ESQUIMALT NATION

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Report Prepared for:

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A Message from Chief Robert Thomas

My name is Chief Robert Thomas, and I am the elected Chief Councillor of Esquimalt Nation.

It is with great pride that I present the 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan.

We came together as a Council and as a Nation to update this important document, which represents our commitment to improving our community’s quality of life. It addresses the most important issues that we face as a close-knit community: housing, employment, education, economic development, and preserving our language and cultural traditions. We heard our members speak about these topics, and they spoke loudly. I want to thank everyone who participated in sharing their Vision for Esquimalt Nation.

As we plan for the future, we also appreciate and acknowledge the sacrifices made by our parents, grandparents, and past generations to get us to where we are today. For thousands of years, our ancestors have lived in balance with the land, the seasons, and our neighbours. They endured hardship and difficulty so their children could have a better quality of life. Similarly, the actions we take today will not just better our own lives; they will improve the lives of our children and future generations.

This Comprehensive Community Plan is an important step in that direction. I invite you to explore this document and to engage with the initiatives that result from it. Together, we will shape the community and carry forward the future of Esquimalt Nation.

háy sxʷ qə
The 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) has been built from the foundation of previous work that created the 2013 Community Plan. Many individuals were involved in laying the foundation while others have since collaborated to co-create the newest 2020 version.

The 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) could not have been completed without:

Chief Rob Thomas  
Councillor Barbara Lecoy  
Councillor Millie Modeste  
Katie Hooper (Executive Director)  
Trisha Hood (Health Director)  
Rose Lecoy (Housing Coordinator)  
Kim Bryce (Tax Administrator and Financial Support)  
Maddy Coxford (Director of Operations/Marine Liaison)  
Matthew Coussens (Director of Lands and Infrastructure)  
Kalie Dyer (Education Director)  
Tim Power (Retired Employment Counsellor)

Furthermore, the 2020 CCP update could not have been completed without the valuable input from Esquimalt Nation members who participated in the community survey as well as attended the open house, both of which occurred in early March 2020. These active members helped to set the priorities of the Nation moving forward as well as highlight the key initiatives within this CCP.

We would also like to thank Urban Systems Ltd. for support on the process.

Thank you, háy sxw' qə
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What is a CCP?

The Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) is a document that outlines the long-term vision of Esquimalt Nation, which is created through community engagement. It includes the objectives, goals and a plan of action towards fulfilling the vision of the community.
PURPOSE

The purpose of the Plan and the planning process is multi-fold. However, there are four key considerations:

1. **To Define the Nation’s Directions**
   
The Nation has opportunities to pursue new directions in terms of social services and economic development. We are defining our relationship with other governments (local, provincial and federal) as we take our rightful place at the table. Current opportunities can change the direction of the Nation toward a more self-reliant community made up of self-reliant members.

2. **Guide Decision-Making**
   
The Nation is in transition towards becoming a more resilient, sustainable and self-determined community. Major decisions regarding governance, land use, economic and social development are imminent. Further strategies for housing the growing population must be developed to provide the opportunity for Nation members to live on reserve, if they so desire. These, and other decisions, require a framework to guide the decision-making process.

3. **To Inform and Involve the Nation**
   
Members need to take an active role in defining the future of the Nation. The Plan, designed by the Nation for the Nation, allows community members to influence the direction the Nation will take in the future. It also helps Members understand what opportunities and constraints they will face as the community moves forward.

4. **Build Capacity**
   
The Nation will continue to build capacity within the community and administration in order to take advantage of current opportunities, and create new ones. The Plan can start this capacity-building process by involving Members in the development of the Plan, and in special projects that support the Plan.
REVIEW PROCESS

Esquimalt Nation’s CCP accompanies and supports other plans, such as the Land Use Plan, as the central vision of the community moving forward. The Nation anticipates that the CCP will remain a living document that will evolve over time, in response to changing circumstances. However, to be effective, the CCP must provide a level of certainty for a given period of time to engender confidence in those who rely on it as a framework for decision-making, including the community at large.

Discussions with Chief, Council, staff and community members have focused on finding the right balance between flexibility and stability. To achieve that balance, a review process with three levels has been developed:

1. **Internal Audit**
   It is recommended that a program and initiative review of the CCP occurs annually to ensure programs and initiatives are meeting their intentions. This review will also identify areas where the CCP may need to be refined. The internal audit will be conducted by the Nation’s administrator, staff and consultants, and be reported to Chief and Council.

2. **General Review**
   This level consists of a review of the policies within the CCP, and their effectiveness in meeting the goals and objectives within each theme area. It is recommended that this occur every three to five years. The general review will be conducted with Chief and Council, staff and consultants, and be reported out to the Heads of the Families, and the community at large.

3. **CCP Update**
   These will involve general reviews of the initiatives each year, and detailed reviews of the goals, objectives, and policies within each theme area to determine if they remain relevant, and generally supported by Members. This detailed review would include any major revisions to the Nation profile, and the generalized land use plan. This process should involve a public consultation and communication programme, and is recommended to occur every five to ten years.
2013 COMMUNITY PLAN

In the summer of 2009, Chief and Council of Esquimalt Nation made the decision to move forward on the development of the Esquimalt Nation Community Plan.

The timing of this decision was prompted, in part, by the ongoing remediation of existing commercially designated lands, and the pending designation of additional lands for commercial development. It was also felt that the process of developing a Community Plan would provide a unique opportunity to bring forward the heritage, the culture, and traditional values into decision-making for the future.

The Community Plan can have meaning and relevance for the Community when it is rooted in the values, Sacred Trust and Natural Laws of Esquimalt Nation. Therefore, the intention was to provide an explicit framework for decision-making going into the future decision-making, rooted in the cultural heritage of the Nation.

The process that led up to the Community Plan included collecting background information, preparing a community profile, defining key cultural values, developing a vision of the future, identifying goals, objectives and programme initiatives as well as developing both a strategic land use plan and an implementation plan. This work led to Esquimalt Nation’s first Community Plan with input from the acknowledged community members and stakeholders.

The Community Plan is anticipated to evolve over time as it adapts to changing circumstance while its core remains rooted in the community values, Sacred Trust and Natural Laws.

2020 CCP PROCESS

For the 2020 update, Esquimalt Nation utilized a community survey, open house and discussions with internal staff.

The Community Survey was conducted as part of the CCP update process to better understand what Esquimalt Nation members see as challenges, opportunities and priorities moving forward. The community survey was open during the first two weeks of March 2020. Members provided answers relating to the following six topic areas:
An open house was hosted in the Programs Building on February 18th before the Annual General Meeting. The open house had large panels for each of the six topic areas and described each department's current services, recent successes, challenges and gaps, areas for improvements and priorities over the next five-years for each topic. Community members were asked to provide comments on their top 3 priorities moving forward for each topic.

A whiteboard was also placed in the administration office through February and half of March. Members were encouraged to leave comments on sticky notes with comments related to housing, education and employment and health and wellness.

Finally, department staff members within Esquimalt Nation were asked to provide feedback on the following questions. This information was taken and incorporated in the development of the 2020 CCP.

- What programs have their department delivered over the last two years;
- How many members have been or are currently being served through these programs;
- What programs and services are required and what gaps exist;
- What were their successes and where are the barriers; and
- What their departments need are over the next five years.

All these engagements noted above gathered invaluable feedback that was then incorporated to identify the path forward, which is expanded on in ‘Where Are We Going?’. 
PLAN STRUCTURE

Who are we?
Where are we?
Where are we going?
COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

The Esquimalt Nation is a small urban nation located within the traditional territories now contained in the Capital Regional District (CRD), and its Members are descendants of the Lekwungen People. Unlike larger, non-urban nations, with extensive land bases and abundant natural resources, the Esquimalt Nation has very limited land, water and resources, with a reserve area of approximately 19 ha (47 acres), which includes the newly transfer ATR lands. In addition to the ATR lands, Esquimalt Nation may also acquire, through the process of reconciliation, 3.23 hectares (8.0 acres) of lands known as Thetis Cove, Lot A.

The on-reserve population is estimated at 171 members on-reserve, while the number of off-reserve members is estimated at 165. Off-reserve members live elsewhere on Vancouver Island, in and around Metro Vancouver, and in Washington State.

The relative size of the Nation’s land, and its small population base pose unique circumstances for the Nation and its members. This CCP intends to provide a framework for addressing these circumstances and challenges moving forward.
THE SACRED TRUST

It has been determined that for this CCP to be meaningful and relevant, it must be rooted in the Teachings and Natural Laws, which flow from the Sacred Trust held by the members of the Esquimalt Nation.

Historically, the Sacred Trust has been transmitted through oral teachings. These Teachings are usually contained in the stories of the Nation, and they articulate a set of Natural Laws. It is the Sacred Trust which is communicated through the Teachings, and the Natural Laws communicated this way that inform the community’s Vision.

The Sacred Trust determines the relationships between the land, water and resources, the Community, and the Spiritual Path (culture and spirituality). The illustration below demonstrates the inter-relationship between these main components of the Sacred Trust and how they inform the Vision, and in turn the CCP.

The following page breaks down the three components of the Sacred Trust, and describes the essence or each.
**THE PATH (CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY)**  “The creator put each of us here for a purpose”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Law</th>
<th>The Creator put us here for a purpose</th>
<th>There is continuity of life</th>
<th>Tradition is important to the present and the future</th>
<th>The Elders have wisdom</th>
<th>Life is to be enjoyed</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Discover your purpose</td>
<td>Remember your ancestors and those that will follow</td>
<td>Honour the traditions</td>
<td>Listen to the wisdom of experience</td>
<td>Make room for humour in your life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Provide guidance</td>
<td>Consider both the past and the future</td>
<td>Hold the traditions and ceremonies for all</td>
<td>Make opportunities for the wise to speak</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for the celebration of life</td>
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**LAND, WATER & RESOURCES**  “Take Care of the Land, Water and Resources, and they will take care of you.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Law</th>
<th>Take care of the land, water &amp; resources</th>
<th>Share with others</th>
<th>Respect all that you take</th>
<th>Nature is part of life</th>
<th>The land is part of our identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Take only what you need</td>
<td>Share what you cannot eat</td>
<td>Give thanks for what you have</td>
<td>Bring nature into your life</td>
<td>Remember the land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Ensure no one over harvests</td>
<td>Preserve so there is enough</td>
<td>Create opportunities to be thankful</td>
<td>Emphasize the importance of being a caretaker</td>
<td>Maintain the relationship to the land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMUNITY, FAMILY & PEOPLE**  “The Community Comes First”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Law</th>
<th>The community comes first</th>
<th>The family is important</th>
<th>Everyone works as one</th>
<th>Emphasize good relations</th>
<th>Respect your Elders</th>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Help others before yourself</td>
<td>Respect your family members</td>
<td>Work cooperatively</td>
<td>Know who you are related to</td>
<td>Listen carefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Ensure the community is treated equally</td>
<td>Reinforce family relationships</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for cooperation</td>
<td>Be inclusive</td>
<td>Give voice to the Elders</td>
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COMMUNITY VISION

The following vision statement was developed in consultation with the Chief, Council, Staff and the Community at large through a series of workshops and Open Houses in 2013. This statement was reviewed again in 2020, and re-endorsed by the community:

The Esquimalt Nation seeks to be a community that is strongly rooted in its unique spiritual and cultural heritage. That heritage is based on the Sacred Trust and the Natural Laws that are derived from that Trust. This Trust takes into consideration the seven generations before, and the seven generations after.

The Community continues to work towards a future that is socially, economically, and physically sustainable in honour of the past, and in stewardship for the future generations. The Community will strive for physical, economic, and spiritual health in balance for the benefit of all members of the Nation, equally and equitably.
It should be appreciated and understood that the material contained in this CCP is not a definitive documentation of the Sacred Trust. It is merely an abbreviated summary, sufficient to inform the development of the CCP.

These Laws as played out in the Seasons of Life – Adult, New Dancer, Orphan and Widow/Widower – will be reflected in the Plan as goals, objectives, and programme initiatives, as well as the Land Use Plans. These Natural Laws lie at the core of the CCP.
TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES

Members of the Esquimalt Nation are part of the Lekwungen peoples, belonging to the Coast Salish language group. Traditional territories were centered in, and around, what is now the City of Victoria, and its environs. Known to have hunted, fished, and gathered across the southern portions of Vancouver Island, and the lower Gulf and San Juan islands, these peoples also travelled to the coastal areas of the Lower Mainland and northwestern Washington State. Oral histories, legends, and traditional place names exist that speak to Esquimalt Nation’s use of these traditional territories.