

Welcome to the Territory & Opening Remarks by Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) Chief Claire Sault at ULI Toronto's Meet the Chief Planners Event - April 2, 2025

Aanii (ah-nee) Boozoo

Migisikway ndizhnikaaz. (ma-gis-i-k-way n-dish-ni-cause)

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation doonjibaa. (Mississaugas of the Credit doon-ji-baa)

Migizi doodem. (mee-ga-zay doo-dem)

Mississauga n'daaw. (Mississauga n-d-ow)

Good evening,

I am the Ogiima Kwe, Chief of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation are the descendants of the "River Credit" Mississaugas, an Ojibway nation. Our ancestors occupied, controlled, and exercised stewardship over approximately 3.9 million acres of lands, waters, and resources in Southern Ontario.

We are the Treaty Holders of our Territory; the only First Nation in our Territory that has proper land surrender treaties with the Crown.

We acknowledge the presence of other First Nations who have used the lands within our Territory in the past, and who continue to use the lands today. Our Territory has been the home to other First Nations since time immemorial.

Our ancestral worldview was to live in harmony with the natural world, respect the life and energy inherent in Creation including humankind, because there is nothing on the planet that will equal us.

I'm honoured to join you today for this exciting event with the Chief Planners and organized by the **Urban Land Institute Toronto**.

As the world appears to be going at high speed in the wrong direction, there is an unquestionable need for planners like all of you.

The Chief Planner collaborates with citizens, developers, regulatory authorities, consultants, and all levels of government to achieve the community's goal of building a vibrant and growing City. Prepares and presents the division's operating and capital budget and ensures adherence to the approved budget.

The role of Chief Planners has changed dramatically over the past few years.

Chief Planners must now embrace a new and more collaborative mandate: to shape the future of cities through visionary leadership, coordinated regional efforts, and forward-thinking policy. The pressures and demands are high. Treaty Rights will inevitably intersect in your work.

We are all treaty people, and our treaties are for you and us. Historically, Treaties were used to tell a story and mark agreements between people groups. Treaties also used to reflect peaceful relations between Nations and settle disputes within societies. These agreements set out rights and benefits for each group.

Throughout the centuries, our ancestors had simple belief and trust in humanity and the “Great White Father”. However, broken promises, broken treaties, and so many atrocities inflicted upon our people caused wounds that have taken years to come to terms with.

My Nation has been working diligently on the reconciliation plan forward. The calls to action have been dramatically embraced but we still have a long way to go. Most of the feedback I heard last year from across all sectors is that they don’t know where to start. ULI has worked diligently on a document that will assist you with how to responsibly implement a Truth and Reconciliation strategy. Miigwech to one of our own elders and former Chief Carolyn King who assisted with this document.

For many reasons we have an urgency to make real and meaningful changes and to meet infrastructure and housing demands.

Your work as planners is the foundation to Economic stability and creating safe environments in which businesses can thrive, and economies can grow. People are more likely to invest too. Businesses can create jobs and stimulate economic growth.

Worldwide, conflict has increased over the last number of years. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, some issues are too big for countries to handle on their own. Your jobs as planners are a **huge part of this bigger picture.**

My First Nation recently hired a planner to assist the Council with our long-term planning with infrastructure and other major projects. For example, we have designated land for over 100 homes, and it requires flood mitigation and updated lagoons. Or lands that the Nation purchased on the main highway that sat for years knowing we needed to do a lot of work before we can even use them. I believe the previous Councils were always challenged with where to start.

In addition, you can tell by where we built our buildings that we didn’t have the luxury of a planner working with us. We are at a critical stage of planning for future growth. Our members can’t afford the rents in the cities and want to move home to the FN. Like you, we certainly have a lot of pressures and demands too.

Today, in 2025, Canada is attempting to reconcile past grievances by making efforts to advance the rights, perspectives, and prosperity of our peoples in Canada. Canada is built on the ancestral lands of First Nations, Inuit and Metis and the country has historically denied our peoples' rights through assimilationist policies and practices, including the residential school system.

Canada is now committed to accelerate its efforts to strengthen relationships with our peoples based on a renewed Nation-to-Nation, Government-to-Government relationship on self-determination and recognition of rights, respect, trust, cooperation, and partnership. Canada has committed to applying a reconciliation lens across all sectors.

MY Nation was and still is resilient, we are survivors, we TRUST, and we still maintain and believe that "at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit – and that this center is - everywhere and dwells within each of us."

Hope and trust – remains alive for us - as we continue on the path of reconciliation in this country called Canada – "OUR HOME ON NATIVE LAND!"

On behalf of MCFN, I hope you enjoy your conference and we want to extend a warm welcome to our homelands.

Miigwetch to you all for allowing me to share some time with you tonight.