

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

TO: *MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: UPDATED LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the updated land acknowledgement, as outlined in Section 3.0 of the report titled “Updated Land Acknowledgement” dated March 3, 2025, of the Executive Committee of Council meeting, be approved; and

THAT staff be directed to develop a transition plan and communication strategy to implement the new land acknowledgement.

REPORT

The Executive Committee of Council, at its meeting held on March 3, 2025, received and adopted the attached report seeking Council approval to finalize an updated land acknowledgement.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of
Council,

Councillor S. Dhaliwal
Chair

Councillor P. Calendino
Vice Chair

TO: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL (ECC)
FROM: DIRECTOR INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION
SUBJECT: **UPDATED LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**
PURPOSE: To seek Council approval to finalize an updated land acknowledgement.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the updated land acknowledgement, as outlined in Section 3.0 of the report titled “Updated Land Acknowledgement” dated March 3, 2025, be approved; and

THAT staff be directed to develop a transition plan and communication strategy to implement the new land acknowledgement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to advance reconciliation with Host Nations, Council approved an Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Strategy Framework at the August 26, 2024, Council meeting (Attachment 1), that outlines connected work coming forward, including updating the land acknowledgement in consultation and collaboration with Host Nations. Staff have since consulted with the First Nations on whose territory the City of Burnaby is now located, including the x^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), Sk^wx^wú7mesh (Squamish), səliilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and k^wik^wəłəm (Kwkwetlem) Peoples (the Host Nations) to update the current land acknowledgement from a linguistics-based acknowledgement to a distinctions-based acknowledgement.

Each Host Nations have approved the updated land acknowledgement as outlined in Section 3.0, to acknowledge the 4 Host Nations and to elaborate on the context of their connections to their territories. As well, the acknowledgement encourages people to learn more about the original stewards of these lands and those connections directly from them by including hyperlinks to their community webpages when shared electronically.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

Building and maintaining relationships with Host Nations and advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples is supported by the following City of Burnaby plans and policies:

- *Connecting Burnaby: Burnaby Transportation Plan (2021)*
- *Burnaby Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016)*
- *Official Community Plan (OCP) (1998)*
- *Equity Policy (1994, Updated 2020)*
- *Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Strategy Framework (2024)*

This work is also in alignment with the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action \(TRC\)](#), the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#), and the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(DRIPA\)](#)

2.0 BACKGROUND

On June 6, 2019, staff brought a report titled *Corporate Guidelines for Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement* (Attachment 2) to the Executive Committee of Council to authorize a process for corporate territorial acknowledgement. The original (and current) land acknowledgement was made to avoid listing Nation names with respect to potential land claims to the area. At the time, First Nations consulted recommended that the suggested land acknowledgement should be reviewed, so that the evolving understandings and knowledge of territorial acknowledgements can be reflected.

Since this time, First Nations in the province have made significant advancements in their ability to articulate their title and the four Host Nations are the First Nations that claim title to the lands on which Burnaby is now located. They agree among themselves that this updated land acknowledgement is accurate, and there is no longer concern of excluding potential title holders, as a result.

In alignment with the City of Burnaby’s Interim Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy and its commitments to truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, staff have been working towards building and maintaining relationships with the Host Nations. City staff have consulted on the updated land acknowledgement with Host Nations. Host Nations were supportive of a distinctions-based approach, agreeing that all four (4) should be recognized, but that the land acknowledgement should be more reflective of their connections to the land. They also wanted the land acknowledgement to be meaningful and encourage anyone reading it to want to learn more about the original stewards of these lands in their own words, by linking to each community for more information in their own words. This report presents the updated language developed in consultation and collaboration with the Host Nations and is in alignment with the UNDRIP and the TRC Calls to Action.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

In collaboration and consultation with Host Nations, the following updated land acknowledgement was developed. With respect to traditional cultural protocols and as advised by Host Nations, it is recommended that the City update its land acknowledgement to the following land acknowledgement approved by all four (4) Host Nations:

We respectfully acknowledge that the City of Burnaby is located on the unceded territories of the [xʷməθkʷəy̓əm \(Musqueam\)](#), [Skwxwú7mesh \(Squamish\)](#), [səlilwətał \(Tsleil-Waututh\)](#), and [kʷikwəłəm \(Kwikwetlem\)](#) Peoples. Each Nation has distinct histories and distinct traditional territories that fully or partially encompass the city.

We encourage you to learn more about the Host Nations whose ancestors have occupied and used these lands, including parts of present-day Burnaby, for thousands of years.

To promote reconciliation and to encourage the community to learn more about the original stewards of these lands, when used in writing, the name of each Host Nation will be linked to the approved community webpage. The second paragraph should be said whenever possible, including when in writing.

To support this work, staff will develop an implementation strategy, including a transition plan and communications plan to update current references and tools, including pronunciation guides and corporate communications, as well as to educate staff and the community about the update.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff will develop a transition plan and communication strategy to implement the new land acknowledgement. Internally, necessary forward-focused adjustments will be included into staff workplans, including updating email signatures and references in documents, templates and reports. Externally, forward-facing references on all public-facing documents or tools will need to be updated, including City websites, such as Burnaby.ca, Burnaby Public Libraries website and My Property Portal. Guidelines for Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement (Attachment 3) will also need to be updated, as well as How to Pronounce recordings. Staff will be informed via an all-subscribers email from the CAO, department-to-department communications from the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Division, and through Staff Connect. The Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Division will collaborate with other City departments, including Marketing and Communications, to ensure the land acknowledgement is updated on all public-facing communications products.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Updating the land acknowledgement will be forward-facing and therefore it is not expected to have any potential related financial considerations.

Respectfully submitted,
Mikelle Sasakamoose, Director, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
For
Noreen Kassam, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Strategy Framework, August 26, 2024

Attachment 2 - Corporate Guidelines for Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement, June 6, 2019

Attachment 3 - Guidelines for Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Mikelle Sasakamoose, Director, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and reviewed by Noreen Kassam, Deputy Chief Administrator and Chief Financial Officer, and Marie Ishikawa, Director, Marketing and Corporate Communications.