

 <b>COBOURG</b>	<b>THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG</b>	
	<b>STAFF REPORT</b>  <b>Committee of the Whole</b>	
TO:	Mayor and Council Members	
FROM:	Jamie Kramer, CHRP, CCIP™	
TITLE:	Accessibility Coordinator	
DATE OF MEETING:	January 4, 2020	
TITLE / SUBJECT:	Indigenous Land Acknowledgment for the Town of Cobourg	
REPORT DATE:	December 20, 2020	

### 1.0 STRATEGIC PLAN

Pillar - PEOPLE – The Town of Cobourg supports and cares for the Social and Physical Well-Being of its Citizens.

Pillar – PLACES – The Town protects, preserves, and promotes its natural assets, heritage, arts, culture, and tourism.

Pillar – PROGRAMS – The Town provides efficient and effective corporate, community, and business and recreational services for its residents, businesses, and visitors.

Pillar – PARTNERSHIP – The Town engages in strong, sustainable public-private partnerships to improve the quality of life for everyone.

Pillar – PROSPERITY – The Town plans for, markets, and develops assets for economic growth and financial security.

### 2.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Alderville First Nations provided the Land Acknowledgement as well as more input and understanding into using Land Acknowledgments.

The Nogojiwanong (Peterborough) Friendship Centre was contacted for further information and resources.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the Land Acknowledgement, created by Alderville First Nations, for their use; and

FURTHER THAT Council incorporate the Town of Cobourg's traditional Indigenous land acknowledgement statement in all Council related meetings; and

FURTHER THAT Council incorporate the Town of Cobourg's traditional Indigenous land acknowledgement statement in all Board and Advisory Committee meetings; and

FURTHER THAT Council incorporate the Town of Cobourg's traditional Indigenous land acknowledgement statement in all public meetings and ceremonies; and

FURTHER THAT all Town of Cobourg require their , municipal staff, Councillors, volunteers, and to attend Indigenous Awareness and Understanding Training, developed by the Town of Cobourg and/or provided by the Town of Cobourg and/or comparable to the training provided by the Town of Cobourg;

FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to incorporate appropriate actions from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action into the development of the EDI Strategy; and

FURTHER THAT Council begin to use the Land Acknowledgement on January 4, 2021 at the first Committee of the Whole meeting for 2021.

#### 4.0 ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

On May 13, 2019, Council resolved:

*THAT Council adopt a traditional land acknowledgement statement to be read at the beginning of its meetings; and*

*FURTHER THAT Council direct Staff to consult with Alderville First Nations to draft a traditional land acknowledgement statement that reflects the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Ojibway/Chippewa peoples, as well as this territory that is covered by the Williams Treaty.*

The Government of Canada created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) after 2007.<sup>1</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the [Indian Residential Schools](#) system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences.

The [Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement](#), the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history, began to be implemented in 2007. One of the

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada." *Government of Canada; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada*, 19 Feb. 2019, [www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525](http://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525).

elements of the agreement was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities and all Canadians.

The [official mandate](#) (PDF) of the TRC is found in Schedule "N" of the Settlement Agreement which includes the principles that guided the commission in its important work.

Between 2007 and 2015, the Government of Canada provided about \$72 million to support the TRC's work. The TRC spent 6 years travelling to all parts of Canada and heard from more than 6,500 witnesses. The TRC also hosted 7 national events across Canada to engage the Canadian public, educate people about the history and legacy of the residential schools system, and share and honour the experiences of former students and their families.

The TRC created a historical record of the residential schools system. As part of this process, the Government of Canada provided over 5 million records to the TRC. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba now houses all of the documents collected by the TRC.

In June 2015, the TRC held its closing event in Ottawa and presented the executive summary of the findings contained in its multi-volume final report, including 94 "calls to action" (or recommendations) to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous peoples.

In December 2015, the TRC released its entire 6-volume final report. All Canadians are encouraged to read the summary or the final report to learn more about the terrible history of Indian Residential Schools and its sad legacy.

To read the reports, please visit the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#) website. [CBC has an interactive aspect entitled "Beyond 94"](#) to showcase where the government and other organizations are in terms of implementing the Calls to Action.

## 5.0 BACKGROUND

Giving thanks, respect, and honouring the land and ancestors was and continues to be a common practice within Indigenous communities. The process of showing appreciation and giving thanks has a long history on these lands.

As a member of Canadian society, we are all treaty people. Treaties are binding agreements to guide the relationships, with the settlement of "Canada." Treaties are the legal basis for acquiring land by settlers and they allowed for the settlement of Canada.<sup>2</sup>

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed as a means of reckoning with the devastating legacy of forced assimilation and abuse left by the residential school system. From 2008 to 2014, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission heard stories from thousands of residential school survivors. In

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<sup>2</sup> King, Thomas. 2013. *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native Peoples in North America*. Toronto: Ontario Penguin Random House Canada

June 2015, the commission released a report based on those hearings. From that came the 94 Calls to Action: individual instructions to guide governments, communities, and faith groups down the road to reconciliation.

Land Acknowledgments are a small yet significant way to show respect and acknowledge the presence of Indigenous peoples past, present, and future.

The [Williams Treaties First Nations](#) include the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island and the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island, and Rama. These seven First Nations are signatories to various 18th and 19th century treaties that covered lands in different parts of south central Ontario. In 1923, the Chippewas and Mississaugas signed the Williams Treaties and together, over 90 years later, the Williams Treaties First Nations have joined to ensure their rights to and the relationship with the land is respected. In 2018 the Williams Treaties First Nations settled a longstanding dispute with the Crown about the making, terms, interpretation and implementation of the 1923 Williams Treaties.

#### **Pronunciation Guide:**

- **Anishnabeg:** Awe – Nish – Nah - Beck
- **Haudenosaunee:** Hoe – De – Nah – Show - Nee
- **Chippewa:** Chip – A - Wah
- **Wendat:** When - Dat
- **Inuit:** Δ (ee) ɔ (nu) Δ<sup>c</sup> (eet)
- **Métis:** May - Tee

## 6.0 ANALYSIS

This report responds to the above resolution requested by Council.

The Town of Cobourg extends its thanks and appreciation to Alderville First Nations for providing the Land Acknowledgement for our use.

Land Acknowledgements are an important starting point for Indigenous Reconciliation in Canada. When Land Acknowledgements are given, it is important to pause, be present, reflect, and consider how our place here, these lands, and how colonization and the oppression of Indigenous Persons has privileged some over others.

The Land Acknowledgement for the Town of Cobourg has been attached as **Appendix A**. The guide for understanding and using Land Acknowledgements, that has been adapted from the City of Toronto, is attached as **Appendix B**.

It is important to note that as we continue on our journey and continue to partner with Alderville and other Indigenous organizations, the Land Acknowledgement may evolve.

### **Next Steps on the Path to Reconciliation**

The next steps from this are incorporating aspects of the Calls to Action and teachings from the Indigenous community into the way we govern and interact with the communities.

There are more actions to take beyond this, including conducting training, education, and awareness for Staff, Council, volunteers, Boards, Advisory Committees, and third party vendors. Training on Indigenous Awareness and Inclusion should be conducted for all staff on a rolling and ongoing basis at the Town of Cobourg.

This will provide everyone with the tools and resources for cultural competency that cannot be created in-house. Training would be conducted by Indigenous Awareness Canada, and as noted in the Council Report on the EDI Strategy, would be starting with Leadership and Town Council then slowly dispersing throughout the Town of Cobourg.

Alongside the training is the need for education and awareness campaigns to bring forward more ideas and engagement within the community to promote inclusion, understanding, and more cultural awareness.

Further, there is a need to incorporate Indigenous Relations, teachings, and understanding, as well as aspects of the Calls to Action in the full EDI Strategy beyond the Land Acknowledgement.

#### 7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/STAFFING/BUDGET IMPACT

There are no financial implications associated with implementing a Land Acknowledgement; however, there are financial implications to ensuring that there is enough education, understanding, and awareness to allow for the Land Acknowledgement to be the first step to Reconciliation.

In the Council Report for the EDI Strategy, budget was allocated for Indigenous Awareness training for Council and Leadership and this will be expanded upon for all Staff, volunteers, Boards, and Advisory Committees, upon the completion of the EDI Strategy.

The cost of providing Indigenous Awareness and Education training will be included in the budget for the EDI Strategy once it has been completed.

#### 8.0 CONCLUSION

The Land Acknowledgement of the Town of Cobourg is the first step in creating reconciliation in our community.

By approving the Land Acknowledgement and its use, the Town of Cobourg is committing to reconciliation with our Indigenous Persons. This combined with training and education, as well as incorporating the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action into the EDI Strategy, will create the foundation of reconciliation in the Town of Cobourg.

9.0 AUTHORIZATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT (SENIOR MANAGEMENT/CAO)

*Jamie V. Kramer*

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Accessibility Coordinator

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Brent Larmer  
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