



CITY OF KIRKLAND
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: James Lopez, Deputy City Manager, External Affairs
David Wolbrecht, Communications Program Manager
Patrick Tefft, Special Projects Coordinator

Date: November 24, 2021

Subject: LOCAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt draft Resolution R-5507, acknowledging the First People of present-day Kirkland and adopting an official Local Land Acknowledgement for implementation by the City in various plans, policies, and programs (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

On August 4, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution R-5434 to ensure the safety and respect of Black people and dismantle structural racism in Kirkland. In addition to those actions articulated in R-5434, the City Manager approved a staff proposal to compile a hyper-local Native history document of present-day Kirkland in consultation with local tribal leaders and Native experts. Staff presented the draft Kirkland Native History Document at the November 16, 2021 Council meeting and is currently seeking community feedback on the draft document to inform potential changes. After this public comment period, staff intend to return to Council in January with a final Kirkland Native History Document for Council's final review and potential adoption.

A component of the historical document is a local land acknowledgement. A land acknowledgement is a formal statement that pays tribute to, expresses gratitude and respect for, and helps raise awareness of the Indigenous inhabitants of the local land—past and present. Land acknowledgements are ceremonial in nature and do not carry any legal authority. Land acknowledgements have been adopted by other cities in Washington, including the cities of Edmonds, Everett, and Spokane. Other cities throughout the country have also adopted land acknowledgements, including the cities of Denver, Colorado; Eden Prairie, Minnesota; and Eureka, California.

Staff developed a proposed land acknowledgement in parallel with the broader history document. Throughout this process, staff sought to center Indigenous voices and adapt both the project process and product based on their feedback. Staff collaborated with representatives from the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie, and Suquamish Tribes, as well as with a Lushootseed speaker and with a representative from the Chief Seattle Club. The proposed land acknowledgement accounts for all suggestions by the tribal leaders and has been reviewed by them. It should be noted that these tribal leaders provided guidance, suggestions, and insight in this process, but the proposed acknowledgement is specific to Kirkland and is not the official position of any of the consulted tribal organizations.

Proposed Land Acknowledgement

“We acknowledge that the Southern Salish Sea region lies on the unceded and ancestral land of the Coast Salish peoples, the Duwamish, Muckleshoot, Puyallup, Skykomish, Snoqualmie, Snohomish, Suquamish and Tulalip tribes and other tribes of the Puget Sound Salish people, and that present-day City of Kirkland is in the traditional heartland of the Lake People and the River People. We honor with gratitude the land itself, the First People – who have reserved treaty rights and continue to live here since time immemorial – and their ancestral heritage.”

Potential Uses of the Land Acknowledgement

Land acknowledgements are often used at the beginning of meetings or other events. Some cities, including some of those listed above, have incorporated a land acknowledgement into the beginning of City Council meetings as a formal item on the agenda after a roll call that is read aloud or as a printed statement in the agenda. In less formal settings, the City’s land acknowledgement can be used as a ceremonial opening at City-hosted events and community meetings. It can also be incorporated into facility signage, interpretive signage or wayfinding, on the City’s website, and in City plans and other official documents. Upon Council adoption, staff intend to draft a Local Land Acknowledgement Guide for use by City staff. Based on staff and community feedback, staff can subsequently create a usage guide for community groups, businesses, and other community members.

NEXT STEPS:

Staff recommend City Council adopt Resolution R-5507.

Attachment A – Draft Resolution R-5507