

**District of Barriere**  
**REPORT TO COMMITTEE**

<b>Date:</b> May 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	<b>File:</b> 530.20/Rpts
<b>To:</b> Committee of the Whole	<b>From:</b> B. Payette, CAO
<b>Re: Territorial Land Acknowledgement</b>	

**SUMMARY:**

As reported by the Mayor as the appointed, representing Director on the TNRD Board, the practice of a territorial land acknowledgement at TNRD meetings was raised at the February 18, 2021 Board meeting. Staff would like to present the Committee of the Whole with information about what other local governments are doing and allow for further discussion and direction on establishing the practice of a territorial land acknowledgement. Council has repeatedly conveyed to staff that external partnerships and reconciliation is a priority to the District of Barriere. Acknowledgement of the territorial lands on which local governments meet, is an important step in fostering relationships with Indigenous communities and strengthening our partnerships with Simpcw First Nation.

**BACKGROUND:**

Opening meetings with an acknowledgment of Indigenous ancestral territories is a very common practice within BC public sector organizations and local governments. Acknowledgement statements must be respectful, representative, and provide a meaningful intent to honour local Indigenous peoples while being considerate of complicated histories and overlapping territories. The land on which the District of Barriere meets, does business and provides services encompasses Simpcw First Nation territory.

Strengthening our partnership with our local First Nations is an ongoing action item but there are small important steps that can be taken towards achieving this goal, including the practice of meaningful territorial acknowledgements. Such acknowledgement would show recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples and would form a small part of the ongoing actions and work the District of Barriere strives to continue to make in learning about and understanding the colonial context of the Simpcw First Nation territory where a meeting or gathering is taking place.

**DISCUSSION:**

The TNRD's and Regional District of North Okanagan's (RDNO) Board of Directors recently directed staff to research what other governing bodies are doing with respect to acknowledgement of First Nations at Council/Board and Committee meetings. The TNRD was kind enough to include the District of Barriere in their research at our request and forward on the responses from other regional districts. The table in Attachment A summarizes the responses. The majority of regional districts that responded do provide a territorial land acknowledgement. For some, this is embedded in their procedure bylaw or a policy and for

others, it is simply a practice. Most regional districts have a specific acknowledgement of the territory on which the meeting is actually taking place, while others have opted for a broader acknowledgement of the Indigenous peoples and their traditional lands on which they are meeting.

There are several options for the wording of an acknowledgement statement, should the Committee recommend that staff pursue this further and bring it forward to a formal Council Meeting. Options range from a definitively worded recognition of the unceded territories of specific First Nations to a more broadly worded acknowledgement of Indigenous lands in general. There is no one correct wording for acknowledgement statements, but the general consensus is that they should be intentional, accurate and meaningful. The acknowledgement should genuinely reflect the preferences and intent of the District. It is also important to note that while a statement is scripted to ensure correct use of appropriate language, accuracy and other key elements, it is certainly appropriate to personalize the statement when reciting it to give it greater meaning or intent. Whatever type of acknowledgement the District may choose to pursue (if any), staff will consult with Simpcw First Nation on the language.

In addition to the possible acknowledgement statement, TNRD staff have been seeking additional input from their Board on other steps that the TNRD could take such as cultural awareness training for Directors and staff (Some District of Barriere staff have participated in such training in the recent past, inviting local First Nations to present to the TNRD Board as a delegation, and exploring opportunities for increased participation and inclusion of First Nations in TNRD decision making.

**Recommendation: THAT, the Committee of the Whole provide input on establishing a territorial land acknowledgement during Council and Committee meetings.**

Prepared by: T. Buchanan, Corporate Officer

Reviewed by: B. Payette, CAO

**Attachment A - Territorial Acknowledgement in other Regional Districts**

<b>Regional District</b>	<b>Yes or No?</b>	<b>Practice or Policy?</b>	<b>Example</b>
Strathcona Regional District	No	Currently no acknowledgement however the Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k:tles7et'h' First Nations is joining their Board on April 1, 2021 so this may change	N/A
Qathet Regional District	Yes	No policy but the practice has been that the Chairs of Committees and Boards make an acknowledgement	<i>"I would like to acknowledge that this meeting is being held on the traditional territory of the Tla'amin Nation."</i>
Regional District of Fraser-Fort George	Yes	No policy but Indigenous relations is one of the pillars of the 2019-2023 strategic priorities and acknowledgement of the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh is set out specifically in that document.	<i>"We respectfully acknowledge the unceded ancestral lands of the Lheidli T'enneh, on whose land we live, work and play."</i>
Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District	Yes	Recognition of territories on the agenda after call to order	Meetings are being held by zoom so there is a broader recognition of all areas where the Chairperson recognizes the meeting is being held throughout the Nuu-cha-nulth territories.
Regional District of Central Kootenay	Yes	Resolution from the Board that the statement be read at the opening of all RDCK Board, Committee and Commission meetings	<i>"We acknowledge and respect the indigenous peoples within whose traditional lands we are meeting today."</i>
Regional District of Kootenay Boundary	Yes	Statement appears on all Board and Committee meeting agendas and minutes and is read out at the beginning of meetings	<i>"We acknowledge and appreciate that the land on which we gather is the converging, traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx, Secwepemc, Sinixt and Ktunaxa Peoples, as well as the Metis Peoples, whose footsteps have also marked these lands."</i>
Regional District of East Kootenay	No	N/A	N/A
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Yes	Posted on agendas and acknowledge verbally at the beginning of each meeting	The Chair acknowledges that <i>"this meeting is being held on the traditional territory of the syilx/Okanagan peoples."</i>
Comox Valley Regional District	Yes	No formal policy but Chair provides statement at beginning of each meeting and it is also on the agenda	<i>"I would like to acknowledge that we are conducting our business today on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation"</i>

Capital Regional District	Yes	Procedure Bylaw mandates a territorial acknowledgement and CRD also developed Territorial Acknowledgement Guide for Directors	Territorial acknowledgement is given before every committee and Board meeting
Fraser Valley Regional District	No	N/A	N/A
Regional District of North Okanagan	No	Board has directed staff to research what other RD's are doing	N/A