

To: Corporate and Finance Services Committee

From: Stephanie Sinnott, Commissioner,
Corporate and Finance Services Department

Report Number: CF-23-85

Date of Report: November 1, 2023

Date of Meeting: November 6, 2023

Subject: Land Acknowledgement and Land Acknowledgement Policy

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an updated City Land Acknowledgement and to introduce a new Land Acknowledgement Policy for Council review and approval.

This report also responds to the Corporate and Finance Services Committee Outstanding Item [CORP-21-41](#), correspondence dated August 7, 2021, a community member request for a Land Acknowledgement for Columbus Community Centre.

Attachment 1 to this report is the Full and Abbreviated Versions of the Land Acknowledgement.

Attachment 2 to this report is the Land Acknowledgement Policy.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Corporate and Finance Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That pursuant to Report CF-23-85 dated November 1, 2023 concerning the Land Acknowledgement and Land Acknowledgement Policy:
 - a. That the Full and Abbreviated Land Acknowledgements as set out in Attachment 1 to Report CF-23-85 be approved in principle; and,
 - b. That the City of Oshawa Land Acknowledgement Policy as set out in Attachment 2 to Report CF-23-85 be approved; and,
 - c. That the budget amount of \$20,000 for the Land Acknowledgement to appear on interior signage at City facilities be referred to the Mayor for consideration in the proposed 2024 Budget.

3.0 Executive Summary

Not applicable.

4.0 Input From Other Sources

The following internal staff have provided input into this report:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Commissioner, Safety and Facilities Services
- Commissioner, Economic and Development Services
- Oshawa Seniors Community Centres 55+

In addition, the Land Acknowledgement wording was circulated to all Williams Treaties First Nations, and a number of Indigenous Elders. At the time of writing this report, the following have provided comment, guidance or acceptance of the Land Acknowledgement wording:

- Alderville First Nation
- Hiawatha First Nation
- Chippewas of Rama First Nation

5.0 Analysis

5.1 Background on the Practice of Land Acknowledgements

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous peoples as stewards of the land on which we live and/or work, and should be delivered at all meetings, events and/or gatherings taking place. It is a way to acknowledge the traditional territories, honour and show respect for these territories and Indigenous communities that have been displaced by colonization, recognizing the harms this has caused. It is important to understand the long-standing history that has brought us to reside on the land, and to seek to understand our place within that history.

The development and use of a Land Acknowledgement is in itself an act of reconciliation and serving to facilitate learning across the corporation and community.

Land Acknowledgements are not only about history, but acknowledge the people who continue to reside and take care of the land. They are also a way to publicly demonstrate commitment toward meaningful reconciliation.

In principle, Land Acknowledgements can be updated from time to time to address new information and practices, knowledge from and about local Indigenous communities and is an opportunity for further awareness and education.

5.2 Background on the City's Land Acknowledgements

In 2017, the Procedure By-law was revised to include Recognition of Indigenous Lands at all Regular Council meetings. The current Land Acknowledgement wording was created by staff through research only, and not reviewed by Williams Treaties First Nations, nor approved by Council.

Since 2017, the Land Acknowledgement wording has been updated twice, to reflect new learning and best practice.

In 2022, Council approved CNCL-22-48, dated June 16, 2022, in which City Council acknowledged and recognized the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (U.N.D.R.I.P.) and directed staff to utilize these documents as the framework for the City's Reconciliation efforts.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (F.P.I.C.) is a specific right of Indigenous Peoples recognize in U.N.D.R.I.P. This right allows Indigenous Peoples to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or their territories.

In addition to respecting F.P.I.C., it is important for the City to embrace the concept of "Nothing about us without us" when developing policy, planning or programs. As a result, the proposed Land Acknowledgement has been developed by the Indigenous Relations Advisor in collaboration with non-Indigenous staff within the Innovation & Transformation Branch through research and learnings of the history of the land we now call Oshawa.

The updated Land Acknowledgements have been circulated to the Williams Treaties First Nation signatories, as the original owners and stewards of the land. These Nations are made up of seven Anishinaabe communities including the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, Hiawatha, Curve Lake, and Alderville, as well as the Chippewas of Georgina Island, Rama, and Beausoleil First Nations.

As a result of this research, staff have created full and abbreviated versions of the Land Acknowledgements to be appropriately applied in various municipal activities, corporate documents and on infrastructure, and is presented in Attachment 1.

It is important to note that at the time of writing this report, City staff have received comments from three of the seven First Nations within the Williams Treaties. The Indigenous Relations Advisor continues to gather feedback and comments through relationship building. As a result, it is recommended that City Council approve the Land Acknowledgements in principle, recognizing that slight wording changes may be required pending these comments.

5.3 Outstanding Item List reference CORP-21-41

On September 13, 2021, Corporate Services Committee received correspondence [CORP-21-41](#), from a community member requesting Council to consider the creation of a Land Acknowledgement for "the unique lands in Columbus", and "that a plaque should be

designed, forged and posted at the site of Columbus Community Centre and former town hall, located at 3265 Simcoe St. North.”

It is recommended that the City does not pursue separate Land Acknowledgements for any specific area of the City or specific City facility, including individual recreation and community centres, and that events taking place at Columbus Community Centre would utilize the proposed Land Acknowledgement in the version most applicable for that use.

Upon approval of this report, staff will communicate with the resident regarding the decision made by Council.

5.4 Land Acknowledgement Policy

A Land Acknowledgement Policy is being proposed to imbed the practice of acknowledging the land into existing structures, and to ensure the consistent application across the Corporation.

The proposed Land Acknowledgement Policy, as presented in Attachment 2, provides the information on the purpose, application, scope, definitions, pronunciations, roles and responsibilities and usage related to a Land Acknowledgement.

5.5 Next Steps/Implementation

Upon approval of this Report, various administrative, communications, training and signage steps will be implemented.

Upon the approval of the Land Acknowledgement Policy, Procedure By-law 128-2022, as amended, and the Advisory Committees of Council Policy and Procedure will be updated to reflect that all Council, Standing Committee and Advisory Committee meetings will start with a Land Acknowledgment. A copy of the Land Acknowledgement Policy will also be shared with the City's External Agencies encouraging incorporation of the Land Acknowledgment at their respective Board meetings.

The Indigenous Relations Advisor will conduct information sessions to orient all Committee Chairs to the Land Acknowledgement, pronunciations and protocol. It is expected that four sessions will be organized in December 2023; one for Council Committee Chairs, and the other three for Community and Advisory Committee Chairs.

Following these initial orientation sessions, training and education via the delivery of workshops and a Guide to Land Acknowledgements will be offered more broadly for staff across the corporation in 2024.

Internal changes such as updating the corporate email signature as per the Customer Service Standards, adding the updated Land Acknowledgement to the corporate website as well as to social media platforms (where possible) will be rolled out and take effect by the end of 2023.

5.5.1 Signage

Signage containing the Abbreviated Version #2 of the Land Acknowledgement will be installed across all facilities in high visibility interior main entrance areas.

It is intended that the Land Acknowledgement signage will include the English version as well as Anishinaabemowin (traditional language of the people of this territory) and will also include Braille and ASL translations.

It is estimated that 21 interior signs will need to be fabricated and placed in the following locations as an initial rollout:

- City Hall
- COD
- Animal Services
- Recreation Facilities
- Fire Halls
- OSCC55+ Branches

Pending 2024 Budget approval, these signs would be created and installed by the end of 2024.

The installation of Land Acknowledgement signage at outdoor facilities, including parks and trails, will be considered when existing signage reaches its end of life cycle and needs to be replaced.

6.0 Financial Implications

The financial implications related to approval of the Land Acknowledgement Policy would be approximately \$20,000 for the design and fabrication of the interior signage for 21 City facilities.

This expense cannot be accommodated in the existing 2023 budget operating budget, and is therefore recommended to the Mayor for consideration in the proposed 2024 budget.

7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This Report advances the Accountable Leadership, Social Equity and Cultural Vitality goals of the Oshawa Strategic Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J MacIsaac', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Julie MacIsaac, Director,
Innovation & Transformation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Sinnott', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Stephanie Sinnott, Commissioner,
Corporate and Finance Services Department

City of Oshawa Land Acknowledgement

FULL VERSION

Usage: Corporate websites, corporate strategic planning documents

The City of Oshawa is situated on lands within the Traditional and Treaty Territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Anishinaabeg and the signatories of the Williams Treaties, which include the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, Hiawatha, Curve Lake, and Alderville First Nations, and the Chippewas of Georgina Island, Rama and Beausoleil First Nations.

We recognize that Oshawa is now present day home to many Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the diverse group of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who have cared for the land and waters within this territory and across Turtle Island from time immemorial, and continue to do so today.

‘Oshawa’ stems from an Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe language) word meaning “a crossing place” and has further translation as “the point at the crossing of the stream where the canoe was exchanged for the trail”. When the word Oshawa was chosen as the name of our city, it reflected and recognized the importance of water and land to our community. Our city’s name is a reminder of this important and powerful connection between people and place in the past but also of the present and for the future.

As a municipality, we are crossing over. We are committed to understanding the truth of our shared history, acknowledging our role in addressing the negative impacts that colonization continues to have on Indigenous Peoples, developing reciprocal relationships, and taking meaningful action toward reconciliation.

We are all Treaty people.

ABBREVIATED VERSION #1

Usage: to be read at all City meetings and City-led events. To be included on corporate documents where space is limited.

The City of Oshawa is situated on lands within the Traditional and Treaty Territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Anishinaabeg and the signatories of the Williams Treaties, which include the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Alderville First Nations, and the Chippewas of Georgina Island, Rama and Beausoleil First Nations.

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ABBREVIATED VERSION #2

Usage: for email signatures, job postings, corporate publications of four pages or more, and signage at City facilities

The City of Oshawa is situated on lands within the Williams Treaties Territory, home to seven First Nation communities of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Anishinaabeg, who have cared for these lands and waters from time immemorial and continue to do so today. Read the full version on [Oshawa.ca](https://www.oshawa.ca) (hyperlink to dedicated webpage).

Corporate Policy

Title: Land Acknowledgement Policy
Number:
Approved By:
Administered By: Innovation & Transformation
Effective: November 20, 2023
Revised:

1.0 Purpose/ Background

The purpose of this Policy is to articulate and reinforce the City's Land Acknowledgement as well as outline the consistent and appropriate approach to its usage at City meetings, facilities, events, and in publications (both print and e-versions) and to identify the responsibilities of City Council and staff.

The City of Oshawa is committed to Truth and Reconciliation. Since 2015 and the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (T.R.C.) Call to Actions, many municipalities and other organizations are incorporating a Land Acknowledgement as a preliminary act in relationship and awareness building.

Land Acknowledgements are meant to acknowledge the traditional territories, honour and show respect for these territories and Indigenous communities that have been displaced by colonization, recognizing the harms this has caused. It is important to understand the long-standing history that has brought us to reside on the land, and to seek to understand our place within that history.

Land Acknowledgements are not only about history, but acknowledge the people who continue to reside and take care of the land. They are also a way to publicly demonstrate commitment toward meaningful reconciliation.

Land Acknowledgements are in itself an act of reconciliation.

Land Acknowledgements are meant to be genuine, authentic and provide the speaker and listeners with a moment of reflection. This reflection is an opportunity for the speaker and audience to learn, to think about how they have benefited from the land where they work, learn and play, and to express gratitude towards Indigenous Peoples for their stewardship and contributions to our communities.

2.0 Policy Statement

The City of Oshawa respects and acknowledges that the present-day city sits on the ancestral and traditional territories of Indigenous peoples.

3.0 Scope/Application

This Policy applies to all Employees (including Employees of the Oshawa Senior Community Centres), Volunteers, Students, Members of Council and Members of all committees and boards of the City of Oshawa.

Staff have consulted with Williams Treaties First Nations and their input/ comments have been incorporated into the Land Acknowledgements as outlined in Section 6 below.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Definitions

City means the Corporation of the City of Oshawa.

city means the geographic area referred to as Oshawa.

Committee means a Standing Committee, Advisory Committee, Committee of Adjustment, Community Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Cultural Leadership Council, the Public Art Task Force and any other committee and/or task force which may be established.

Council means Oshawa City Council as a whole.

Council Member means an individual member of Council, including the Mayor.

Employee means all full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal and staff hired on a contract basis for a defined period of time, as well as Students.

Indigenous Peoples in this context is referring to the collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Time immemorial means for a very long time and is so long ago that the time frame is indefinite.

Traditional/Ancestral Territory describes the ancestral and contemporary connections of Indigenous peoples to a geographical area. Territories may be defined by kinship ties, occupation, seasonal travel routes, trade networks, management of resources, and cultural and linguistic connections to place.

T.R.C. Calls to Action the executive summary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings contained in its multi-volume final report, including 94 "calls to action" (or recommendations) to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples.

Treaty People relates to how all Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people have obligations, responsibilities and rights related to Treaties. Treaties were created through Nation-to-Nation negotiations and are the legal agreements made between the Government of Canada and Indigenous governments that outline how resources, land and power would be shared. Treaties were and continue to be broken and although many believe it to be the sole responsibility of the Government of Canada to uphold

Treaties, all people living in Canada have an obligation to recognize and honour Treaties.

Treaty Territory is as it sounds. Lands that have been defined through treaty negotiations either in a historic Indian treaty-making process or through modern treaties, and usually, but not always, have an accompanying map to define the boundaries.

Truth and Reconciliation relates to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (T.R.C.) which intended to reveal to Canadians the complex truth about the history and ongoing legacy of the residential school system and to guide and inspire a process of healing and reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and families and non-Indigenous communities, governments, churches and private sector and Canadian residents. In 2015, the T.R.C. released its report containing 94 Calls to Action.

Turtle Island is to some Indigenous communities the continent of North America. Turtle Island is derived from a creation story where a turtle carried the world on its back.

Reconciliation in this context refers to the work of building a renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect and partnership.

Student means an individual at least 15 years of age who is in an educational program at a high school, college or university level.

Volunteer in this context refers to an individual who chooses to donate their time and/or services, to assist the City.

Williams Treaties the territory that stretches from the northern shore of Lake Ontario to Lake Nipissing, and together cover approximately 52,000 km². The geography of the Treaties overlaps with several previous treaties.

4.2 Pronunciations

Anishinaabe	Awe-Nish-i-Nah-Bay
Anishinaabeg	Awe-Nish-i-Nah-Bag
Chippewa	Chip-i-waa
Haudenosaunee	Hoe-De-Nah-Show-Nee
Inuit (ᐃ ᓂ ᐃᑦ)	Ee-New-Eet
Wendat	When-Dat
Métis	May-Tee
Michi Saagiig	Mi-Chee Saw-Geeg

5.0 Responsibilities

All Employees, Volunteers, Students and Members of Council:

- Adhere to this Policy and use the Land Acknowledgement in an appropriate manner and in accordance with this Policy;
- Work to understand the significance, meaning and role of Land Acknowledgements in reconciliation; and,

- Are encouraged to develop their own personalized additions to the statement to reflect their personal commitments to reconciliation.

6.0 Practice/Procedures

6.1 Versions of the Land Acknowledgement

Full Version Land Acknowledgement

The City of Oshawa is situated on lands within the Traditional and Treaty Territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Anishinaabeg and the signatories of the Williams Treaties, which include the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, Hiawatha, Curve Lake, and Alderville First Nations, and the Chippewas of Georgina Island, Rama and Beausoleil First Nations.

We recognize that Oshawa is now present day home to many Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the diverse group of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who have cared for the land and waters within this territory and across Turtle Island from time immemorial, and continue to do so today.

'Oshawa' stems from an Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe language) word meaning "a crossing place" and has further translation as "the point at the crossing of the stream where the canoe was exchanged for the trail". When the word Oshawa was chosen as the name of our City, it reflected and recognized the importance of water and land to our community. Our City's name is a reminder of this important and powerful connection between people and place in the past but also of the present and for the future.

As a municipality, we are crossing over. We are committed to understanding the truth of our shared history, acknowledging our role in addressing the negative impacts that colonization continues to have on Indigenous Peoples, developing reciprocal relationships, and taking meaningful action toward reconciliation.

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Abbreviated Land Acknowledgement - Version #1

The City of Oshawa is situated on lands within the Traditional and Treaty Territory of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Anishinaabeg and the signatories of the Williams Treaties, which include the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Alderville First Nations, and the Chippewas of Georgina Island, Rama and Beausoleil First Nations.

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Abbreviated Land Acknowledgement - Version #2

The City of Oshawa is situated on lands and waters within the Williams Treaties Territory, home to seven First Nation communities of the Michi Saagiig and Chippewa Anishinaabeg, who have cared for and maintained these lands from time immemorial and continue to do so to present day. Read the full version on Oshawa.ca (hyperlink to dedicated webpage).

6.2 Land Acknowledgement Procedure

The **Land Acknowledgement - Full version** will be used in the following circumstances:

- a. City of Oshawa websites on a designated webpage.
- b. Corporate strategic planning documents.

The **Land Acknowledgement - Abbreviated version #1** will be used in the following circumstances:

- a. Council, Committee and Other Meetings:
 - The Land Acknowledgement will be read aloud at the start of all Council, Standing Committee, Advisory Committee and Committee of Adjustment Meetings.
 - The Land Acknowledgement will be read aloud at the start of all City community group meetings, ad-hoc committees and task forces.
 - Any City staff hosted meetings outside of those listed in subsections a) and b) are also encouraged to begin meetings with the Land Acknowledgement. The Chair or Host (includes non-employees) is responsible for reading the Land Acknowledgement during meetings as outlined in this policy as well as understanding the significance, meaning and role of Land Acknowledgements in reconciliation. The Land Acknowledgement should be delivered by a non-Indigenous individual; this should not be requested of Indigenous Peoples.
- b. Corporate Documents
 - The Land Acknowledgement will be included in all agendas and minutes for all the meetings listed above.
- c. Events
 - The Land Acknowledgement will be read aloud at all City-led events that include remarks or opening ceremonies including but not limited to Special Events, Flag Raising ceremonies and facility openings.
 - The Chair or Host (includes non-employees) is responsible for reading the Land Acknowledgement during events as outlined in this policy as well as understanding the significance, meaning and role of Land Acknowledgements in reconciliation. The Land Acknowledgement should be delivered by a non-Indigenous individual; this should not be requested of Indigenous Peoples.

The **Land Acknowledgement - Abbreviated version #2** will be used in written circumstances where there are space limitations and for e-documents where the ability to hyperlink to the City website and the Full Version is possible. These circumstances are, including but not limited to:

- a. Email signature for all staff and City Council members.
- b. City of Oshawa websites – on the homepage.
- c. Corporate Infrastructure - The Land Acknowledgement will be included on interior signage at City facilities including, but not limited to City Hall, Consolidated Operations Depot, Recreation Facilities, and Fire Halls.
- d. Select corporate publications consisting of four pages or more, and where space, allows on other corporate publications.
- e. Social media platforms where space allows.
- f. On Job Postings.

7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed by the Innovation and Transformation Branch at least every three years to ensure its effectiveness and will bring forward amendments for Council consideration. The Director, Innovation and Transformation is authorized to make minor or housekeeping amendments to this Policy, as required.

For further information regarding this Policy, please contact the Innovation and Transformation Branch at 905-436-3311 or email diversity@oshawa.ca.

8.0 References

[CNCL-22-48](#) Response to the Truth and Reconciliation (T.R.C.) Calls to Action and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (U.N.D.R.I.P.).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (2015).

Approved

Authority	Date	Signature
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