



Innovation



TSAWWASSEN FIRST NATION





Tsawwassen is a Hun'qum'l'num word that means "Land Facing the Sea." We have a long and proud Coast Salish history. For thousands of years we used and occupied a large territory that was abundant in fish, shellfish and wildlife resources.



Foreword

We are embarking on a new chapter for our community – one of hope, renewal and prosperity.

It is an extraordinary time for the people of the Tsawwassen First Nation. We are facing significant changes – which is not new to us – but the fact that we are now finally in control of these changes is what is most exciting.

Having recently reached the first treaty through the B.C. treaty process I believe in my heart of hearts that this treaty is the foundation for success, ultimately, through self-governance, we will be able, for once and for all, to extricate ourselves from the Indian Act – to get this oppressive legislation off our backs. But we will do so in a way that we can handle, that is based on our needs and, most importantly, our decisions over our own lives and the future of our community.

And now, as we roll up our sleeves to design and re-build our community, we will be looking for business partners to help us develop a long-term, sustainable economy that will ensure we take our rightful place in the economic mainstream of this country.

Chief Kim Baird
Chief Kim Baird

Our population is young and growing fast. 40% of our members are under the age of 18.





Who We Are

In our language, Hun'qum'Tnum, the word 'Tsawwassen,' is translated into English as "land facing the sea." It also provides an accurate description of our home and treaty lands, located at what is now known as Roberts Bank in Delta, on the southern Strait of Georgia near the Canada-U.S. border.

We have been here since time immemorial. Archeologists say the southwest coast of B.C. has been occupied by human beings for at least 9,000 years.

Our population is young and growing fast. We have 400 members today, and approximately half our membership lives on our 290 hectare reserve. We are resilient, caring, strong, intelligent and determined. We are a friendly people, and are known as being kind and gracious hosts. We are industrious and talented, creative, politically astute and fun to be around!

The elders are the strength of our nation. They are a source of inspiration and guidance for many in our community. They are also the memory of our community – they store our language, culture and traditional heritage.

The primary food resources we have left to maintain our traditional lifestyle are salmon, crab and eulachon. We now harvest these traditional resources in small skiffs, otherwise known as our mosquito fleet. Fish provides for cultural and social processes that are very important to our identity.

Traditionally, food was abundant. A trade and barter system was in place, and specialized services were exchanged. Through our longhouse culture, we had extensive practices and ceremonies that dealt with governance functions. Our longhouse systems also ensured the redistribution of wealth to make certain our people could survive. Experts are still learning how complex these practices were, and still are.

Our land base is deeply connected to our identity. Our traditional territory is bordered on the northeast by the watersheds that feed into Pitt Lake, down Pitt River to Pitt Meadows, where they empty into the Fraser River. It includes Burns Bog and part of New Westminster, following the outflow of the river just south of Sea Island. From Sea Island, it cuts across the Strait to Galiano Island and includes all of Saltspring, Pender and Saturna Islands. From there, our territory continues northeast to include the Point Roberts Peninsula and the watersheds of the Serpentine and Nicomekl rivers.



Our elders are the strength of our nation.



First Urban Treaty



The Tsawwassen First Nation Final Agreement is the first treaty in the history of the B.C. treaty process, and the first urban treaty in British Columbia.

The Tsawwassen treaty means many things to many people. One of the important things the treaty achieves is a new relationship between Tsawwassen, Canada and British Columbia. It achieves true reconciliation – proving that a modern society can correct the mistakes of the past, while providing for differences in values and cultures.

Some of the key goals of obtaining the treaty include economic sustainability, ensuring the health and prosperity of our community, and having the ability to engage productively with the regional economy. The treaty provides the land, resources and authorities to achieve these goals.

The treaty brings both important benefits and significant responsibilities to Tsawwassen First Nation:

Benefits

- Tax sharing agreement for tax revenues generated on TFN Lands
- Rights and title set out and protected in treaty and the Canadian Constitution
- 724 hectares (including current reserve) of TFN Land
- Right of first refusal on 278 other hectares of adjacent land
- Ownership – not management – of small Fraser River and Boundary Bay parcels
- Cash transfer of approximately \$16 million
- Defined fisheries and shellfish allocation, including ceremonial and commercial
- Cash benefit of \$15,000 to each elder (over 60), and \$1,000 to each member
- Mandated servicing arrangement to provide TFN with sufficient water supply into the future
- 5-year review of the treaty to identify & negotiate critical areas for improvement

Responsibilities

- Phasing out of current Indian status tax exemption
- Law-making authority over lands, social development, culture, education, health and public administration
- Management of lands and resources on Tsawwassen Land
- Legal liabilities and obligations as a government entity – removal of INAC protection and patronage
- Maintenance of eligibility and enrollment list for TFN population
- Compliance with and enforcement of applicable provincial and federal laws
- Planning, policy, evaluation, monitoring functions of TFN-delivered programs and services
- Co-operation with other First Nations to manage shared territories



Our nation's land base totals 724 hectares. Our land is situated on the southern Georgia Strait, 30 kilometres south of Vancouver.





Tsawwassen Treaty & Business Opportunities



The Tsawwassen treaty is very important to our First Nation. It provides us with security over our land base, and a strengthened decision-making and self-governance ability that will allow us to make important decisions about our future. This is an important opportunity, and an equally important strength.

Our foreshore and oceanfront provide a beautiful setting and a healthy, natural environment in which to live, work and prosper. Our community is a peaceful place with a wonderful climate. The port and ferry terminal provide potential for economic growth and make our lands an optimal location for business and industry. Our community is centrally located in a vibrant region, close to major transportation hubs and thoroughways such as the ferry terminal, the Canada-U.S. border and the Vancouver International Airport.

Tsawwassen First Nation will become increasingly engaged in the regional economy. As a self-governing First Nation, we will make planning and development decisions based on the best interests of our community. We will create a stable investment climate that is focused on cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability. Tsawwassen First Nation is creating an economic development corporation to champion development activity. This corporation will generate revenue from innovative ventures and partnerships – revenue that will be put towards improving the quality of life of Tsawwassen First Nation members.

We are building many new relationships, including one with Metro Vancouver. Our membership in Metro Vancouver will allow us to provide our community and our lands with the servicing required to grow and develop over time.



Under treaty, Tsawwassen First Nation has a seat as a full member of Metro Vancouver.



Our population totals 400 members. Half reside on TFN Lands and half reside elsewhere in Canada and the U.S.A.

Moving Forward

Tsawwassen First Nation faces an enormous opportunity and an equally significant challenge. We have a lot of work ahead of us, but Tsawwassen will succeed. We will build partnerships, build our community, and most importantly, build our youth. Tsawwassen youth will be able to grow up, study, work and live in a new and different world. A world defined by optimism and opportunities, of pride in our heritage and the cultural richness that heritage represents.

Tsawwassen will change for the better over the coming years. We will preserve our beautiful home, gorgeous sunsets and treasured sense of community. But we will integrate with the regional economy, and grow to provide our community with the tools we need to succeed today. Even though Tsawwassen will become a busier place, we will ensure that development happens on our terms – on terms that respect the environment, our people and our culture.

We are excited about the next leg of our journey and are now laying a foundation for our future success.





Fish provides for cultural and social processes that are very important to our identity. The urban location of Tsawwassen First Nation leaves fish as one of our few accessible renewable resources. Fishing is of vital importance to our community.



To Learn More:

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