

GOVERNANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**Review of Policy GOV-001-036 Acknowledgement of Treaty Six****Report Purpose**

Based on the results of the Governance Advisory Committee's review of the Acknowledgment of Treaty Six policy, the Committee provides a recommendation to Council for a new policy.

Recommendation

THAT policy GOV-001-004, Territorial Acknowledgment, as set out in enclosure 2 of the June 15, 2021 Governance Advisory Committee, be approved; and

THAT policy GOV-001-036 Acknowledgement of Treaty Six be rescinded.

ReportBackground:

GOV-001-036 Acknowledgement of Treaty Six policy was scheduled to be reviewed in September 2020 as per the County's approved policy review schedule. Since the policy is part of the Governance 001 series, the Governance Advisory Committee (GAC) has a mandate to review the policy and make recommendations to Council on desired changes. The GAC was supported by Intergovernmental Affairs and Legislative and Legal Services in this review.

Revised Policy:

One of the goals of this review has been to create a more meaningful policy which meets the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report and aligns with best practices for Land Acknowledgments. While the original Treaty Six Acknowledgement policy was a positive first step, the GAC believes the review is an opportunity to improve the County's land acknowledgement and overall approach to the policy.

The changes recommended to the policy are significant and thus the review has resulted in a rewrite of the policy and land acknowledgement. For these reasons, the GAC is recommending that policy GOV-001-036 be rescinded and that the policy GOV-001-004 Territorial Acknowledgement be approved.

Enclosure 1 provides the current policy (Acknowledgement of Treaty Six).

Enclosure 2 sets out the proposed revised policy (Territorial Acknowledgement).

Review Process:

To support the review, Administration conducted research, including an interjurisdictional scan, to determine what actions are being taken by municipalities across Canada to improve Indigenous relations. An example of improvement incorporated into the proposed policy is the recognition of the varied and distinct cultures of members of the Confederacy of Treaty Six, the Métis Nation of Alberta, and Métis Settlements (the current policy acknowledges Indigenous peoples in a general way). This inclusivity creates a more accurate representation of Indigenous peoples that honours our Indigenous Partners. The new title, Territorial Acknowledgement Policy, also reflects this approach.

Updated Land Acknowledgement:

To create a transparent and accurate land acknowledgement, the policy and current land acknowledgement was reviewed by the intermunicipal Treaty Relationship Renewal Network and Strathcona County's internal Indigenous Working Group. Appropriate amendments were integrated into the acknowledgement in response to feedback from these groups. The acknowledgment was also reviewed by the leadership at the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta, and Elders.

Updated Guidelines:

In preparing the revised policy, guidelines from GOV-001-036 were updated:

1. We will begin each Council and Priorities Committee meeting with an acknowledgement of the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of First Peoples on which Strathcona County is located, in a manner similar to that found in Schedule A.
2. We will invite Chiefs and Representatives from the Confederacy of Treaty Six, the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Metis Settlements General Council to Strathcona County Council and Priorities Committee meetings and other vital gatherings.
3. We will include an acknowledgement of the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of Indigenous Peoples on which Strathcona County is located, in a manner similar to that found in Schedule A, at Civic Events within Strathcona County, regardless of whether an elected official is present.
4. Following each municipal election, the Strathcona County Council orientation will include relationship building with Indigenous Partners, sharing success stories of Indigenous Peoples in the County, and specific obstacles that Indigenous Peoples face.

Further, additional guidelines regarding policy development were added:

5. At the beginning of each municipal term, Strathcona County Council will take part in a ceremony to begin the term in a way that honours Indigenous Peoples, such as a Pipe Ceremony, Smudge, or other ceremony to assist in building relationships with Indigenous Peoples.
6. We will recognize the importance of the relationship, and relationship-building, with First Peoples in documentation by taking steps such as capitalizing the words "Indigenous Peoples" along with other vital words.
7. This Policy is intended to be a living document and will be reviewed at least once every calendar year, guided by the corresponding procedure.

Updated Definitions, Title, and Language:

In addition to the changes noted above, clearer definitions were proposed to ensure inclusivity of the many Indigenous people who have resided on the land now known as Strathcona County. The proposed policy recognizes the structure of the Confederacy of Treaty Six and there is recognition of the unique culture and history of the Métis people, the governance of the Métis Nation of Alberta, and the unique Métis Settlements as distinct groups.

The proposed policy title and statement strive to align with Indigenous values and provide a more accurate representation of the history of the land. The language in the land acknowledgement, which is in Schedule A of the policy, is also updated to better align with the phrasing preferred by our Indigenous Partners.

Council and Committee History:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| September 17, 2017 | Council approved GOV-001-036 Acknowledgement of Treaty Six (includes land acknowledgement) |
| June 17, 2020 | Governance Advisory Committee begins review of GOV-001-036 |
| July 22, 2020 | Governance Advisory Committee continues review of GOV-001-036 |
| December 2, 2020 | Governance Advisory Committee continues review of GOV-001-036 |
| February 17, 2021 | Governance Advisory Committee approved THAT the proposed policy GOV-001-004 Territorial Acknowledgement, as set out in enclosure 1 of the February 17, 2021 Governance Advisory Committee report, be provided to Council for consideration by June 15, 2021. |

Enclosures

- 1 Current policy GOV-001-036 Acknowledgement of Treaty Six
- 2 Proposed policy GOV-001-004 Territorial Acknowledgement