



WHISTLER

REPORT | ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL

PRESENTED: June 1, 2021
FROM: Chief Administrator's Office
SUBJECT: TERRITORIAL STATEMENT

REPORT: 21-060
FILE: 3024

COMMENT/RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

That the recommendation of the Chief Administrative Officer be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the following language for the Resort Municipality of Whistler's territorial statement:

The Resort Municipality of Whistler is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Lil'wat People, known in their language as Lil'wat7úl, and the Squamish People, known in their language as Skwxwú7mesh. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship and voice; and

That Council and staff adopt the practice of making the territorial statement at the beginning of all Council and Committee Meetings and other public meetings of the Resort Municipality of Whistler.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this Report is to request Council's approval of the territorial statement and to request that Council and staff adopt the practice of making a territorial statement at the beginning of all Council and Committee Meetings, as well as other public meetings. This Report also outlines the steps that the RMOW will make in demonstrating the municipality's commitment to learning more about the Lil'wat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh.

DISCUSSION

Background

The Resort Municipality of Whistler's (the "RMOW") current practice is that Mayor Crompton, through his discretion as the Chair of Council Meetings, makes a territorial statement at the start of all Council Meetings. This Report seeks Council's approval to require that the RMOW's territorial statement be used to open all public meetings of the RMOW.

Staff have undertaken the important work of creating the RMOW's territorial statement in collaboration with the Board of Directors of the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (the "SLCC"), including Leadership from the Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation, to show the municipality's commitment and gratitude to the Lil'wat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh. Through this collaboration, staff were asked to indicate how the territorial statement would be introduced to Council and staff and what actions the municipality would take toward indigenizing our workplace. The statement is a commitment that we are here to work in a good way, with respect and with care, and that we have gratitude for those that have cared for this land

since time immemorial and share it with us now.

The commitment we make through this territorial statement is more than just a commitment to saying these words at the start of meetings. Much like the sentiment that the SLCC has shared in their [territorial acknowledgement video](#) and [blog post](#), we introduce the RMOW's territorial statement as a first step in moving toward reconciliation. The RMOW's hope is that by taking this first step, more questions are asked and that we begin the learning process together, hopeful that this act of learning is a demonstration of respect and gratitude for being on this land.

A great first question to ask is: what do these words mean?

Shared – This word demonstrates that what we know as “Whistler” falls within a territory that is shared between two Nations. This has been formalized in a historic protocol agreement between Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation.

Unceded – Unceded refers to land that was never ceded; that is, land that was never legally surrendered or given up.

Grateful, respect and commit – The combined use of these words indicates that the RMOW's territorial statement is intended be more than just a statement. These words signal the municipality's understanding that the statement needs to be combined with further actions that demonstrate our appreciation for residing on these lands and that we need to commit to learning so much more in order to properly convey our respect for the Lilwat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh.

What about *traditional* and *acknowledge*?

The RMOW's territorial statement is intentional in its exclusion of the words *traditional* and *acknowledge*, which are commonly found in other territorial statements.

Traditional – When used to describe the territory, traditional suggests a historical element, and while history is important here (these lands have been cared for since time immemorial by the Lilwat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh), it is more important that we do not lose sight of the fact that these lands are still and will continue to be those of the Lilwat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh. Use of the word traditional obscures that present and future reality.

Acknowledge – When you think about the meaning of this word, it implies that something may not be true and that that something needs to be acknowledged in order for it to be given the necessary authority. The lands on which we work are those of the Lilwat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh and it is not necessary for the RMOW to acknowledge that fact.

Taking a second step: learning as an organization

As the RMOW commits to taking a second step and learning together as an organization, staff and Council must recognize that each of us are at a different place in terms of our knowledge of the Lilwat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh and of the greater experience of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In order to support staff and Council through this learning, Indigenous cultural awareness training will be offered this summer. This act also works toward one of the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, specifically Call to Action #57 – Professional Development and Training:

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to provide education to

public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

RMOW staff and Council will also be asked to consider how they will commit to a deep consideration of the histories, cultures, stewardship and voices of the Lílwat7úl and Sḵwxwú7mesh in their work. Departments will be encouraged to write an additional sentence for the territorial statement that starts with “In our work, we will ...” to express their commitment to this work. Further to this, staff have developed a Virtual Resource Library where staff can find a curated collection of readings, podcasts and videos that will support ongoing learning. Suggested starting places that will be shared with staff include:

- Visit the SLCC to learn about the shared territory of the Lílwat7úl and Sḵwxwú7mesh.
- Read the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action](#).
- Visit the [First Voices](#) and [Kwi Awt Stelmexw](#) websites to learn how to say Lílwat7úl and Sḵwxwú7mesh and common phrases such as please, thank you, and hello in the Sḵwxwú7mesh language of Skwxwú7mesh Snichim and in the Lílwat7úl language of Ucwalmícwts.
- Learn about whose land you're from by exploring the [Whose Land](#) and [Native Land](#) websites.
- Watch the [Whistler 101: Indigenous Peoples video](#) at a team meeting.

The RMOW's investment in creating a more indigenized work environment has also been demonstrated by sponsoring free admission to the SLCC for the months of December 2019 and January 2020. Staff are currently exploring stewardship options to further support the SLCC and allow for additional RMOW staff to access the SLCC.

All staff and Council email signatures will be updated to incorporate the territorial statement. This update will also involve a removal of the current reference to Whistler's role as a Host Mountain Resort for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Staff will also work to build the territorial statement into the municipality's website and collateral. As part of the RMOW's ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion, staff will also be invited to update their email signatures to include their gender pronouns.

By asking staff and Council to personally engage with this work and ask themselves how they will show their commitment to working with respect and care with the Lílwat7úl and Sḵwxwú7mesh, we hope that as an organization we can work to display our gratitude for being here on this land.

In accordance with the second recommendation of this Report, the territorial statement should be used to open all public meetings of the RMOW. This includes all Council and Committee Meetings, Working Group Meetings, open houses and information sessions, and any other type of meeting hosted by the RMOW to which members of the public have been invited. Interviews with prospective RMOW employees will also open with the territorial statement. The territorial statement should be made by the Chair of each meeting or the host for each public event as appropriate.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Official Community Plan

The [Official Community Plan](#) (the “OCP”) is the RMOW's most important guiding document that sets the community vision and long-term community direction. This section identifies how this Report supports the OCP.

Community Vision

The Community Vision includes the statement that “We move forward with the Lil’wat Nation and Squamish Nation and reconcile with the past”. Taking the first step of making a territorial statement and committing to taking a second step of learning together signify forward movement with Lil’wat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh. The RMOW’s territorial statement also highlights and strengthens the vision characteristics of culture and partnerships by showing respect for and celebrating the culture of the Lil’wat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

The Our Shared Future section of Chapter 3: Reconciliation with the Lil’wat Nation and Squamish Nation is, by design, aspirational. Yet, there is an element of this shared future that becomes more of a reality with this work, and that is the following statement: “it is acknowledged that Whistler’s municipal area is located within the unceded traditional territories of the Lil’wat Nation and Squamish Nation”. The RMOW moves closer to this future by formally adopting the language for and use of the territorial statement at all public meetings.

Many goals of this chapter of the OCP are also furthered through the adoption of the territorial statement and the associated second step learning commitments. Three goals are worth highlighting. Goal 3.1 speaks to reconciliation with the Squamish Nation and Lil’wat Nation and includes a policy of providing cultural competency training for the municipality’s staff. Goal 3.2 focuses on the histories of the Lil’wat Nation and Squamish Nation and calls for increased opportunities to share these histories, as well as the Skwxwú7mesh language of Skwxwú7mesh Snichim and the Lil’wat7úl language of Ucwalmícwts. Goal 3.3 notes that cooperative government-to-government relationships have been established and an objective under this goal is to continue to maintain and build relationships based on the principles of equality, partnership, good faith and mutual respect.

Other Relevant Policies

Corporate Plan

The [RMOW Corporate Plan](#) is updated annually and articulates strategic direction for the organization. One of the Council Focus Areas is Community Balance. This concentrates on effectively balancing resort and community needs through deliberate planning, partnerships and investment. Formalizing the RMOW’s territorial statement is a step toward strengthening the partnerships and relationships between the RMOW and the Lil’wat7úl and Skwxwú7mesh.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The budget required to pay for the Indigenous cultural awareness training has already been provided for in the Five-Year Financial Plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

In collaboration with the SLCC, staff engaged in a dialogue around the RMOW's goals for the territorial statement, and Council and staff's commitment to the work required around creating a more indigenized work environment. With this information, the SLCC Board developed the language for the statement that is presented to Council today.

Respectfully submitted,

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for
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CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER