
MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: February 13, 2023
To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Kevin Bonnell, Manager of Equity, Inclusion, and Indigenous Initiatives
Report #: COU23-027
Attachments: N/A

Title: The City of Stratford Land Acknowledgement and Protocols for Use

Objective: To provide Council with an introduction about how, why, and when to use the Land Acknowledgement and to request the use of the Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of all public events and meetings.

Background: Traditional land acknowledgement statements are a reminder that we must continue to strengthen the relationships and understanding between non-Indigenous peoples. The Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement used to recognize and remember the long history that brought us to reside on this land.

Between April 2022 and October 2022, conversations were undertaken by staff in the Clerk's Office and later included consultation with different Indigenous people, knowledge keepers, elders, organizations, academics and interested parties who are knowledgeable about Indigenous engagement in this region. This work helped inform the development of a meaningful and respectful Land Acknowledgement that can be used for official use in the City of Stratford.

The Land Acknowledgement is a way for settlers and uninvited guests to recognize, appreciate and respect the local Indigenous people and to honour their history, knowledge, culture, and rights. However, it is important to understand that Land Acknowledgements are not a new practice because when Indigenous Peoples visited other territories, it was, and still is, customary to respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land.

Analysis: Following consultation with Indigenous people, knowledge keepers, elders, organizations, academics, and interested parties, a spoken and written Land Acknowledgment has been developed for adoption. This report also details the protocols for using the developed Land Acknowledgement.

How do you develop and share a Land Acknowledgement?

The Land Acknowledgement for official use was constructed after researching the specific land, Indigenous People and Treaties of the land that the City of Stratford sits on. Versions of the Land Acknowledgement were shared and adapted with the feedback and ongoing support of Indigenous Elders, communities, organizations, and Municipalities. It is also recommended that we observe a moment of silence after the Land Acknowledgement is recited for meeting attendees to reflect on how Truth and Reconciliation can be practiced during the meeting and in your day-to-day lives. The Land acknowledgement should be followed by a moment of reflection.

Who shares the Land Acknowledgement?

The Land Acknowledgement is designed to be used by non-Indigenous people at the start of a meeting. At formal events such as council meetings, the Land Acknowledgement should be shared by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, or Chair. It should be shared by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or designate at programs or public events. If neither is available, the event host should proceed by sharing the Land Acknowledgement.

Where do we share the Land Acknowledgement?

A Land Acknowledgement is a cultural practice that should be done at the start of all Council meetings, in person and virtual. Additionally, it should be considered to be used at any public gathering or events, including all staff meetings. The Land Acknowledgement should be done at any City organized or hosted events and gatherings, and should be read at the beginning of a meeting before calling the meeting to order/program to start.

Who are we acknowledging?

People

The Land Acknowledgement in the City of Stratford should recognize the **Neutral (Attawandaron), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples.**

Neutral (Attawandaron) (Atta-wan-da-ron)

The name Attawandaron is used by the Huron-Wendat to mean “people of a slightly different language.” Neutral was the Iroquoian language spoken by the Neutral Nation. Attawandaron is an Iroquoian people who lived in what is now southwestern Ontario in Canada.

Anishinaabe (Anish-nahh-bay)

The name Anishinaabe translates to "people from whence lowered." Another definition refers to "the good humans," meaning those on the right road or path are given to them by the Creator Gitche Manitou or Great Spirit. The Anishinaabe speak Anishinaabe languages that belong to the Algonquian language family and are present in the Great Lakes Region.

Haudenosaunee peoples (hoe-dee-no-SHOW-nee)

The name "Haudenosaunee " describes "people who build a house." The name represents the confederation among six Native American nations, more commonly known as the Iroquois Confederacy. The six nations that comprise the Haudenosaunee speak Iroquoian languages. The Iroquoian language group includes over ten languages: Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Tuscarora and Seneca."

Treaties

The following is provided for the information of Council.

The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant of 1701,

The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant of 1701 was developed by Indigenous People of the Great Lakes region and northeastern North America to describe how the land can be shared to the mutual benefit of all people living on the land. A "dish with one spoon" was referenced by Indigenous peoples who make treaties with each other to avoid violent conflict. The "dish" represents the land to be shared peacefully, and the "spoon" represents the individuals living on and using the resources of the land in a spirit of mutual cooperation. Often, a bowl or kettle was referred to rather than a dish. One of the most known wampum belt is the one treaty made between the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe peoples before the coming of the Europeans.

The Huron Tract Treaty of 1827,

The Huron Tract Treaty of 1827 included southwestern Ontario bordering on Lake Huron and Lake Erie. This treaty uses the intersection of the St. Clair River and "a hickory tree marked with a broad arrow on two sides" to mark part of its boundary. This agreement was made between eighteen Anishinaabek Chiefs and the Canada Company.

What are the two forms of the Land Acknowledgement?

The full Land Acknowledgement should be read out loud for all attendees to hear, preceded by a moment of silence to reflect on how the specific event moves toward Reconciliation while remembering the history of the land. The Land Acknowledgement should also be shared in an accessible way to ensure all meeting participants can

equitably engage in reflection. At the end of the Land Acknowledgement, please encourage the meeting participants to take a moment to reflect. This reflection can include reflecting on what the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and their Calls for Justice means for you in your personal and professional lives. The abbreviated Land Acknowledgement should be used in the email signature block for all staff.

Why do we do a Land Acknowledgement?

The Land Acknowledgement is to provide a reminder that we must continue to strengthen the relationships and understanding between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples. The Land Acknowledgement can be used by the City as a practice of reconciliation aimed at recognizing the traditional or treaty territories of Indigenous peoples. As we look toward the future, we want to continue to express gratitude to those who reside here, and to honour the Indigenous people who have lived and worked on this land historically and presently.

Spoken Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Stratford is positioned on the traditional territory of the **Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples**. As we gather, we are reminded that the City of Stratford is situated on treaty land that is steeped in rich Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples today. We acknowledge that Stratford is situated on land that was shared between the **Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples**. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work, and play on this land.

Written Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that Stratford is situated on lands shared between many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples today. As a City, we have responsibility for the stewardship of the land on which we live and work. Today we acknowledge **Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and the Neutral (Attawandaron) peoples** and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live, work, and play on this land.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications to be reported as a result of this report. Following adoption of the Land Acknowledgment it will be incorporated into the email signature block and provided for use at City meetings and events.

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

Funds have been allocated in the 2023 draft budget for Indigenous Training which at the time of writing this report is subject to council approval.

Legal considerations:

The Land Acknowledgements have been reviewed by the City's legal counsel.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

The Land Acknowledgement is a way for the City of Stratford to reflect on the historical ways the Land our municipal buildings are located on were used for and it also allows us to centre the experiences of Indigenous People who lived and live in our city today. It is also a way for us to think how the Land Acknowledgement is a cultural practice of reconciliation aimed at recognizing the traditional or treaty territories of Indigenous peoples.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work and support local prosperity

The Land Acknowledgement statement is a reminder that we must continue to strengthen the relationships and understanding between non-Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities, and promoting a culture of sustainable living. The Land Acknowledgement is for all staff and residents to learn about the Indigenous history.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the spoken and written Land Acknowledgement as detailed in Report COU23-027, be adopted for official City use during, but not limited to, the following:

- **Regular Council Meetings,**
- **Special Council Meetings,**
- **Sub-committee Meetings,**
- **Advisory Committee Meetings, and**
- **City of Stratford events, public information and consultation sessions and staff meetings.**

Prepared by: Kevin Bonnell, Manager of Diversity, Equity and Indigenous Initiatives

Recommended by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer