



Photo: Carleen Thomas, Tsleil-Waututh Nation

# Guidelines for Territorial Acknowledgement

Burnaby is located on the ancestral and unceded territories of the  $x^w m \theta k^w \acute{a} y \acute{a} m$  (Musqueam),  $S k w x w \acute{u} 7 m e s h$  (Squamish),  $s \acute{a} l i l w \acute{e} t a \ddot{t}$  (Tsleil-Waututh), and  $k^w i k^w \acute{e} \lambda \acute{a} m$  (Kwikwetlem) peoples.

Before Burnaby existed, its lands were home to the ancestors of those Coast Salish Nations. Today, their descendants continue to live in present-day Burnaby and the adjacent municipalities that developed within their traditional territories.

Since time immemorial, each of these First Nations has celebrated its own unique culture and history, while remaining connected to the others by family, social life, culture, protocols, and language. Each has oral traditions to explain their origins and ongoing connections to their territories.

## Why do we recognize traditional territory?

Recognizing traditional territory follows a customary protocol of acknowledging that Host Nations have called this land home since time out of mind, long before the arrival of settlers. It also recognizes that the land Burnaby is on remains unceded. It is territory that was never yielded through treaty, war or surrender by the original inhabitants. Following this protocol shows respect to those that have lived on the land since time immemorial. Acknowledging traditional territory is also a way of building greater mutual understanding, respect and relationships between Host Nations and visitors and settlers on these lands. It can demonstrate a willingness to learn the truth about our shared past.

[The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#) released its final report in 2015. This foundational document included a number of actions for local governments, and Burnaby City Council approved implementation of these actions in 2016.

## What should I say to recognize traditional territory?

In collaboration with the Host Nations, the following territorial acknowledgment wording has been developed. This language is a guide, not a script. Territory acknowledgment is a traditional protocol and should be offered as a sign of respect.

This recommended language could be reviewed as our understanding evolves through ongoing learning from Elders, knowledge keepers, and First Nations community members.

**Note:** The lower-case letters in the below are deliberate and you should not apply English grammar and punctuation to them.

***"Before we start, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge that the City of Burnaby is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and kʷikwəłəm (Kwikwetlem) Peoples. Each Nation has distinct histories and distinct traditional territories that fully or partially encompass the city.***

***We encourage you to learn more about the Host Nations whose ancestors have occupied and used these lands, including parts of present-day Burnaby, for thousands of years."***

## HOW DO I PRONOUNCE THESE NAMES?

It is a good idea to practice pronunciation of these names before a public event:

**xʷməθkʷəy̓əm** [click here for an audio clip\\*](#)

**səlilwətał** [click here for an audio clip\\*](#)

**Skwxwú7mesh** [click here for an audio clip](#)

**kʷikwəłəm** [click here for an audio clip\\*](#)

\*Audio clips to come soon.

## When should traditional territory be recognized?

Traditional territory should be recognized verbally at the beginning of all formal gatherings and meetings.

### NOTES:

- Recognizing traditional territory should be the first item on the program.
- Be careful when copying and pasting to ensure that the font has not changed and characters are appearing correctly.

## How should traditional territory be recognized in written documents?

Traditional territory should be recognized in publicly-available, high-level and strategic documents.

The written acknowledgment should appear near the beginning of, or in a high profile place, in the written document.

Below is an example of the written statement to be included. Phrasing may need to be altered depending on the prose of the document.

***We respectfully acknowledge that the City of Burnaby is located on the unceded territories of the [xʷməθkʷəy̓əm \(Musqueam\)](#), [Skwxwú7mesh \(Squamish\)](#), [səlilwətaɬ \(Tsleil-Waututh\)](#), and [kwikwəḷəm \(Kwikwetlem\)](#) Peoples. Each Nation has distinct histories and distinct traditional territories that fully or partially encompass the city.***

***We encourage you to learn more about the Host Nations whose ancestors have occupied and used these lands, including parts of present-day Burnaby, for thousands of years.***

## How should traditional territory be recognized when speaking?

The Chair or MC should acknowledge traditional territory at the start of the meeting or event. It is not necessary to have an Indigenous person do this, although at larger more formal events it is proper protocol to request a representative from a Host Nation to provide a welcome after the territory acknowledgement has been offered.

## Protocol honorariums and gifting

If a representative from a Host Nation provides a welcome or attends a meeting it is appropriate to offer an honorarium, otherwise known as a handshake, in recognition of their time, knowledge and support. Provide it to the representative the day of the meeting or event.

It is appropriate to also offer a small gift (such as a potted plant), in addition to the honorarium. Providing refreshments is also important.

## Learn more about the Host Nations

Click on the links below

[xʷməθkʷəy̓əm \(Musqueam\)](#) [səlilwətaɬ \(Tsleil-Waututh\)](#)  
[Skwxwú7mesh \(Squamish\)](#) [kwikwəḷəm \(Kwikwetlem\)](#)

## I'd like to learn more!

- City of Burnaby Council Report - [Corporate Guidelines for Territorial Acknowledgement](#)
- Burnaby Village Museum - [Indigenous History in Burnaby Resource Guide](#)
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future - [Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
- [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)
- [Proposed Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy](#)

## Did you know?

In recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day, the City sponsors an annual [City of Burnaby Hope and Health Community Camp](#). The camp promotes ReconciliACTION and is an opportunity to engage children and youth in reconciliation.

## Have any questions?

Please email [Indigenous@burnaby.ca](mailto:Indigenous@burnaby.ca) if you have questions or would like more information. Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation team members are also available to attend staff meetings or training sessions to discuss these guidelines.