



## The Corporation of the Township of King Report to Council

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**From:** Community Services Department - Heritage and Culture Division  
**Report Number:** COM-HEC-2024-002  
**Date:** Monday, September 23, 2024  
**Title:** **King Township Land Acknowledgement**

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### **Recommendation**

1. That Council receive Report COM-HEC-2024-002; and
2. That Council adopt the Land Acknowledgement as attached in Appendix A to this report.

### **1. Report Highlights**

- The Township of King seeks to establish a Township-wide Land Acknowledgement that reflects past, present, and future Indigenous communities in King, in addition to our ongoing commitment towards Truth and Reconciliation.
- Once completed, the Land Acknowledgement will physically be represented at each municipal site.
- The Township currently supports Indigenous initiatives in King through Community Services' public programming.
- The Land Acknowledgement will be the Township's first step in defining its policy regarding Indigenous initiatives and Truth & Reconciliation, with the intent of encouraging stronger relationships with Indigenous communities and nations, including our Treaty Partners: the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Williams Treaty First Nation.
- A draft Land Acknowledgement Use Corporate Policy will be presented to Council for consideration in 2025.
- Relationships with Indigenous Treaty Partners are to be mutually beneficial and supportive of both parties, with an emphasis on servicing Indigenous initiatives in King.

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to approve the proposed Land Acknowledgement. Per approval, terms of use will be defined, as well as our policy regarding Indigenous relations; and the Township of King's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation moving forward.

### 3. Background

In preparation for the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in 2021, a temporary Land Acknowledgement was written by staff and shared with Council for use by the Township to recognize the Indigenous peoples who have called the land upon which King Township sits home. It was as follows:

*We acknowledge that the Township of King sits within the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Williams Treaty First Nation, as well as the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee peoples. We thank them for sharing this land with us. Together, we will continue to celebrate the heritage, diverse cultures and outstanding achievements of Indigenous people.*

In 2023, Heritage and Cultural staff engaged in recognized training on Land Acknowledgements to learn how to use them beyond an initial statement; and, create a meaningful impact to support Indigenous peoples in the community. Through this course, staff recognized the existing acknowledgement was not sufficient for properly recognizing the important role that Indigenous peoples play in our history, present, and future; nor, did it recognize the impacts of colonization on this land. To rectify this, staff first wrote a new draft Land Acknowledgement using lessons from that course.

In late 2023, staff engaged Indigenous consultant Andrew McConnell (Secondment to the Faculty of Education at York University in Toronto and former Indigenous Education Coordinator to York Region District School Board) to edit and refine the statement to the current proposed version attached as Attachment 1 to this report, as well as help staff understand the importance and meaning behind its words.

The final version was also compared against the MCFN Land Acknowledgement Guidelines to ensure compliance with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

The statement was also sent directly to Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for approval, whereby it was confirmed satisfactory without further amendments required.

### 4. Analysis

#### 4.1. Purpose of a Land Acknowledgement

A Land Acknowledgement expresses gratitude to the Indigenous people whose territory we reside on and honors those who have lived here since time immemorial. More importantly, it acknowledges that Indigenous communities reside within these territories today, as their roles continue to shape our present and future. This message is crucial in understanding the history that brought us here and our dynamic role within it. Land Acknowledgments also highlight the effects of colonialism ongoing to this day, requiring mindfulness of our present participation. This practice follows Indigenous protocol, respecting the original stewards of the land.

## **4.2. Environmental Comparison**

Many municipalities in Ontario (and across Canada) have adopted Land Acknowledgements for use at Council meetings, official municipal events or displayed prominently including Georgina, East Gwillimbury, Newmarket, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Markham, York Region, and others. Several municipalities also post a Land Acknowledgement on their respective websites with additional information on Truth and Reconciliation and the Indigenous histories of their community. By adopting this statement, King would be in alignment with our neighbours in expressing our gratitude and respect for our Indigenous partners.

## **4.3. Indigenous History of King Township**

In the 1400s, the Wyandot people (Huron or Wendat) traditionally inhabited areas around Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay, but by the 1600s, European diseases and Haudenosaunee expansion led to their dispersion. The Haudenosaunee, living south of Lake Ontario, destroyed Wyandot villages in the 1649-1650 period, expanding their territory. By the 1680s, the Anishinaabe pushed the Haudenosaunee back south of Lake Ontario. The 1787 Gunshot Treaty was later disputed, while the 1805 Toronto Purchase between the Mississaugas and the British Crown was ratified. In 1923, the Williams Treaties were signed with various First Nations. Settlements in 2010 and 2018 with the Canadian government addressed compensation for historical grievances, including \$145 million for the Toronto Purchase Claim and Brant Tract Claim in 2010, and \$666 million from Canada and \$444 million from Ontario in 2018, along with recognition of treaty rights and additional reserve lands.

## **4.4. Indigenous Treaty Partners Confirmation**

King Township sits in the boundaries of two separate treaties: Treaty 13 (also known as the “Toronto Purchase”) which was signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN); and the Williams Treaty with the Williams Treaty First Nation. To ensure that the drafted Land Acknowledgement was acceptable, the MCFN were contacted in Summer 2024 for approval and have given their assent for the proposed statement to be used by the Township of King.

## **4.5. Future Planning**

With an approved Land Acknowledgement, a Land Acknowledgement Corporate Policy will be drafted, whereby the following will be defined: how the statement will be used, where, when or in which context, and by whom. Community and Council consultation will occur throughout the policy development process.

During this process, the Township will continue to strengthen relationships with our Indigenous Treaty Partners: the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Williams Treaty First Nations; as well as build new relationships with Indigenous communities and nations. As per the Land Acknowledgement statement, the Township will continue to promote Indigenous initiatives, culture, and heritage in the Township and develop partnerships mutual to both parties.

The Land Acknowledgement is open to potential revision as information, language, and trends in Indigenous education develop. For any future updates, consultation from Council and our Indigenous partners will take place.

## **5. Financial Considerations**

There are no additional financial implications to endorsing the King Township Land Acknowledgement as proposed. The future Land Acknowledgement Use Corporate Policy that will be presented in 2025 may have implications related to signage and Indigenous relationship building that will be discussed at that time. Currently, all initiatives are captured within the existing Township operating budget.

## **6. Alignment to Strategic Plan**

The 2023-2026 Corporate Strategic Plan (CSP) was adopted by Council on June 12, 2023. The CSP reflects the priorities of utmost importance to the community and defines the obligations and commitments of the Township of King to its citizens and to the public. The CSP is aligned with the Townships long-term vision defined in the “Our King” Official Plan. The CSP also aims to ensure that staff initiatives focus on and work towards supporting King’s Vision, Mission and Values

This report is in alignment with the CSP’s Priority Area(s), and/or associated Objective(s) and/or Key Results(s):

Priority Area: Complete Communities

Objective: Enrich community well-being and make King the ideal place to live, work and play.in-kind contribution requests by 2024.

A Land Acknowledgement enriches community well-being by fostering a deeper sense of respect, inclusivity, and connection among members. By recognizing and honoring Indigenous peoples who have historically cared for and lived on the land, communities can acknowledge their enduring cultural heritage and contributions. This practice not only educates people about historical contexts and current injustices, but also builds bridges between diverse groups. It promotes a shared commitment to justice and reconciliation, creating a more empathetic and informed community. As individuals and groups come together in this spirit of recognition and respect, they enhance their collective well-being, creating a more harmonious and cohesive environment where everyone feels valued and connected.

## **7. Conclusion**

A Township-wide Land Acknowledgement is integral to King’s commitment to Truth & Reconciliation, while also bridging the past, present, and future of this land. Once approved, it will be standardized across all sites in the municipality. Additionally, it will provide a framework for developing a future Land Acknowledgement policy to define the context in which it is used; and, reinforce our ongoing support for Indigenous initiatives in King and strengthening ties with Indigenous communities and our Treaty Partners.

## 8. Attachments

- Appendix A- Township of King Land Acknowledgement
- Appendix B - MCFN Land Acknowledgement Guidelines
- Map of Ontario Treaties and Reserves

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