



## COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: June 27, 2023  
Contact: Michelle Bryant-Gravelle  
Contact No.: 604.871.6956  
RTS No.: 15851  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: July 11, 2023  
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: Senior Director of Indigenous Relations  
SUBJECT: Relationship Protocol Agreement - Squamish Nation and City of Vancouver

### Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve the WA IYÍM TA SKW̱X̱WÚ7MESH (Squamish Strong) Protocol attached as Appendix A to this Report and authorize the Mayor to sign on behalf of the City.
- B. THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by the adoption by Council of Recommendation A, nor will any legal rights or obligations be created by the execution and delivery by the Mayor of the WA IYÍM TA SKW̱X̱WÚ7MESH (Squamish Strong) Protocol.

### Purpose and Executive Summary

The report provides the rationale for the City signing a relationship protocol with the Squamish Nation as it aligns with the [City's UNDRIP Strategy](#) Foundational Call to Action #3 (p 11). This will be one of three relationship protocols that the City intends to engage in. The others will be with Musqueam Indian Band and Tsleil-Waututh Nation and such relationship protocols will be brought forward to Council at future dates.

### Council Authority/Previous Decisions

The City of Vancouver voted unanimously on June 24, 2014 to [acknowledge that the City is on the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples.](#)

On July 8, 2014 the City adopted the [Reconciliation Framework.](#)

In March 2021 the City unanimously adopted a [motion to create the UNDRIP Task Force.](#)

On October 22, 2022 the City voted to endorse the City's [UNDRIP Strategy](#).

### **City Manager's Comments**

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

### **Context and Background**

The City staff are already engaged in co-developing a 5 year Action Plan based on the previously endorsed CoV UNDRIP Strategy with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh. Foundational Call to Action #3 in the City's UNDRIP Strategy is to "Develop stronger intergovernmental coordination and communication processes and explore opportunities to develop, renew, expand, or strengthen relationship protocol agreements, MOU/A's and protocol agreements with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations which involve clarification of jurisdiction." (p.11)

The WA IYÍM TA SĶWĶWÚ7MESH (translated in English this means Squamish Strong) Protocol (the "Relationship Protocol") with Squamish Nation is in line with this Foundational Call to Action in the City's UNDRIP Strategy.

The City is also engaged in developing relationship protocols with Musqueam Indian Band and Tsleil-Waututh Nation, which will be brought forth at a future Council date.

Squamish Nation will be celebrating their 100th Year since Amalgamation throughout the month of July 2023, and expressed an interest in signing a relationship protocol with the City during these celebrations. This is not an indication of City preference or priority of Squamish Nation over Musqueam Indian Band or Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Squamish Nation has indicated that they are also engaged in relationship protocols with the City of North Vancouver, the District of Squamish, the Provincial Government as well as the Federal Government.

This Relationship Protocol will provide a framework for the long-term sustainability and well-being of the relationship between the City and Squamish Nation.

### **Discussion**

TÚxwumixw in their language, is a unity of the Squamish Peoples with an uplifting culture, rich history, and exciting future. The Squamish Nation, as a government, has existed since 1923. Prior to 1923, the Squamish People were socially, economically, and politically organized into several physical communities called an úxwumixw ("village; people") in the territory of the Squamish People.

The territory of the Squamish People includes the Burrard Inlet, English Bay, False Creek, and Howe Sound watersheds. While historically the Squamish People had a tradition of dual residencies between the Howe Sound Watershed and the English Bay or Burrard Inlet watershed, the majority of the Squamish people live on the North Shore of Vancouver in three communities in West Vancouver and North Vancouver and approximately 10 percent of the Squamish population living in communities along the Squamish River in Squamish, British

Columbia.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (“UNDRIP”) was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 13 September 2007, which provides the framework for reconciliation, healing, and the enjoyment of rights by Indigenous Peoples; establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity, well-being and rights of the world’s Indigenous Peoples; addresses both individual and collective rights; cultural rights and identity; rights to education, health, employment, language, and others; outlaws discrimination against Indigenous Peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice call on all levels of government to implement and comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the framework for reconciliation, to uphold and protect Indigenous Peoples’ rights and their enjoyment of those rights. As recognized in Section 35 (1) of the 1982 Canadian constitution, Indigenous Peoples in Canada include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations are the original stewards, the rights and title holders of their respective unceded territories, which include the lands on which Vancouver now resides. The three Nations have inherent, constitutional and human rights of self-determination and self-government. Until recently, these rights have been largely ignored by the colonial governments which have asserted jurisdiction. As a City of Reconciliation that acknowledges it is on unceded Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh territories, Vancouver has committed to the implementation of UNDRIP at the municipal level, in alignment with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (The Declaration Act) legislation passed by the BC government and federal government legislation.

The Relationship Protocol includes: the City’s recognition of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh title, rights and inherent jurisdiction within its territory; reference to the City’s governance authorities and responsibilities as set out in the *Vancouver Charter*; the objective of providing guidance on how Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and the City will engage in advancing reconciliation; the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh guiding principles; and the commitment to develop an MOU based on these principles that will establish a formal process that leads to substantive agreements which support the full enjoyment of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh title, rights and jurisdiction within its territory.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications.

### **Legal Implications**

In furtherance of establishing a framework for the long-term sustainability and well-being of the relationship between the City and Squamish Nation, the Relationship Protocol states that the City “will develop a memorandum of understanding (‘MOU’) that will establish a formal process that leads to substantive agreements which support the full enjoyment of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh title, rights and jurisdiction within its territory”, all on the basis that the Relationship Protocol is not intended to create any legal rights or obligations.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**CoV / Squamish Nation Relationship Protocol**

**WA IYÍM TA SK̓W̓X̓WÚ7MESH PROTOCOL**

**BETWEEN**

**CITY OF VANCOUVER**

(the “City”)

**AND**

**SK̓W̓X̓WÚ7MESH ÚXWUMIXW,**

Also known as the Squamish Nation, on behalf of itself and its members as represented by its  
Council

(the “Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh”)

(Collectively referred to as the “Parties” and individual as a “Party”)

**WHEREAS:**

- A. Sk̓w̓x̓wú7meshulh Territory is the temíxw (lands), x̓echx̓áchu7 (lakes), and swelwá7lt (streams), sh'k̓weñ (ocean), and staḵw (freshwater) within the territory as defined by where the Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh exercised its rights, including rights to ownership, of areas that were governed according to systems of Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh rules, customs, ways, or laws.
- B. Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh title and rights exist in Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh territory, and the Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh have a unique relationship to and connection with the land and resources throughout Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Territory, which are important to the:
  - a. the full enjoyment of Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh title and rights;
  - b. well-being of Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh family, community, culture, economy and health; and,
  - c. maintenance of Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh’s governance, laws and economy;
- C. The mission of the Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh is to protect the Amalgamation and enhance the Úxwumixw (Nation) values and traditions through respect, equality, and harmony for all.

- D. The City is a municipality with governance authorities and responsibilities as set out in the Vancouver Charter.
- E. As a local government, the City recognizes its role in fostering government-to-government relationships with Indigenous communities that are built on mutual recognition, honesty, and respect.
- F. The City recognizes Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh title, rights, and inherent jurisdiction within its territory and will work with the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh to develop a framework for reconciliation that will act as a bridging step to support the full enjoyment of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh title, rights, and inherent jurisdiction and the reconciliation of those within the City's jurisdiction.
- G. The City and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh are committed to building on their existing government-to-government relationship based on respect and recognition to advance reconciliation consistent with the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Provincial *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* and Action Plan. On October 25, 2022, Vancouver City Council endorsed the Task Force entitled "City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy: Report of the UNDRIP Task Force" and accepted the Calls to Action in the Task Force Report as a pathway forward to building the City's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, including Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh.
- H. The Parties intend to keep building on their relationship through this Protocol on a path to reconciliation.

### **Objective of Protocol**

The objective of this Protocol is to provide guidance on how the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and the City will engage in advancing reconciliation.

### **Principles to Guide Reconciliation Process**

Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh lives our commitment to uphold, support, and affirm our rights & responsibilities. Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh will only engage external entities that recognize and affirm our inherent rights and title and that make space for our priorities.

The process to seek Wa l̓ým ta Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh agreements will be governed by the following principles:

**Tkwáya7n iy Nexwne'ítm** - "Listen & Engage"

**Wa nexwniwnen chet ta nexwni'w t'l'a Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh** - "Follow the ways of the Squamish"

**Texwlá'm Ns7eyx** - "Genuinely Care"

**Chet wa telnexw tina t'l'a snewiyelh t'l'a Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh** - "Learn the advice of the Squamish"

**Na wa nelhnilhtway ta uxwumixw** - "The people go through it together"

**We7us chet ta Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh si'yá'mín** - "Protect the rights and title of the Squamish"

The parties are committed to building shared understanding of these principles and exploring their application in developing and implementing Wa l̓ým ta Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh agreements.

### **Generational Goals**

The Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh will engage with the City in a Wa l̓ým ta Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh process to determine how the City can support the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh in achieving and implementing its generational goals for its:

- People
- Government
- Land and Waters
- External Relations

## MOU

Based on the commitments and principles under this Protocol, the parties will develop a memorandum of understanding (“MOU”) that will:

- establish a formal process that leads to substantive agreements which support the full enjoyment of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh title, rights and jurisdiction within its territory, and
- identify specific commitments between the Parties regarding meeting the strategic priorities of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh and
- include specific measurable targets that the City will commit to, and accountability measures related to those commitments.

This Protocol is not intended to create any legal rights or obligations.

THIS PROTOCOL has been executed on the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Amalgamation of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw on this \_\_\_\_ day of July 2023.

SK̓WX̓WÚ7MESH

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Khelsilem, Council Chairperson

CITY OF VANCOUVER

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Ken Sim, Mayor