



Photo: Carleen Thomas, Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Guidelines for Indigenous Territory Acknowledgement

Burnaby is located on the ancestral, and unceded territory of the hə́ńqəmínəm and Sḵwə́wú7mesh Sníchim speaking peoples. Before Burnaby existed, its lands were home to the ancestors of several local Central Coast Salish Nations. Today, their descendants continue to live in Burnaby and the adjacent municipalities that developed within their traditional territories. Since time immemorial, each of these Nations has celebrated its own unique culture and history, while remaining relations with the others by family, social life, traditions, protocols, and language. hə́ńqəmínəm and Sḵwə́wú7mesh Sníchim speaking peoples remain deeply connected to Burnaby lands and waters today.

There are several Indigenous Nations who share territory in Burnaby. All speak hə́ńqəmínəm or Sḵwə́wú7mesh Sníchim. Recognizing language groups instead of individual Nations is a way of being both specific and inclusive.

Why do we recognize traditional territory?

Recognizing traditional territory follows a customary protocol of acknowledging that Indigenous peoples have called this land home since time out of mind, long before the arrival of newcomers. 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 Indigenous peoples and Nations and non-Indigenous inhabitants of this land. 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 report 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?

Through relationships with local Indigenous Nations, the following territorial acknowledgment wording has been developed. This language is a guide, not a script. Territory acknowledgment is a personal process, and should be offered as a sign of respect, not by rote.

This recommended language will be reviewed on an annual basis to recognize that knowledge and awareness are constantly evolving as we continue to learn from Elders, knowledge keepers, and Indigenous community members.

Note: the lower-case letters in the below are deliberate.

“Before we start, I would like to take a moment to recognize we are on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hən̓q̓əmiṇəm and Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim speaking peoples, and to extend appreciation for the opportunity to hold a meeting on this territory.”

HOW DO I PRONOUNCE hən̓q̓əmiṇəm AND Skwxwú7mesh?

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

[hən̓q̓əmiṇəm](#) > [click here for an audio clip](#)

This audio clip has been provided to the City of Burnaby by staff from the Musqueam Nation. It is of Elder Larry Grant speaking.

[Skwxwú7mesh Sníchim](#)
> [click here for a pronunciation video clip](#)

This video shows Sekyu Siyam, Chief Ian Campbell - Hereditary Chief of the Squamish Nation, explains how the Squamish language relates to their territory.

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.
- NEVER use English spellings of *hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓* and *Sḵwx̓wú7mesh Sníichim* in documents that are available to the public, as the English alphabet is not appropriate to interpret the sounds of these two languages.

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.

Burnaby is located on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hən̓q̓əmi̓nəm̓ and Sḵwx̓wú7mesh Sníichim speaking peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to be on this territory.

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 have a representative from a local Nation provide a welcome after the territory acknowledgement has been offered.

Protocol honorariums and gifting

If a representative from a local Nation provides a welcome, or attends a meeting, it is necessary to offer an honorarium in recognition of their time, knowledge and support. Consider providing the honorarium in cash if possible. Based upon the honoraria fee schedule used by other organizations within the Lower Mainland, a \$200 honorarium per person is suggested for a time commitment of two hours or less.

Gifting protocols vary by Nation, so you may have to do some research. Ask the representative in question if a gift would be appropriate and what would be recommended. Providing refreshments is also important.

I'd like to learn more!

- City of Burnaby Council Report - [Corporate Guidelines for Indigenous Territory 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](#).

Did you know?

Did you know that [Burnaby Village Museum](#) hosts an Indigenous Learning House and Matriarch's Garden? During the summer season, this space is staffed by local Indigenous Educators. Visit the Burnaby Village Museum website for hours and more information.

Have any questions?

Please email Indigenous@burnaby.ca if you have questions or would like more information. Indigenous Relations staff are also available to attend staff meetings or training sessions to discuss these guidelines.