



Indigenous Engagement Protocol:

A Guide to Engagement with the Mississaugas of the Credit First
Nation for Planning Act Applications
County of Brant

May 2026
Policy Planning Division
Development Services Department
County of Brant

Table of Contents

Honouring the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation	3
1. Guiding Principles of Engagement with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation	3
2. General Requirements of Engagement.....	4
2.1 Proof of Engagement.....	4
2.2 Development Proposal Circulation Requirements	5
2.3 Inclusion of Feedback	5
3. Engagement Process.....	6
4. Additional Notes and Information	8
4.1 Clarity on “Decline Request to Engage”	8
4.2 Understanding MCFN-Specific Requests for Engagement.....	8
5. Required Studies/Report.....	9
6. Additional Resources to Guide Developers.....	11
7. Who to Engage with at MCFN.....	13
Annex 1 – The History of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation	15

Appendix C – Engagement Tracker (MCFN)

Annex 1 – The History of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

* All **defined terms** in this Protocol appear in **bold** upon their first use. For full definitions and additional context, please refer to the **Glossary** located in the Introduction section of this document.

Honouring the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Although **development** within the County of Brant occurs under a colonial land use planning framework, the County is seeking to integrate the **Traditional Knowledge** and practices of **Indigenous Nations** who have been present on this land since time immemorial. The Provincial Planning Statement and the objectives of the County of Brant Official Plan – *A Simply Grand Plan (2023)* seek to recognize the origins of the lands on which we live, including treaty relationships and Indigenous histories. As an implementation mechanism, this *Protocol* guides **applicants** to meet the policies of the Official Plan, while respecting Indigenous and treaty rights.

Through this *Protocol*, the County seeks to honour the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), including their Traditional Knowledge of the territory. Where possible, the County will seek to incorporate MCFN's point of view, including the values, traditions, and stories into development within the County.

1. Guiding Principles of Engagement with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Meaningful **engagement** is most impactful when it not only begins early, is respectful and remains ongoing but acknowledges key guiding principles of the Nation's values. The following guiding principles are designed to reflect the high-level values that should be upheld throughout the engagement process with MCFN. Annex 1 provides more detailed information to help applicants learn more about the history, values, governance, and Traditional Knowledge systems of MCFN. The County has identified the following guiding principles for applicants engaging with MCFN:

- **Relationship-Driven:** Engagement lasts beyond the completion of a project and strengthen bonds for future discussions.
- **Proactive:** Engagement occurs as early as possible, with technical studies and requirements identified and concerns addressed prior to formal application submission.
- **Good-Faith:** Engagement is approached with honesty, transparency, and in good faith, with an attitude of mutual respect
- **Collaborative:** Engagement involves working collaboratively with MCFN by responding to all verbal and written comments, incorporating shared knowledge into development proposals, and striving for consensus before a formal application is made to the municipality.

- **Flexible:** Engagement creates flexibility within the process to meet the needs and capacity of MCFN.

2. General Requirements of Engagement

2.1 Proof of Engagement

Applicants of development are required to engage with MCFN as part of a complete *Planning Act* application to the County.

Proof of engagement in the form of communication records with MCFN will be considered by the County in the review of all development applications to determine whether the applicant has meaningfully pursued engagement. These records must include:

- email correspondence,
- all methods of communication used,
- key comments or concerns made, and any review letter provided by MCFN within the submission package
- Any commitments made throughout the engagement process.

Various methods of communication may be required to facilitate discussions. Virtual meetings or on-site meetings may be useful to resolve any outstanding concerns as part of consensus building. The applicant is responsible for tracking and reporting all communication efforts as part of their submission to the County. Applicants are encouraged to track communication efforts in the template provided through Appendix C of this *Protocol*. Both the quantity and quality of communication will be considered when reviewing the proof of engagement provided to the County. Acceptable efforts may include, but are not limited to:

- Follow up emails within a reasonable timeframe.
- Phone calls or virtual meetings.
- Timely responses to MCFN's inquiries, demonstrating that the applicant has actively addressed questions, concerns, and requests for additional information during the engagement process.

The method and extent of engagement may vary depending on the scale, capital cost, and location of the proposed development. Applications that could have an impact on natural heritage resources, archaeological and cultural resources, or

economic impacts on traditional territories and treaty lands may require more extensive and proactive engagement efforts.

2.2 Development Proposal Circulation Requirements

Information and **notification** are required as part of proof of engagement with MCFN. **Major development** applications are encouraged to reach out to MCFN as soon as possible to begin preliminary discussions. All application circulations should include the following:

- Overview (including a map of the site, existing conditions and potential area of **impact** of the development if applicable), timing, and description of the proposed development;
- Known or potential impacts from the proposed development;
- Contact information from the applicant;
- All information provided to the County of Brant in respect to the proposal; and,
- Any other relevant information to MCFN's interest in the environment, Indigenous cultural heritage and archeological resources, and economic impacts.

2.3 Inclusion of Feedback

Feedback received from MCFN prior to the submission of a complete application should be reflected through **inclusions** in the development proposal. These inclusions may consist of, but are not limited to:

- Environmental protection and enhancement measures integrated directly into the plan for development.
- Archeological protection and conservation measures as determined through an archeological assessment.
- Cultural protection measures integrated directly into the plan for development.
- Associated and ongoing monitoring of impacts from the development.
- Other refinements to the contemplated action or decision.

Where inclusions requested by MCFN are not incorporated into the proposal, justification for such exclusions must be provided as part of a complete application submission. A standardized engagement tracker has been provided as Appendix C to this *Protocol*. Using this tracker, applicants are required to outline who they have connected with at MCFN and when, which inclusions have been requested from

MCFN and how they have been included throughout the application or if not, justification as to why.

3. Engagement Process

Initial outreach for **minor developments** is optional but should happen early for more major developments. Such outreach would be to start a dialogue, as well as discuss potential studies and associated terms of reference.

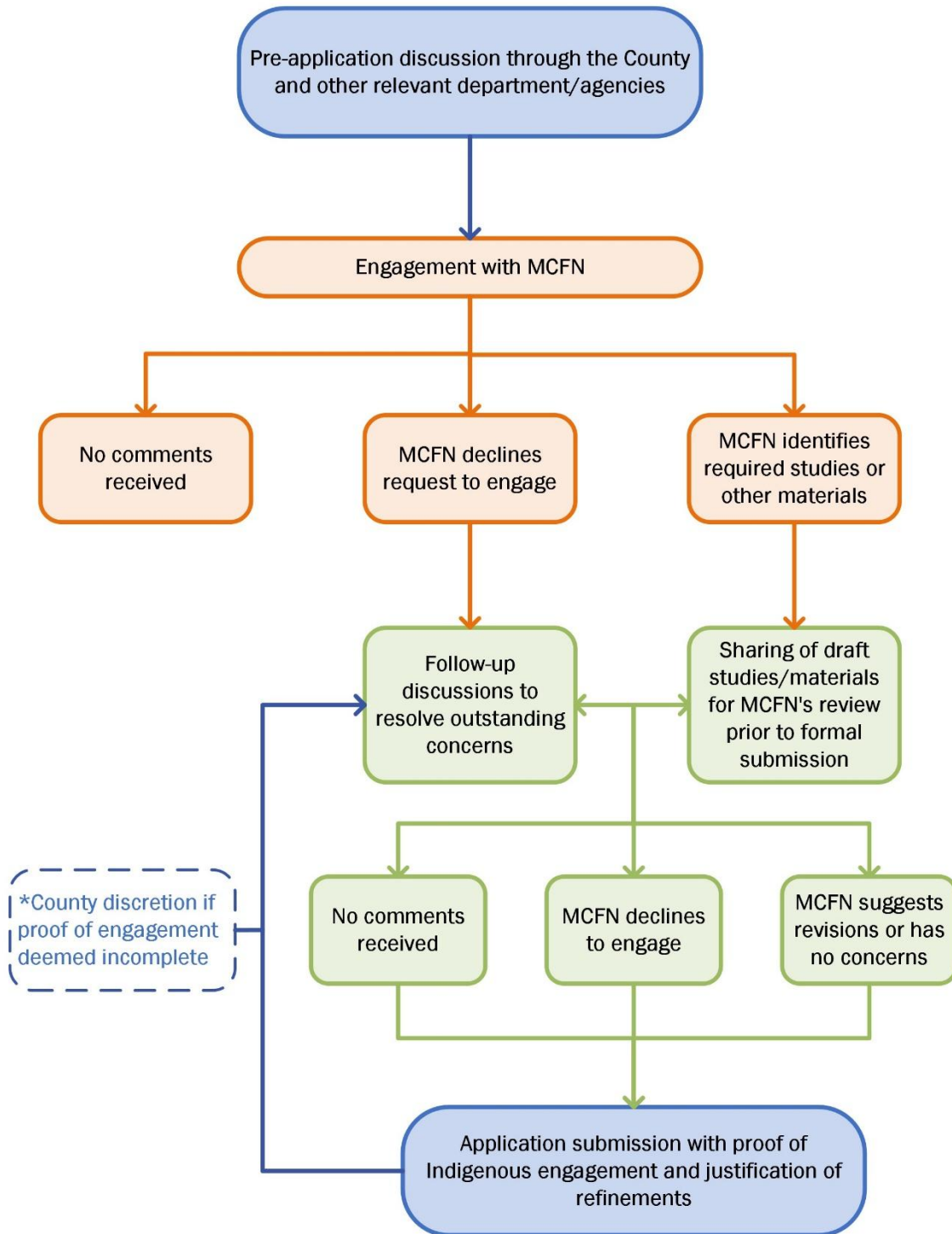
Although early engagement is encouraged as noted above, the first formal step is through the municipal pre-application discussion process through the County. As part of the pre-application discussion with the County, draft proposal materials are circulated to MCFN for review and comment. At this stage, MCFN may choose to:

- ask questions about the proposal
- provide comments on the draft proposal, including any **required studies** and/or additional materials
- communicate the requirement that MCFN participates in and reviews technical assessments.
- provide no comments, or
- decline to engage,

If MCFN declines to engage, follow-up discussions may occur to better understand and address any concerns. Where MCFN identifies specific requirements, draft materials and studies are shared for their review prior to formal submission, and the proponent invites MCFN to participate in fieldwork related to the technical assessments. MCFN may then offer feedback, suggest Inclusions, or indicate no further comments.

Once appropriate steps are taken to recognize and address the key concerns expressed by MCFN, the applicant may proceed to submit this with the remainder of the items required as a submission for a complete application to the County. The complete application submission should include proof of engagement, MCFN's requested inclusions, and if applicable, a justification for any inclusions that are not incorporated. The County retains discretion to determine whether the proof of engagement is sufficient before deeming the application complete. **Figure 1** illustrates this engagement process, from pre-application discussions with the County and MCFN to final application submission.

Figure 1: Engagement Process



4. Additional Notes and Information

4.1 Clarity on “Decline Request to Engage”

MCFN has the right to excuse themselves from engaging with any development project based on the applicant’s failure to meet the requirements for entering the engagement process. This right is in accordance with section 32 of UNDRIP, which outlines that applicants “*shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.*” Accordingly, applicants should notify MCFN as early as possible in the planning process and must remain responsive to feedback throughout. Supporting studies and materials should be revised as needed to address outstanding matters raised by MCFN, or to provide rationale where feedback cannot be included. Applicants and MCFN should work collaboratively toward meeting the expectations of all parties involved.

If an applicant has made attempts to communicate but are not receiving comments within the set application timeline outlined by the *Planning Act*, this should not be interpreted as consent or lack of interest. It is the responsibility of the applicant to take all reasonable steps to pursue engagement and collaborate with MCFN, including making efforts to resolve outstanding issues. The County will consider and verify proof of engagement provided by the applicant and any comments provided by MCFN as part of the pre-application discussion to determine if the applicant has met the requirements of a complete *Planning Act* application. In situations where MCFN declines to engage, this may factor into the County’s decision on the application.

4.2 Understanding MCFN-Specific Requests for Engagement

As part of a complete *Planning Act* application, the County requires proof of engagement with MCFN; however, the applicant’s discussions with MCFN may approach a wider range of requests. The County does not require copies of additional agreements regarding Indigenous engagement and is not liable for any agreements entered into between the applicant and MCFN such as Technical Review Agreements (TRA) and Capacity Funding.

5. Required Studies/Report

The table below outlines some typical studies and reports along with associated requirements related to Indigenous engagement with MCFN as part of a complete application submission. The requirements under each of the listed studies and reports may vary depending on the scale and complexity of the development.

Studies and Reports	Description
<p>Archaeological Assessment (AA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1: background study and evaluation of potential • Stage 2: property assessment • Stage 3: site-specific assessment • Stage 4: mitigation of development impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required for any development that has the effect of soil disturbance, unless it is demonstrated that the site was subject to a deep ground disturbance (e.g. mineral aggregate operation). The application will be put on hold until such time as an archaeological assessment and study is completed. - Must be carried out by a licensed Archaeologist in accordance with provincial guidelines. - Must be reviewed and entered into the Ontario Public Register of Archaeological Reports. - All applicable stages must be completed prior to submission of an application, except where appropriate stages may be waived. The County in engagement with MCFN must be satisfied that potential or known significant archaeological resources will be appropriately conserved. Examples include zoning and dedication of lands that result in permanent conservation. - Where appropriate, as determined by County staff in engagement with MCFN, a condition of approval may be utilized in lieu of placing the application on hold.

<p>Environmental Impact Study (EIS), Environmental Implementation Plan (EIP) and Hydrogeological Assessment used to inform EIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required for any development or site alteration proposed in or within 120 metres of known or potential natural areas identified as part of the Natural Heritage System described in the County's Official Plan. - May be scoped or waived as determined by the County, in engagement with MCFN, where no useful purpose would be served, or where the impacts are anticipated to be minor. - Must be completed in accordance with the County's County Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) and Environmental Implementation Plans (EIP) Terms of Reference Submission Guidelines. - A Hydrogeological Assessment must be completed to inform the EIS, where impacts are anticipated to water resources such as wetlands and watercourses. - Upon completion, the EIS and/or EIP will be circulated to MCFN for review. Based on the results of the review, the documents may be accepted as is, revisions may be requested to address comments raised during the review, or it may be concluded that the lands are not the appropriate place for development.
<p>Heritage Impact Study (can include cultural heritage evaluation reports, conservation strategies, adaptive reuse plans, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required for development or site alteration that could have an impact on sites of potential cultural heritage value or designated cultural heritage resources. This can also include proposals on lands adjacent to cultural heritage resources. - May be required to be prepared and reviewed by an appropriate professional in good standing of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professional, at the discretion of the County.

<p>Tree Inventory, Preservation and Compensation Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required for development or site alteration that could have an impact on trees. This generally included any proposal in or within 10 metres of trees. It includes any trees on and adjacent to the subject lands. - Must be completed in accordance with the County of Brant Technical Tree Guidelines.
------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

6. Additional Resources to Guide Developers

The following additional resources offer valuable learning opportunities for those working or developing within the County of Brant and promote a stronger commitment to continuous learning and meaningful collaboration. These resources also provide a broader understanding of the various County-required studies and their associated guidelines.

- County of Brant. (2024, July). Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) and Environmental Implementation Plans (EIP) Terms of Reference Submission Guidelines. <https://www.brant.ca/planning-and-development/about-planning/development-toolbox/#EnvironmentalImpactStudiesandEnvironmentalImplementationPlans>
- County of Brant. (2024, July). *Heritage Impact Study Submission Guidelines*. <https://www.brant.ca/media/ujmxxhj/heritage-impact-study-submission-guidelines-pdf.pdf>
- County of Brant. (2025). *County of Brant Technical Tree Guidelines*. <https://www.brant.ca/media/i1xmxutn/county-of-brant-technical-tree-guidelines.pdf>
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. (2017). *A Sacred Trust*. <https://mncfn.ca/culture-history/a-sacred-trust/>
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. (2020, February). Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology.
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. (n.d.). *Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Community Profile*. <https://mncfn.ca/about-mncfn/community-profile/>

- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. (n.d.). Treaty Lands & Territory. <https://mncfn.ca/treaty-lands-territory/>
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute. (n.d.). *Indigenous Planning Perspectives Resource List*. <https://ontarioplanners.ca/inspiring-knowledge/indigenous-planning-perspectives/resource-list>

7. Who to Engage with at MCFN

MCFN is entitled to designate different personnel as the appropriate contact person for various aspects of engagement. For example, proof of engagement with the land use and stewardship technician is required for natural heritage matters, while archaeological specialists must be contacted regarding archaeological assessments. Without affecting MCFN's rights to replace, substitute, assign, or otherwise designate personnel, in its discretion, at the time of adoption of this *Protocol*, such designated personnel were, to the best of the County's knowledge, as follow:

Department of Consultation and Accommodation (DOCA):

- The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation have designated DOCA to participate in engagement processes with the Crown (Federal and Provincial governments) and private sector *applicants* on actions and proposed development projects that may impact the rights and interests of MCFN and to ensure that environmentally sustainable practices are being implemented in response to any concerns about the land, water, air, species at risk, and the health of its people;
- DOCA will assess and help mitigate impacts on MCFN's rights, land claims and ways of life by building relationships/partnerships with governments and private sector applicants. The department also works to advance negotiations with key applicants for securing long term relationship agreements or business partnerships in the spirit of peace, respect, and friendship;
- DOCA will ensure that responsible practices are implemented to protect the environment, and the cultural heritage and archaeology of the First Nation; and,
- DOCA is responsible for strengthening recognition of the rich heritage of MCFN by increasing public awareness and by being directly involved in all planning and development within MCFN's traditional and treaty territory.

Initial correspondence should flow through the Consultation Unit and Abby (LaForme) Lee, Consultation Coordinator, at abby.laforme@mncfn.ca. The following Units should only be contacted after initial contact has been made through the Consultation Unit:

Engagement Unit

- Megan Devries, Manager of Engagement and Accommodation, Megan.devries@mncfn.ca

Archeology Unit

- Adam LaForme, Manager of Archeology, Adam.laforme@mncfn.ca

Environment Unit

- Lindsay Wong, Manager of Environment, Lindsay.wong@mncfn.ca

Technical Review Agreements

- Megan Devries, Manager of Engagement and Accommodation, Megan.devries@mncfn.ca
- Abby LaForme, Consultation Coordinator, Abby.laforme@mncfn.ca

Annex 1 – The History of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

[The following material is provided by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN). All content reflects the values and perspectives of MCFN and is intended for the benefit of County staff and those developing within the County to gain a deeper insight into MCFN.]

The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation are members of the Algonquian linguistic group and are a sub-group of the larger Ojibway Nation. In their own language, the Mississaugas refer to themselves as Anishinaabe meaning “human beings or people”.

The oral tradition of the Anishinaabe tells of their migration from the East Coast of North America, down the St. Lawrence River valley, and eventually into the lands of the Great Lakes Region. In a journey thought to span some 500 years, the founding peoples of the Three Fires Confederacy- the Ojibway, the Pottawatomie, and the Odawa Nations, stopped for extended periods near Montreal, Niagara Falls, the Detroit River, Manitoulin Island, and Spirit Island (Duluth, MN) before ending their journey at Madeline Island in Lake Superior. Ancestors of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation broke from the main body of the migratory group and settled along the north shore of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay where they were first encountered by the French in 1634.

The people, who came to be known as the Mississaugas, lived lightly on the land as they harvested its gifts. During the spring, the Mississaugas converged on the flats of rivers and creeks where they erected their wigwams and engaged in fishing. Berries, mushrooms, and other wild foods were gathered throughout the summer months with the harvest of wild rice occurring in the early autumn. After the harvest of rice, the people then again gathered at their fishing grounds to catch and preserve the fish they would consume over the winter months. Breaking into smaller family groups, the people would then move into winter camps where they would engage in trapping and await the yearly cycle of seasonal migration to begin anew. The arrival of the French into the lands of the people was welcomed as pelts could be exchanged for European trade goods that made life easier. Iron axes, copper kettles, cloth, and even fish hooks proved beneficial as the Mississaugas no longer had to craft comparable objects solely from the resources of the land. Unfortunately, participation in the trans-Atlantic fur trade meant the Mississaugas would be caught up in the conflicts of the 17th century known as the Beaver Wars.

The Beaver Wars were a period of intermittent warfare that engulfed much of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes Regions, and saw the occupancy of Southwestern Ontario change hands three times. The Haudenosaunee from south of Lake Ontario,

in their efforts to monopolize the fur trade with the Europeans, invaded Southwestern Ontario dispersing the Neutrals, Petun and the Wendat Nations, and making the region their beaver hunting grounds. By the end of the 17th century, the combined efforts of Algonquian nations, including the Mississaugas, and French forces succeeded in driving the Haudenosaunee back into their homelands south of Lake Ontario. A treaty, brokered by the French in 1701, restored peace in the region and found the Anishinaabe in control of Southwestern Ontario. Mississaugas of the Credit ancestors, who had driven the Haudenosaunee from the head of Lake Ontario, now occupied approximately four million acres of lands, water, and resources in Southern Ontario.

The territory of the Mississaugas extended from the Rouge River Valley westward across to the headwaters of the Thames River, down to Long Point on Lake Erie and then followed along the shoreline of Lake Erie, the Niagara River, and Lake Ontario until arriving at the Rouge River Valley. One creek in particular, the Missinnihe, was a favourite of the people who used it and the surrounding area for hunting, fishing, gathering, healing and spiritual purposes. A trading post established in the vicinity by the French circa 1720, enabled MCFN ancestors to trade the pelts they had gathered over the winter for European trade goods. The Missinnihe was later named the Credit River due to the traders' practice of extending credit to MCFN ancestors and then being repaid the following spring with the winter's catch of furs. The people became known to the Europeans as the Mississaugas of the Credit.

The outbreak of the American Revolution (1775-1783) and its aftermath placed pressure on the British Crown to acquire lands for the settlement of Loyalists. Recognizing that Mississaugas of the Credit ancestors had lands desirable for that purpose, the Crown actively pursued the acquisition of their territory. Between 1781 and 1820, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation ancestors negotiated eight treaties with the British Crown that saw their territory of approximately 4 Million acres reduced to 200 acres on the Credit River. These pre-confederation treaties include:

- The Mississauga Treaty at Niagara, No. 381 (1781)
- The Between the Lakes Treaty, No. 3 (1792)
- The Brant Tract Treaty, No. 8 (1797)
- The Toronto Purchase, No. 13 (1805)
- The Head of the Lake Treaty, No. 14 (1806)
- The Ajetance Treaty, No. 19 (1818)
- Treaty 22 (1820)
- Treaty 23 (1820)

Entering into the early treaties, neither the Crown nor the Mississaugas fully understood what the agreements meant to the other. For the British, treaty making meant that they were outright purchasing the land- they were the sole proprietors and they could use the entirety of the land as they saw fit. The Mississaugas entered the early treaties with the understanding they would be sharing the lands with the settlers- the settlers would establish their farms and villages while the Mississaugas would carry out their hunting, fishing and gathering activities as they had always done. To their dismay, the Mississauga belatedly realized that the settlers were not sharing the land but regarded it as their own. Endeavoring to move about their lands as they had always done, the Mississaugas found their paths blocked by fences, the fish and game depleted, the forests cleared, and themselves driven away from their camping spots by angry farmers. Strangers in their own lands, the Mississaugas' traditional economy collapsed and their population plummeted as the settlers brought diseases for which the Mississaugas had no cure. In 1787, the Credit Mississaugas had over five hundred members; in 1798, there were approximately three hundred members; in 1811, there were two hundred and eight members; and in 1820, there existed slightly less than two hundred members. It seemed to appear that the Mississaugas of the Credit would inevitably disappear as a first nation.

Averting extinction was accomplished by transitioning from their traditional ways to an agrarian lifestyle. Converting to Methodism during the mid-1820s, the Mississaugas established a Christian mission village at the Credit River in 1826. During their time at the village, the Mississaugas were able to build successful farms and a village that included a school, hospital, chapel, mechanics' shops, and forty settler style homes. Learning about business as well, the Mississaugas were the major shareholders of the Credit River Harbour Company and the owners of their own schooner. Despite their successful adoption of a new world and life view, continued encroachment by settlers, diminishing resources, and the inability to gain title to their lands, eventually caused the Mississaugas to relocate their settlement.

Leaving their mission village in 1847, the Mississaugas of the Credit moved to their present location on 6000 acres of land in Brant and Haldimand Counties. Today the Mississaugas of the Credit population has a population of 2600 with two-thirds of the membership living off reserve.

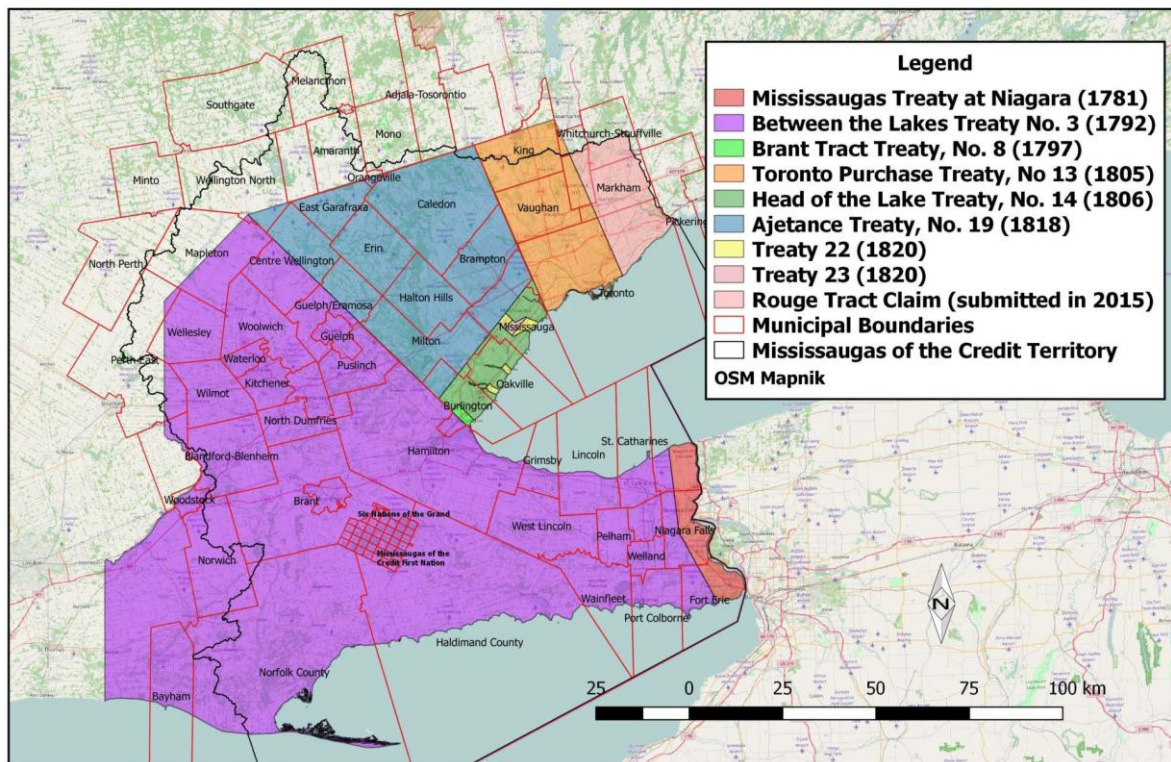
Between the Lakes Treaty, NO.3

County of Brant is located within the Between the Lakes Treaty, No.3. This Treaty was initiated by the British to facilitate the resettlement of Crown Loyalists after the American Revolutionary War. Recognizing that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 required the land to be purchased from its owners, Col. John Butler was sent to negotiate a Treaty with the Mississaugas.

On May 22, 1784, the Mississaugas of the Credit ceded to the Crown approximately 3 million acres of land between Lakes Huron, Ontario, and Erie. The boundaries of this agreement were redefined in 1792.

In addition to County of Brant, notable communities within Treaty 3 include Hamilton, Waterloo, Guelph, Cambridge, Haldimand, Norfolk, St. Catherines and Brantford.

The present Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Reserve is located on the Between the Lakes Purchase lands.



Municipal Boundaries Related to the Between the Lakes Treaty, No. 3 (1792)