
Director Public Safety and Community Services
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