



TE'MEXW
TREATY ASSOCIATION



SONGHEES FN TSL UPDATE

MARCH 2022





MEDIA RELEASE

City Supports Songhees in their Treaty Negotiations

Unceded Ləkʷəŋən territory, Victoria BC – Today, Songhees Nation and the City of Victoria are pleased to celebrate an important next step toward return of Ləkʷəŋən land as part of Treaty negotiations.

In a show of support for the Songhees, City of Victoria has provided a formal letter of support for recognition of Songhees' Treaty Settlement Lands within City boundaries. Although the treaty negotiations with British Columbia and Canada continue, this represents a significant step in the Treaty process and in relations with the First Nation government.

"Today we celebrate and honour Mayor Helps and Council in their efforts to rebuild the relationship with the Songhees Nation," said Chief Ron Sam. "We appreciate their support in our mission to negotiate return of our traditional lands in Ləkʷəŋən territory through Treaty, and for their unwavering commitment to working government-to-government with our leadership over the years. It is a truly historic day, and we look forward to continuing our respectful and valuable relationship to benefit all families who live in Victoria and the surrounding area."

"The City of Victoria acknowledges that it is built on the homelands of the Ləkʷəŋən speaking peoples," said Mayor Helps. "We welcome the opportunity to work towards decolonization and to address the wrongs of the past by supporting the Songhees Nation in their efforts to get some of their land back. We have a strong and deep relationship with Chief Sam and his Council that we value very much. It is this relationship that can lead to meaningful reconciliation between the City and the Songhees Nation to the benefit of their members and our residents."

The Songhees Nation and the City of Victoria are committed to working together to reach an agreement that will see important reliable services provided to the Treaty Settlement Lands, and that will establish transparent processes to the benefit of both the residents of Victoria and the members of the Songhees Nation.

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BACKGROUND

- The City of Victoria is located on the traditional territories of the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Lekwungen) speaking people, including the Songhees Nation;
- Songhees Nation is currently negotiating a land claim agreement under the British Columbia Treaty Process through the [Te'mexw Treaty Association](#);
- Songhees Nation wishes to acquire certain parcels of land located within the City of Victoria as Treaty Settlements Lands as part of its treaty negotiations;
- Treaty Settlement Land is essential to the Songhees Nation's Treaty negotiations;
- In 2017, the City of Victoria committed to and began a journey towards reconciliation with First Nations peoples;
- The City of Victoria is committed to reconciliation and to working with the Songhees Nation on a government-to-government level;
- The City of Victoria wishes to support the Songhees Nation's acquisition of Treaty Settlement Lands in Victoria via the BCTC treaty process;
- Treaty negotiations with Canada and British Columbia are continuing and although the lands in question are in active consideration, they will require an approval process and further consultation before they could be offered as part of the Treaty Settlement to the Songhees;
- The parties seek to work together towards their shared goals in the spirit of reconciliation and in the best interests of their communities;

The Songhees Nation is currently negotiating a modern Treaty as part of the Te'mexw Treaty Association, having signed an Agreement in Principle in 2015. The City of Victoria supports the Songhees Nation in their Treaty aspirations and wishes to work with Songhees in the spirit of mutual respect and collaboration.

THANK YOU



Photo: Songhees Wellness Centre