

Title:	Land Acknowledgement Policy
Number:	GOV-23-01
Approved By:	City Council
Administered By:	Innovation & Transformation
Effective:	November 20, 2023
Revised:	January 2, 2024

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

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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

Official Land Acknowledgement – Full and Expanded Version (for Website and OSP)

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 are grateful for the Anishinaabeg who have cared for the land and waters within this territory since time immemorial.

We recognize that Oshawa is steeped in rich Indigenous history and is now present day home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. We express gratitude for this diverse group of Indigenous Peoples who continue to care for the land and shape and strengthen our community.

‘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.

Official Land Acknowledgement – Spoken Version (for Meetings and Events)

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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Official Land Acknowledgement – Short Version (for Print and Signage)

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. [Learn more](#)

6.2 Land Acknowledgement Procedure

The **Official Land Acknowledgement - Full and Expanded Version** will be used in the following circumstances:

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

The **Official Land Acknowledgement – Spoken Version** 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 **Official Land Acknowledgement – Short Version** will be used in written circumstances where there are space limitations and for e-documents. 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 of 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).