



## Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: March 22, 2023

Report Number: SRCM.23.04

Department: Office of the City Manager  
Division: Strategy and Transformation

Subject: **SRCM.23.04 – Richmond Hill Land  
Acknowledgement**

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### Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to have Council approve the Land Acknowledgment statement developed by Shared Path Consultation Initiative.

### Recommendation(s):

- a) That the following statement be implemented as the City's Official Land Acknowledgement:

*We are gathering on lands that have been home to First Nations Peoples from time immemorial. We acknowledge that what we now call Richmond Hill is on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations of the Williams Treaty. We also recognize that we are on part of the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Huron Wendat.*

*We would also like to acknowledge all First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from across North America, also known as Turtle Island, who now reside in the City of Richmond Hill. We are committed to rebuilding constructive and cooperative relationships;*

- b) That this Land Acknowledgement be read by the Chair at Regular Council meetings prior to the National Anthem, and by the Mayor or designate at all City-led events through Cultural Services where there is an official welcome with Council and local dignitaries;
- c) That Council amend Article 5 of the Procedure By-law No. 74-12 to include the Land Acknowledgement as an Order of Business following the Call to Order and prior to the National Anthem.

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### Contact Person:

Manpreet Abrol, Coordinator, Strategy and Government Relations

Lise Conde, Manager, Strategy and Government Relations

### Report Approval:

**Submitted by:** Anthony Iannucci, Chief Transformation Officer

**Approved by:** Darlene Joslin, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

### Background:

At its June 23, 2021 meeting, Council directed staff to research and consult with Indigenous communities to develop a Land Acknowledgement statement for Richmond Hill. After reporting back to Council with a Land Acknowledgement in November 2021, staff were directed to “have further consultations with the Indigenous Community on wording for the Land Acknowledgement” and “report back to Council on a revised Land Acknowledgement at a future Council Meeting.”

Due to the sensitivity of settler-Indigenous relations the City sought to hire an Indigenous consultant to facilitate this consultation and undertake communication and consultation in the broader indigenous community with the intent to achieve agreement on an appropriate Land Acknowledgement for the City. The organization Shared Path Consultation Initiative (SPCI) was the successful organization who have worked with staff over the past number of months to develop the draft Land Acknowledgment presented in this report.

### Components of the Report on the Land Acknowledgement from SPCI:

SPCI was tasked with conducting a comprehensive consultation process with First Nations on Treaty 13 and the Williams Treaties territories, in addition to other First Nations and Aboriginal Rights holders who have an interest in the development of a Land Acknowledgement statement for Richmond Hill.

In addition to a Land Acknowledgment statement, the report contains information on the history of land acknowledgements, as well as the consultation process conducted to develop one for Richmond Hill. It includes reasoning for why specific First Nations were consulted, and the importance of establishing a Land Acknowledgment in order to grow, rebuild and foster relationships with Indigenous communities.

Additionally, the report outlines when it’s appropriate to state a Land Acknowledgement. Specifically, a Land Acknowledgment should be considered an accompaniment to the

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National Anthem (preferably before it), when it's used to open ceremonial and/or official occasions. It is not necessarily required to state a Land Acknowledgement during committees and advisory bodies as they tend to be less formal, notwithstanding any ceremonial aspects that may be on an agenda. To implement this direction, the recommendation in this report outlines how the Land Acknowledgment would be said at the outset of all Richmond Hill Council meetings and at City-led events through Cultural Services where there is an official welcome with Council and local dignitaries, including those at the Richmond Hill Centre for Performing Arts.

Should Council approve the recommendations in this report, staff will also make the Land Acknowledgment available to other community organizations and individuals who may want to use it for their meetings and/or events in Richmond Hill.

### **Proposed Land Acknowledgement:**

Based on the work done by SPCI, the Land Acknowledgement recommended to be adopted by Council is as follows;

*We are gathering on lands that have been home to First Nations Peoples from time immemorial. We acknowledge that what we now call Richmond Hill is on the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Mississauga and Chippewa Nations of the Williams Treaty. We also recognize that we are on part of the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Huron Wendat.*

*We would also like to acknowledge all First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples from across North America, also known as Turtle Island, who now reside in the City of Richmond Hill. We are committed to rebuilding constructive and cooperative relationships;*

### **Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:**

There are no financial or resource implications as a result of this report.

### **Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:**

The Land Acknowledgement aligns with Council's Priority of a Strong Sense of Belonging.

### **Climate Change Considerations:**

There are no climate change considerations as a result of this report.

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### **Conclusion:**

As directed by Council, Staff engaged with SPCI to help develop a Land Acknowledgement for the City of Richmond Hill. The report from Shared Path includes a history of what a Land Acknowledgement is, the consultation process used to develop the statement, the proposed Land Acknowledgement for the City, and how to move beyond the Land Acknowledgement to foster and rebuild relationships with First Nations and Treaty Holders.

### **Attachments:**

Appendix A: City of Richmond Hill – Report on Land Acknowledgement from SPCI

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCM.23.04 Richmond Hill Land Acknowledgement.docx
Attachments:	- City of Richmond Hill – Report on Land Acknowledgement from SPCI.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 9, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Stephen Huycke - Mar 8, 2023 - 8:45 AM**

**Lise Conde - Mar 8, 2023 - 11:21 AM**

**Anthony Iannucci - Mar 8, 2023 - 1:08 PM**

**Darlene Joslin - Mar 9, 2023 - 8:55 AM**