

**TO:** MAYOR & COUNCILLORS

**FROM:** DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

**SUBJECT:** **PROPOSED INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGY**

**PURPOSE:** To propose an Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation framework and strategy for Council's approval.

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** an abbreviated history of the First Nations on whose territory the City of Burnaby is now located, including the x̣ẉṃə̣θ̣ḳẉə̣ỵəm (Musqueam), Ṣḳẉx̣ẉụ́7̣mesh (Squamish), ṣə̣ḷiḷẉə̣ṭə̣ł̣ (Tseil-Waututh), and ḳẉiḳẉə̣ł̣əm (Kwikwetlem) Peoples (the host Nations), as outlined in Section 2.0 of the report titled "Proposed Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy", dated August 26, 2024, be received for information;

**THAT** the proposed interim Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy be adopted, and

**THAT** staff be directed to use this interim framework and strategy to inform engagement to co-develop a final reconciliation framework and strategy, as outlined in Section 3.0 of this report.

## 1.0 POLICY SECTION

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

- *Connecting Burnaby: Burnaby Transportation Plan (2021)*
  - For example:
    - *In 2019, Council adopted a policy framework that responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action for Local Government that focuses on reconciliation efforts in Burnaby.*
    - *As the original stewards of the territory known as Burnaby, and as knowledge keepers on land use and environmental protection, local First Nations have a unique status and history in Burnaby. The Plan recognizes local First Nations' traditional knowledge base and the value it brings to future land use and transportation decisions.*
- *HOME: Burnaby's Housing and Homeless Strategy (2021)*

- For example:
  - *The HOME Strategy includes strategies and actions intended to encourage partnerships with local First Nations and Indigenous housing providers.*
- *Burnaby Community Safety Plan (2020)*
  - For example:
    - *Foster and strengthen relationships with local First Nations and urban Indigenous groups to identify ways to enhance Indigenous people's safety and well-being and to ensure programs and services are inclusive and culturally sensitive.*
- *Burnaby Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016)*
  - For example:
    - *Explore ways to develop and nurture partnerships with neighbouring municipalities, other levels of government (regional, provincial, federal, First Nations), community groups, industry and businesses.*
- *Official Community Plan (OCP) (1998)*
  - For example:
    - *To provide opportunities for increased awareness and the conservation of the City's unique natural, cultural, archeological and built heritage.*
- *Equity Policy (1994, Updated 2020)*
  - For example:
    - *The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect.*
- *Social Sustainability Strategy (2011)*
  - For example:
    - *Look for opportunities to provide leadership in reducing all forms of discrimination.*

This work is also in alignment with the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action](#) (TRC) that implicate local governments, including 43, 47, 57, 69, 77, 91 and 93. It is in support of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#) including articles: 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 22, 26, 26, 27, 29, 32, and 39; and the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(DRIPA\)](#), including [Action Plan](#) items 3.1 and 4.27. As well, it responds to the [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Calls to Justice](#) regarding municipal governments.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

Official discourse about the idea of reconciliation in Canada began in 1998, when the federal government responded to the [Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report](#). Since, work in Canada to advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples after more than 150 years of colonialism has advanced in many different forms and at all levels of Canadian society, from neighbourhood actions to national initiatives. Reports, legislation, and international declarations, such as the TRC Calls to Action, the UNDRIP,

and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Calls to Justice have provided a framework or a pathway for this important work.

Other local municipalities have declared their commitments to working with Indigenous Peoples and host Nations to respond to these calls for action made to all Canadians and all levels of government, including local governments, to learn about and from the past and to build and maintain positive relationships between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples. For example, in 2014, Vancouver declared itself a City of Reconciliation when its [Reconciliation Framework](#) was adopted by Council and it issued a declaration acknowledging it is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples. It was the first government in Canada to do so, showing leadership at the local level. Continuing their work, in June 2024, the City of Vancouver [UNDRIP Action Plan](#), developed in collaboration with host Nations, was released.

The District of North Vancouver publicly recognizes Canada’s colonial past and its impacts on Indigenous Peoples with respect for Indigenous knowledge, teachings, and values, as well as respecting the land. Agreements to co-manage Whey-ah-Wichen/Cates Park date back to 2001 and have been used as a model in the region for other parks co-management agreements. Since 2022, the City of Coquitlam has identified reconciliation as both a strategic goal and key priority in its Corporate [Business Plan](#), which guides all activities and work across the organization. By doing this, the City of Coquitlam has committed to taking concrete steps to enhance its positive relationship with the kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem) and other First Nations.

In New Westminster, the past year was proclaimed A Year of Truth, during which time the municipality worked to understand the mistakes of the past in order to make meaningful reconciliation. As part of this work, they completed a colonial audit and have published the [Summary Report on Actions Taken by the City of New Westminster Involving Indigenous Peoples, 1860-1999](#), to inform their work going forward. The City of Port Moody has started work on what is anticipated to be a multi-phase reconciliation project. One of its first steps was to hire an Indigenous consultant to assist Council and staff with navigating the best path forward in the engagement of local First Nations. The consultant submitted a report ([Indigenous Relations Final Report](#)) in June 2022 that recommends the collaborative development of a short-term Indigenous relations strategy. Port Moody Council has directed staff to begin work on the short-term strategy, which will lay the foundation for a 3-to-5-year Indigenous relations strategy to help the City build meaningful and respectful relationships with First Nations.

At the regional level, in 2022 the Metro Vancouver Board renewed its commitments and identified reconciliation as a Strategic Priority in its updated 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, noting: *Metro Vancouver will continue building and strengthening respectful and reciprocal relationships with local First Nations. Metro Vancouver will also continue to engage meaningfully with First Nations on plans, programs, and projects.*

The following report will outline work that the City of Burnaby has done to advance reconciliation and will propose an interim framework and strategy for moving forward in consultation and cooperation with host First Nations and Indigenous Peoples living in

Burnaby to understand the truth in Truth and Reconciliation and to support Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.

**Abbreviated History of Host Nations**

This is a brief and high-level abbreviated history of the host Nations’ history and relationships to the lands on which the City of Burnaby is now located for awareness only. It is not a complete or fulsome reflection of the deep and enduring connections of the host Nations to their traditional and unceded territory.

The City of Burnaby is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and kʷikʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem) Peoples. These four (4) First Nations assert title to these lands, and it is recorded and reported by them publicly, including on their websites, in statements of claims submitted to the provincial and federal governments, and in the provincial consultative database, as well as in maps identifying consultative areas and traditional place names.

The host Nations identified by the City have changed over the years, as the City gains a better understanding of Indigenous rights and title and acquires the capacity to implement an Indigenous relations and reconciliation strategy framework. While a number of First Nations may have interests in the territory that the City of Burnaby is now located, these four (4) Nations assert title today.

The legal duty to consult resides with the federal and provincial governments, but in BC the implementation of DRIPA may result in this responsibility being divested to municipalities. For example, in a recent letter from the Minister of Environment Management and Climate Readiness regarding the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* (EDMA) sent March 12, 2024, it is explained that obligations under the new legislation relevant to local governments will be phased in over time as the regulations are developed.

However, it is highlighted that “a key exception to this is the requirement to consult and cooperate with First Nations, which came into effect when the legislation was adopted.” While local governments, including the City of Burnaby, do not have a legal duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples whose rights may be potentially impacted by the City’s conduct, it is appropriate to prioritize the rights and interests of the title holders in its conduct within the above noted policy context.

**xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) – (Map of territory – Attachment 1)**

Musqueam’s ancestors have lived throughout and stewarded the Fraser River estuary for thousands of years.

Today, portions of Musqueam’s territory are called Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, New Westminister, Delta, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Surrey, UBC Endowment Lands, YVR Airport and Coquitlam.

On June 10, 1976, Musqueam's elected leadership and membership signed the [Musqueam Declaration](#), which states that Musqueam people "hold aboriginal title to our land, and aboriginal rights [...] within that territory occupied and used by our ancestors, namely:

The lands, lakes and streams defined and included by a line commencing at Harvey Creek in Howe Sound and proceeding Eastward to the height of land and continuing on the height of land around the entire watershed draining into English Bay, Burrard Inlet and Indian Arm; South along the height of land between Coquitlam River and Brunette River to the Fraser River, across to the South or left bank of the Fraser River and proceeding downstream taking in the left Bank of the main stream and the South Arm to the sea, including all those intervening lands, islands and waters back along the sea shore to Harvey Creek, AND, the sea its reefs, flats, tidal lands and islands adjacent to the above described land and out to the centre of Georgia Strait."<sup>1</sup>

## **Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) – (Map of territory – Attachment 2)**

Our traditional territory, located in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia, stretches from Point Grey in the south to Roberts Creek in the west. It extends north along the height of the land to the Elaho River headwaters, covering all of the islands in Howe Sound, the entire Squamish Valley, and Howe Sound drainages. The territory continues southeast to the confluence of the Soo and Green Rivers north from Whistler, then south along the height of the land to the Port Moody area, including the entire Mamquam River and Indian Arm drainages. It finally extends west along the height of the land to Point Grey.

This vast territory includes parts of present-day cities such as Vancouver, Burnaby, and New Westminster, as well as all of North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Port Moody, the District of Squamish, and the Municipality of Whistler. The boundaries encompass all of Howe Sound, Burrard Inlet, and English Bay, as well as the rivers and creeks flowing into these bodies of water. Furthermore, it includes the various islands within Howe Sound.

Throughout this expansive territory, numerous Skwxwú7mesh place names exist, each carrying unique meanings and significance rooted in our oral traditions. These names help explain the place and our relationship with the land. The land also bears witness to the rich history of our ancestors, with evidence of settlements, resource sites, and spiritual locations, including villages, hunting camps, cedar bark gathering areas, rock quarries, clam processing camps, pictographs, and cemeteries. Some of these village sites date back 3,000 years.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Musqueam's Story, Musqueam Territory, [Musqueam Territory - Musqueam](#)

<sup>2</sup> About Squamish Nation/Our Land - [Our Land - Squamish Nation](#)

### **səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) – (Map of territory - Attachment 3)**

The heart of our community is now centred on Burrard Inlet, between Maplewood Flats and Deep Cove in North Vancouver. But traditional use studies and archaeological evidence show our ancestors occupied a vast area, about 1,865 square kilometres (190,000 hectares). Our traditional territory encompasses wilderness watersheds northwards to Mount Garibaldi, Coquitlam Lake in the east, and Howe Sound to the west.

This territory was a land of plenty, with abundant fish and game to sustain the Tsleil-Waututh and our neighbours, other First Nations we partnered with through marriage or protocol. We shared resources to provide for all and maintain the area's abundance.

We never ceded or relinquished our responsibility for this territory. But its resources have been exploited and damaged through industrialization and urbanization. Our nation holds Aboriginal title over what is now a highly urbanized area, which we share with many private and public interests.<sup>3</sup>

### **kʷikwəłəm (Kwkwetlem) – (Map of territory - Attachment 4)**

The kʷikwəłəm people have lived in our traditional territory, known as the Coquitlam Watershed, and the surrounding areas, since before remembered time.

Archaeological findings have confirmed continuous occupation of our traditional territory for at least 9,000 years, or since the most recent ice age.

Our traditional territory centers on the watershed of skʷələma:ł ʔaca? (Coquitlam Lake), including the upper and lower skʷələma:ł stáləw (Coquitlam River), and over to the east side of Pitt Lake and either side of the lower Pitt River. To the west, the territory encompasses Mossum Creek and Port Moody Inlet over to Stoney Creek, the lands of Sapperton Heights, and the north arm of the Fraser River. Our southern territory extends from Barnston Island to Annacis Island and the immediate surrounds, including that portion of the Fraser uplands south of the Fraser River.

These areas correspond to the following BC municipalities: Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Pitt Meadows, Burnaby, Surrey, New Westminster, the Village of Anmore and sections of the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve.

The kʷikwəłəm First Nation has never ceded, surrendered, nor abandoned our rights and responsibilities to our traditional territory, and our title has never been relinquished.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> About Tsleil-Waututh Nation – Our Territory - [About Tsleil-Waututh Nation - Tsleil-Waututh Nation \(twnation.ca\)](https://www.twnation.ca)

<sup>4</sup> Kwkwetlem First Nation – Our Territory - [Our Territory - Kwkwetlem First Nation](https://www.kwikwetlem.com)

### Indigenous Peoples Living in Burnaby

The Indigenous population of Burnaby makes up 1.7% of the population <sup>5</sup> from a diverse and vibrant urban Indigenous community with members originating from many different First Nations communities—often from outside of Metro Vancouver, and even the province.

### 3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Proposed Reconciliation Framework

The following is a proposed Reconciliation Framework. The intent would be to implement this proposed framework on an interim basis, while staff engage on the interim policy with host Nations and Indigenous Peoples living in Burnaby to co-develop a final framework to guide the City in advancing reconciliation. The proposed framework would consider the following:

- What:
  - Build relationships with Indigenous Peoples, including government-to-government relationships with host Nations, based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.
- Who and Where:
  - The host Nations on who’s traditional and unceded territory the City of Burnaby is now located, including the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and kʷikʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem) Peoples, and other Indigenous Peoples living in Burnaby as appropriate and with respect to cultural protocols.
- How:
  - Commit to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in the context of principles, such as those found in the UNDRIP, DRIPA, the TRC Calls to Action, and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Calls to Justice.
- Why:
  - To come to terms with events of the past and to proactively develop respectful and mutually beneficial relationships based on truth, justice, and reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples that will support a prosperous and just future for all.

It is proposed that this interim framework be supported by three (3) posts. The use of posts, versus pillars, is intentional and meant to be respectful of Coast Salish culture.

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<sup>5</sup> Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population, Burnaby, City - [Focus on Geography Series, 2021 Census of Population, Burnaby, City](#)

Using language and symbolism reflective of Coast Salish culture is a first step in a holistic approach to this work. House posts were created for significant or special events, such as a potlach or the completion of a longhouse, and they can be carved to reflect character and values but were also designed as markers for civic and community spaces.

The *k'wə səliiwətaʔ syəwenəʔ ct - Our Tseil-Waututh Ancestors* carving by Jonas Jones, that now stands in the lobby at Burnaby City Hall is a physical example of these markers. The three proposed posts and strategies within each post are as follows:

**Post 1: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition**

- Including, but not limited to:
  - Government-to-Government/Council-to-Council Relationships and Agreements
  - Land Acknowledgment
  - Support for UNDRIP
  - Decolonizing Systemic-Racism through Audits, Policies and Processes
  - Implementing TRC Calls to Actions
  - Supporting Indigenous Self-Determination
  - Advancing Economic Reconciliation
  - Consulting and Collaborating with Host Nations in the Identification and Management of Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Resources
  - Partnering with Host Nations to Increase Visibility of their Presence on their Territory
  - Developing a Public Reconciliation Statement and Declaring Official Commitment to Reconciliation

**Post 2: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity**

- Including, but not limited to:
  - Cultural Competency and Capacity Training for Staff, Senior Leadership and Council
  - Developing Community Resources, including Investments in Programming
  - Hosting Community Events, such as National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebrations and the Annual Hope and Health Community Camps
  - Recognizing Sept. 30 as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and May 5 as Red Dress Day
  - Recruitment and Retention of Indigenous Public Servants
  - Grants and Contributions
  - Developing Marketing and Communications Tools and Products

**Post 3: Unity**

- Including, but not limited to:
  - Support, Celebrate and Promote Indigenous Public Art
  - Facilitate the Retention and Revitalization of Indigenous Languages, Including Restoring Traditional Place Names
  - Incorporate Indigenous Culture and Language into Community Events and Celebrations
  - Support and Participate in Events hosted by or for Indigenous Peoples.



- Create Opportunities for Children and Youth to Participate in Reconciliation

**Next Steps**

Over the past 10 years, City leadership and staff have advanced much work in the spirit of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Examples of this work include, but are not limited to:

- Planning events to recognize National Indigenous Peoples Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Relevant programming and resources for community members, like programs at the Burnaby Village Museum and the Indigenous History in Burnaby Resource Guide
- Indigenous public art, like the carvings in the lobby at City Hall and other commissioned pieces around the City
- A land acknowledgment recognizing the original stewards of the lands on which Burnaby is now located
- Relationship building and engagement on City policies and projects, like participating in Council-to-Council meetings and soliciting feedback and input on the Official Community Plan

Going forward, staff will update Council and seek direction on related work in connection with this interim framework. Work that is being prioritized at this time and proposed timelines to be presented to Council, include:

- Civic Archaeology Policy (Fall 2024)
  - This work is in response to:
    - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
    - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
    - TRC Recommendations: 43
    - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 3,11, 12, 13, 26, 27, 29, 32, 39
- Updated Land Acknowledgment (Summer 2024)
  - This work is in response to:
    - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
    - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 11, 15, 26
- Engagement/Co-Management Agreements (Summer 2024)
  - This work is in response to:
    - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
    - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47
    - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 26, 27, 29, 32, 39
- Indigenous Placemaking at Burnaby Public Libraries (Fall 2024)
  - This work is in response to:
    - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
    - Post: Unity
    - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47

- UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 22
  
- Naming Process Policy (Summer 2024)
  - This work is in response to:
    - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
    - Post: Unity
    - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47
    - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 11, 13, 15, 27
    - DRIPA Action Plan Items: 4.27
  
- Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework (Fall 2024)
  - This work is in response to:
    - Post: Indigenous Human Rights and Recognition
    - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
    - Post: Unity
    - TRC Recommendations: 43, 47
    - UNDRIP Declaration Articles: 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, 22, 26, 27, 29, 32, 39
  
- Indigenous Awareness Training for Council, Senior Leadership and Staff (Fall/Winter 2024/2025)
  - This work is in response to:
    - Post: Truth, Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity
    - TRC Recommendations: 57
    - DRIPA Action Plan Items: 3.1

**4.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As per the UNDRIP, Indigenous Peoples have the right to access financial assistance for the enjoyment of the rights contained in the Declaration, including the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, and artifacts. The financial considerations will be provided with each strategic document that comes forward for Council approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Mikelle Sasakamoose, Director, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
for Noreen Kassam, Deputy CAO and Chief Financial Officer

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1 – xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam) – Map of territory
- Attachment 2 – Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) – Map of territory
- Attachment 3 – səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) – Map of territory
- Attachment 4 – kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem) – Map of territory

**REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

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