



**Report to:** Stratford Public Library Board  
**Meeting Date:** March 3, 2020  
**From:** Julia Merritt, CEO  
**Subject:** Preliminary considerations: SPL Land Acknowledgment

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### **Purpose:**

A land acknowledgement statement is usually made at the beginning of a gathering or special event. The purpose is to acknowledge the host Indigenous nation(s) on whose territory people are gathering, as a sign of gratitude and respect. Acknowledging the traditional territories of host nations has been a practice common to many Indigenous nations for generations, but is new to many Canadians.

The Stratford Public Library wishes to recognize and show respect to local Indigenous people and to honour their history, knowledge, culture and rights. Making land acknowledgement statements is a sign of respect and affirmation, and is also a first step in the journey towards reconciliation. Moreover, making land acknowledgement statements helps support the creation of SPL as a safe and welcoming space for Indigenous people. It also serves as an awareness building piece for SPL staff and members of the public. It is important for everyone to be aware of the space they inhabit.

Many other libraries have created land acknowledgment statements and protocols for their appropriate use. Ontario examples include Toronto, Kitchener, Huntsville, Grand Valley, and Pickering.

Below are some draft land/territory acknowledgment statements that have been researched and verified as appropriate for this area. They can be used at the start of events and programmes to communicate respect and to express our desire for cooperation and partnership with Indigenous Peoples.

In order to be Intentional, an additional protocol should be developed to guide when the statements should be used, by whom, and what additional education is needed in order to do so.



### ***Draft Recognition and Land Acknowledgement Statements:***

#### Full:

We [I] will begin this event [Name the Event] by acknowledging that we are meeting on the original land inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning.

As settlers, we're grateful for the opportunity to meet here and we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land since time immemorial.

In particular, **we acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.**

We recognize and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place. We also recognize the contributions of Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made, both in shaping and strengthening this community in particular, and our province and country as a whole.

As settlers, this recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities.

#### Abbreviated: Pre-colonial contact

**We (I) would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.**

#### Abbreviated: Post-Colonial contact:

**We (I) would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Haudenosaunee, and OjibwayChippewa peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.**

### **Staff Recommendation**

SPL staff recommend that the Board move forward with the adoption of a land acknowledgment statement and the creation of a protocol for its use.