



T'SOU-KE NATION

# Comprehensive Community Plan

2025 TO 2050



# Contents

<b>4</b>	<b>Message from the Chief</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Message from the Administrator</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Looking Ahead Seven Generations</b>
9	Intention
10	How did we create this plan?
11	Acknowledgements
<b>12</b>	<b>Our Past</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Our Present</b>
16	Vision
17	Mission
18	Values
20	Principles
<b>27</b>	<b>Our Future</b>
27	Goals
28	Objectives
<b>34</b>	<b>Approach: How We Will Succeed</b>
34	Roles
38	Implementation Strategies
<b>39</b>	<b>Ways to Monitor, Evaluate, and Update This Plan</b>
39	Monitoring
39	Evaluating
39	Updating

# Message from the Chief

When I look 25 years into the future, I see a strong and thriving T'Sou-ke community. Our culture, language, and connection to the land and waters continue to guide us.

This Comprehensive Community Plan sets the direction for how we will protect what is sacred and build a healthy, prosperous future for our people. It reflects the vision and values passed down by our ancestors. It also reminds us that the decisions we make today shape the world our children and grandchildren will inherit.

The work in this plan belongs to all of us. Each member of our Nation has a role in bringing it to life and shaping our future with integrity, respect, and purpose. Together, we will strengthen our sovereignty, care for the land and each other, and create opportunities that honour who we are as T'Sou-ke people. In the years to come, new generations will lead with the same teachings and values that guide us now. I hope they will look back and know that we planned with care, acted with respect, and worked together to build a future worthy of our ancestors and the generations yet to come.

*Chief Lawrence Underwood*



# Message from the Administrator

As we look ahead to the next 25 years, this plan represents more than a roadmap—it is a promise to our people. The T'Sou-ke Comprehensive Community Plan reflects the collective voice, vision, and strength of our Nation. It honours our teachings while providing a clear path forward for how we work together as staff, leadership, and community.

This plan will guide how we make decisions, how we allocate our resources, and how we measure our success always grounded in our values and responsibilities as T'Sou-ke people. It builds on the solid foundation of governance, stewardship, and community wellness that has been carefully shaped over many years by those who came before us.

Our administrative team is committed to turning this plan into action. Each department will weave the goals and objectives of the CCP into their work, ensuring that

every initiative connects back to our shared vision. We will continue to report back to the community, celebrate milestones, and adjust as we learn and grow together.

I want to express my gratitude to the Long-Term Planning Taskforce, our staff, and all community members who contributed their voices and ideas to this important work. Your input has shaped a plan that truly belongs to the whole Nation one that reflects who we are and what we strive to become.

Together, we will carry this plan forward with integrity, respect, and care for the generations to come.

*Michelle Thut, Administrator*

# Looking Ahead Seven Generations

T'Sou-ke's Comprehensive Community Plan envisions our Nation and community for the next seven generations, with a focus on what we want to achieve in 25 years (2025-2050).

It also provides a foundation for building a short-term strategic plan showing priorities for the coming three years (2025-2028).



With this  
plan, we  
intend to:

1 **Envision** what will be needed as we grow, and map pathways toward getting those things in place.

2 **Build ownership** of this plan by the whole community, with everyone seeing themselves in it and sharing responsibility for making it successful.

3 Set up those who follow us for **success** in carrying out what we have started.

# How did we create this plan?

We built this Comprehensive Community Plan in ways that reflect best practices and decolonization of planning.



1

A Long-Term Planning Taskforce guided the process, including senior staff and leadership.

2

Our planning consultant mentored a Nation member, learning on the job.

3

Community members of all ages provided input and guidance through a variety of activities, events, and meetings.

4

Taskforce members reached out to community members individually to promote involvement.



Youth and staff drumming at KWL-UCHUN (Spring Salmon Place) Campground at the potholes during a youth engagement activity, March 2025



# Acknowledgements

Elders, youth, and community members of all ages provided the wisdom, feedback, and input to create this plan.

The T'Sou-ke Long Term Planning Taskforce guided the planning journey in 2024-25.

Members were:

- Denise Chewka, Children and Family Manager
- Edward Chutter, Fisheries Stewardship Manager
- Natassia Davies, Communications Coordinator
- Rose Dumont, Health Manager
- Bonnie Hill, Land Governance Manager
- Debra Lazzar, Chief and Council representative
- Sandra Sprinkling, Finance Manager
- Michelle Thut, Administrator
- Chief Lawrence Underwood, Chief and Council alternate representative

Jessica Kisby provided primary staff support, working with our consultant James Pratt.



Staff and Leadership Strategic Planning Session Participants, November 2024

# Our Past

We are the T'Sou-ke people. Our ancestors have lived along the Sooke River, Basin, and Inlet since time immemorial. These lands and waters have always provided for us—our food, our medicines, and our teachings. In return, we cared for them. Our way of life was guided by respect, balance, and our responsibility to care for all living things.

Before contact, our people lived close to the land and water, moving with the seasons and the tides. The salmon, cedar, and shellfish sustained our families and shaped our way of life. As one of our Elders often said, *“When the tide is out, the table is set.”* Our language, stories, and songs carried the teachings that guided how we lived, worked, and supported one another.

When colonization came, everything began to change. Disease and new laws were brought into our territory, and control over our lands and lives was taken from us. In 1850, our ancestors signed the Douglas Treaty, believing it would protect our village sites, fields, and our rights to hunt and fish as we always had. Those promises were not kept. Our territory was reduced far beyond what was agreed, and our people were confined to small areas of land.

The Indian Act and residential schools went even further, separating families, taking children from their homes, and trying to erase our language and ways of life. Many of our Elders carried those teachings quietly, protecting what they could until it was safe to bring them forward again.

Through all of this, our people stayed strong. We honour the Chiefs and Councils who carried the Nation through difficult times, the Elders who protected our stories and language, and the youth who continued to bring hope to the community.

Our past is not only about loss. It is about strength, survival, and love for one another and for this place. Because of those who came before us, we are still here—standing on the same lands our ancestors walked, speaking their words, and carrying their teachings forward.



**“When the tide is out,  
the table is set.”**

*— a T'Sou-ke teaching reminding  
us that the land and water have  
always provided for our people.*



**“ÍY SÇÁĆEL — it is a good day.”**

*We walk forward together, carrying the strength of those who came before us.*

## Our Present

T’Sou-ke Nation stands in a time of renewal. We carry forward the teachings of our ancestors while building a community that honours our values and strengthens our sovereignty. Every decision is guided by integrity, respect, and our responsibility to plan for the next seven generations. We act today with the future of our children and grandchildren in mind.

Through the T’Sou-ke Land Code, we have taken back jurisdiction over our lands and waters. We manage our territory with care and act as true stewards, protecting what has always sustained us. Our governance is grounded in culture and tradition while meeting the needs of a growing and modern Nation. Leadership, Elders, and members work together to guide our community in a good way.

Community and culture remain at the heart of everything we do. Programs, ceremonies, and intergenerational learning continue to strengthen identity and connection. Our Elders guide us, our youth carry the teachings forward, and our families remind us why the work matters. The new Community Complex and Health Centre brings services home, providing culturally grounded care that supports the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness of our members. Housing, employment, family services, and education initiatives continue to grow, creating opportunities for our people to thrive here at home.

T’Sou-ke’s strength also lives in our lands and waters. Through stewardship, the IPCA initiative, and the work of our Guardians, we protect the territory for future generations. These efforts reflect who we are—a people connected to place, guided by teachings, and working together with purpose and pride.

Today, we move forward with clarity and confidence. Our people are resilient. Our connections to one another, to the land, and to the waters remain strong. We are a Nation that honours the past, protects the present, and plans thoughtfully for the generations yet to come.

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*Our vision represents our desired future state, the ultimate situation we are moving toward through the next seven generations.*

## Vision

As a thriving community and sovereign nation, our culture is the foundation of our unique identity. We are dedicated stewards of our lands and waters, champions of strong governance, and advocates for the well-being of our families.

Our vision for the future includes embracing our cultural traditions, access to sustainable housing, traditional foods, quality education, meaningful employment, and vibrant community connections that ensure prosperity for generations to come.

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*Our mission represents who we are, as a community and a Nation.*

## Mission

We, the T'Sou-ke First Nation, are Northern Straits Salish people who have protected our lands, waters, and resources through traditional laws and values since time immemorial.

We uphold the responsibility of our ancestors to engage, mentor, maintain connections, and practice culture.

We provide strong leadership, meaningful partnerships, and vital community services that embody our values, ensuring prosperity and wellbeing.

## Values

We have seven core values reflecting what we hold to be important and what we believe in:



planning  
for seven  
generations



family and  
community  
connection



holistic  
health



respectful  
stewardship



culture and  
language



mentorship,  
education,  
and learning



integrity  
and respect

# Principles

We aim to live by each of these values through our guiding principles:

## Planning for seven generations



- We know who we are and where we come from; we introduce ourselves, stating our lineage.
- We consider our last seven generations as we plan for our next seven.
- We guide our actions based on what will be sustainable for the next hundred years and beyond.
- We ensure that our rights, resources, and opportunities are preserved for future generations.

## Holistic health



- We practice compassion—for ourselves and others.
- We listen, learn, and tailor our approach to meet people where they are at.
- We take care of each other, sharing physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and cultural support.
- We prioritize support and services for our elders and youth to thrive in community.

## Respectful stewardship



- NAUT'SA MAWT (one heart, one mind)—we understand that everything is interconnected.
- We serve as guardians of the lands and waters in our Territory.
- We demonstrate sound environmental practices.
- We work to revitalize and restore healthy T'Sou-ke ecosystems.
- We take only what we need, acknowledge and give thanks.
- *"When the tide is out the table is set."* – T'Sou-ke Elders

## Culture and language



- We practice traditional teachings in fishing, hunting, growing, gathering, and harvesting.
- We honour teachings and stories from elders and knowledge keepers.
- We weave our culture into everything we do.
- We learn and practice our language, art, drumming, dance, and protocols.
- We balance modern and traditional ways, living in two worlds.

## Mentorship, education, and learning



- We learn together, "hands-on".
- We encourage lifelong learning.
- We support our members through education, mentorship, and training.
- We bring our experiences and learning from outside back to our community.
- We engage in intercultural knowledge sharing (ex: Tribal Journeys).

**Family and  
community  
connection**



- We enjoy laughing together and sharing meals together.
- We create welcoming spaces and opportunities for connection.
- We create healing and safe spaces for families.
- We encourage story sharing and elders' interaction with youth.

**Integrity and  
respect**



- We communicate clearly.
- We are accountable.
- We treat all people with respect and kindness.





# Our Future

## Goals

Toward our mission, we have the following seven goals—our broad areas of intended achievement:

- 1 Steward our lands and waters to maximize environmental health.
- 2 Revitalize, learn, practice, and share our culture and language.
- 3 Build community wealth and develop economic prosperity for our members.
- 4 Develop and maintain sustainable infrastructure and housing.
- 5 Provide relevant, effective, and equitable programs and services for our members.
- 6 Communicate and engage in ways that work well for all members.
- 7 Provide accountable leadership.

This 25-year community plan is everyone's plan. We all have roles and responsibilities in implementing it.

# Objectives

For each goal, we have a set of objectives—specific areas of intended achievement.

## GOAL 1

**Steward our lands and waters to maximize environmental health.**



1. Reclaim lands, and stewardship of lands, through collaboration and relationship building
2. Encourage sustainable forest management and environmental practices.
3. Protect and enhance our marine environment.
4. Achieve long-term food sovereignty and food security.

## GOAL 2

**Revitalize, learn, practice and share our culture and language.**



1. Explore what language means in our community and what our language was.
2. Develop a language nest program—an immersive language learning space.
3. Build community ownership and accountability for cultural revitalization.
4. Empower and build capacity for community revitalization of the culture and values.
5. Preserve and protect our history.

**Build community wealth and develop economic prosperity for our members.**

**GOAL 3**



1. Develop sustainable, long-term career advancements opportunities.
2. Build a circular economy, keeping what we consume and produce within the community.
3. Invest in and assist our members in entrepreneurship ventures and business development.
4. Seek and develop economic opportunities that align with our vision and values.
5. Create financial independence.

**Develop and maintain sustainable infrastructure and housing.**

**GOAL 4**



1. Provide sufficient infrastructure for housing and community spaces.<sup>1</sup>
2. Provide safe community spaces.
3. Develop and operate sustainable housing for all stages of life.

**Provide relevant, effective, equitable programs and services for our members.**

**GOAL 5**



1. Provide elders, children, youth, and family programming.
2. Provide health programming.
3. Provide marine, lands, and environmental programming.
4. Provide education, mentorship, and training.
5. Provide social and cultural programming.
6. Provide financial literacy programming.

<sup>1</sup> Provide for those already here, considering the needs of members wanting to come home.

**Communicate and engage in ways that work well for all members.**

**GOAL 6**



1. Develop and implement a communication and engagement plan.
2. Build trust to breakdown barriers to communication and engagement.
3. Build and develop a sense of community that encourages members to participate.

**Provide accountable leadership.**

**GOAL 7**



1. Provide good governance through Chief and Council.
2. Maintain administrative and financial policies and procedures to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all.
3. Uplift positive, healthy, and professional office culture.
4. Create and uphold elder and youth councils.



# Approach: How We Will Succeed

This 25-year community plan is everyone's plan. We all have roles and responsibilities in implementing it.

## Roles

### All of us commit to:

- Practice respectful communication in keeping with our values and principles.
- Respect each other as individuals.
- Ensure we are educating young people and raising good elders.

The following are some examples of what community members, Chief & Council, the Administrator, and the staff team will do.

### Community members shall:

- Contribute energy based on individual passions and strengths.
- Participate in activities and events that bring the vision alive.
- Encourage and help each other to attend and participate.
- Commit to be informed, provide input, and share with family.
- Honour the work that has been done.
- Fulfill our individual responsibilities in stewardship and in supporting community.

### Community staff, including all departments, shall:

- Develop and implement work plans based on this plan.
- Share work plans across all departments to support linkages.
- Consistently reference this plan in reports.
- Use this plan as a guide for ongoing work and development of proposals for new initiatives and funding.
- Ensure that briefing notes to Chief and Council link with this plan and/or our current strategic plan.
- Engage community members and facilitate feedback and input.

## Chief and Council shall:

- Champion the plan.
- Set organizational priorities for implementation of the plan, reflecting community priorities.
- Approve, implement, and report on the plan.
- Ensure joint reporting to community on how the strategic plan is being implemented.
- Liaise with and lobby other organizations and governments.

## The Administrator shall:

- Ensure timely review and updating of this plan.
- Ensure development and implementation of strategic plans/ work plans based on this comprehensive community plan.
- Ensure that briefing notes to Council link with this plan and/or our current strategic plan.
- Ensure that staff are communicating and collaborating to carry out our plans.
- Ensure that strategic activities for each goal are developed and coordinated with each other.
- Support community staff who are organizing and collaborating in activities that will achieve the goals and objectives.
- Ensure the administration reports out to community on how the strategic plan is being implemented.
- Encourage a strong connection between all departmental plans and the strategic plan—to ensure it is all one plan.



## Implementation Strategies

The Administrator and senior staff shall take responsibility for the following implementation strategies:

- Assess ability of our organizational structure to deliver on our strategic priorities, with a focus on cross-departmental collaboration and support for senior staff in making the necessary changes.
- Embrace innovation in a thoughtful, deliberate, analytical way—based on understanding of the challenges rather than in reaction.
- Create systems that will help us learn and continue to innovate in meaningful ways.
- Ensure processes and structures are in place so that work plans reflect what community and Chief and Council have identified.
- Gather all departments around specific goals as needed.
- Host open house events, including all ages.
- Ensure staff capacity, allowing for professional development and budget to implement strategic plan priorities.

# Ways to Monitor, Evaluate, and Update This Plan

This comprehensive community plan is a living document.

To nourish and sustain it, we will pay attention to how we are implementing it (monitoring), assess how well we are moving toward our community vision (evaluating), and revise the plan based on what we learn and accomplish (updating).

## Monitoring

We will document activities and achievements that contribute to the plan and its implementation on an ongoing basis. Once a year, we will celebrate what we have accomplished together. Recognition of steps toward the vision, both small and large, will help energize us to keep moving forward. We will report on progress annually, using this plan as a guide for communicating about what has been done and how.

## Evaluating

We will assess the process and results of plan implementation every 3–4 years, or as needed. The Administrator will ensure that the evaluation of progress toward implementing this plan occurs in a timely and inclusive way, with meaningful engagement of community members.

## Updating

We will review our vision, values, principles, goals, and objectives following evaluation of progress. We will update the Comprehensive Community Plan based on the consensus achieved through community engagement. This updating will help us make sure we continue to grow and evolve as a community.



**T'Sou-ke Nation  
Comprehensive Community Plan  
2025-2050**