

STZ'UMINUS FIRST NATION - TOWN OF LADYSMITH

“NAUT'SA MAWT” - WORKING TOGETHER



PATHWAY OVERVIEW

Located on the shore of Vancouver Island a short drive south of Nanaimo, the Town of Ladysmith and Stz'uminus First Nation have built a strong and resilient relationship. The two governments now work together and have collaborated on a range of projects which began with signing of the Community Accord in 2007.

This initial step grew from a difficult community debate on Town boundary expansion and a proposal for waterfront development. The original 2007 Community Accord provided a foundation and directions for the two Councils to meet regularly, review and work together on initiatives of mutual benefit and concern. A successful step, this Accord was then renewed and updated in 2012 with the Naut'Sa Mawt Accord, which means “working together” in the local Hul'qumi'num language. This foundational agreement that has provided the framework for further agreements and many joint initiatives in the community and its purpose has remained unchanged since it was first developed:

- To formally recognize and understand the common interests and goals of the two communities so that a strong framework is in place for community leaders to pursue, in partnership, initiatives and opportunities that serve greater good.

PATHWAY ACTIVITIES

The collaborative pathway activities undertaken by Stz'uminus First Nation and the Town of Ladysmith include the following.



**Protocol and
Communications Agreements**



**Servicing Agreements
and Infrastructure**



**Land Use Planning
and Development**



**Joint Economic
Development Initiatives**



**Shared Tourism
Projects**

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The updated 2012 Naut'Sa Mawt Accord called for two subsequent agreements to be formalized and signed: the Co-operation Protocol and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). These two agreements laid out potential initiatives for the communities to undertake and the principles and guidelines for working towards them.

Stz'uminus and Ladysmith signed the Co-operation Protocol in 2012 which outlined objectives and initiatives of common interest. This protocol established the Naut'sa Mawt Steering Committee to implement the agreement. The committee has been meeting regularly since 2012.

The Cooperation Protocol was formalized in October 2012 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding which sets out joint initiatives and the means for the two communities to work together. The list of 15 joint initiatives included:

- The inclusion of water and sewer services to Stz'uminus in the Town's Liquid Waste Management Plan.
- Service agreements for water and sewer services provided by the Town to 1,500 homes on neighbouring Stz'uminus reserves.
- Collaborative watershed management for the protection of their shared drinking water supply.
- Clean-up of the Ladysmith Harbour and a possible marina expansion.
- Uniform bylaws for the protection of the environment.
- Joint applications for mutual funding opportunities and grants.
- Consultation on amendments to the Town's Official Community Plan.
- Joint development of industrial land located close to Stz'uminus reserves.
- Inclusion of First Nations heritage and culture in future agreements and projects, and formal recognition of Stz'uminus First Nation within the Town.

Since 2012, many of the actions identified in the 2012 Cooperation Protocol have been implemented or are in progress. A 2016 report, *Joint Community Report: Inspiring Progress - Milestone Achievements*, outlines the progress made together on 55 joint initiatives undertaken between 2012 and 2015. These projects range from small-scale relationship-building activities like the Town supporting in Stz'uminus National Indigenous Day celebrations, to more significant projects

like water and sewer service agreements and joint planning programs for the waterfront and Ladysmith Harbour.

OUTCOMES

Since 2016, the two governments have continued on their collaborative path with three additional joint projects that were realized through the two governments' collaborative relationship and having foundational agreements in place.

Waterfront Area Plan: In early 2018, the two communities completed a joint Waterfront Area Plan. The year-long engagement and design process involved planning for over 50 hectares of land and water lots, most of which is government owned. Both Councils were engaged from the beginning of the planning process and adopted the leading principle "Itst uw'hw-nuts' ul-wum", or "we are working as one" in the local Hul'qumi'num language. The finished plan includes the cultural, environmental, economic and recreational values of both the communities and is currently being implemented. This plan will help revitalize and restore the area, while creating new housing, economic development, and recreational opportunities. The plan was recognized with a provincial planning award in 2018.



IMAGE: Plan view of Ladysmith Waterfront Area Plan area (DIALOG)



Economic Development Strategy:

Ladysmith and Stz'uminus along with other partners (Nanaimo Airport, Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce, Ladysmith Downtown Business Association, Community Futures Central Island) completed a new economic development strategy for Ladysmith that highlights collaborative opportunities for the Town, Nation and surrounding communities. The strategy includes 17 key recommendations for supporting economic development and positioning Ladysmith as an attractive place to live, work and invest. Medium-term priorities detailed in the strategy include a marina expansion (in conjunction with the Waterfront Area Plan) and enhanced aquaculture and seafood processing in cooperation with Stz'uminus. It also acknowledges the important role the Stz'uminus may play in opening up new commercial and industrial land in the Ladysmith region.

New Housing: Stz'uminus is 50 percent partner in a new housing initiative that plans to add 610 units of housing to Ladysmith over the next two decades. Phase one was completed in spring 2019, and phase two launched in late May 2019. A focus on environmental stewardship was a key aspect of Stz'uminus involvement, which has resulted in about 43 percent allocated to green space within the development.

LESSONS LEARNED AND KEYS TO SUCCESS

The main lesson learned and primary key to success according to both partners, in addition to establishing collaboration agreements, is to spend time on relationship-building. This includes taking the time to learn about one another's organizations and governance models, timelines (which may not always align), and histories (even though for some, hearing firsthand about First Nations' experiences can be difficult). Other lessons and keys included:

- ✓ **Create a collaboration framework.** Establish a framework for working together.
- ✓ **Keep Councils – local government and First Nation – involved and informed.** Political buy-in, understanding, and support is key to implementing actions.
- ✓ **Bring the broader community into the work.** This includes regular and frequent updates to make sure they're up-to-date on successes and opportunities.
- ✓ **Confirm commitments frequently.** Priorities can change over time and as relationship and trust grows. Include monitoring, evaluation, and review as part of all work and agreements.
- ✓ **Make meetings enjoyable.** This can include sharing food and meals (the Mayor hosted a BBQ dinner meeting on one occasion), moving meetings between communities, and even having meetings outside when weather permits.

Let's Do Lunch!

The Mayor of Ladysmith and Stz'uminus Chief meet regularly over lunch or a coffee. Not only does this allow for the leaders to informally talk about the two communities, but it further builds and strengthens the relationship between the communities and elected leaders.



“It really is our vision to work with our neighbours and create an economy here and create opportunities for everyone.”

Stz’uminus Chief John Elliott

“Every partner involved made a commitment to working together to bring forward the best and most immediate economic opportunities for our town and our region.”

Ladysmith Mayor Aaron Stone

PATHWAYS TO COLLABORATION

Pathways to Collaboration is a joint initiative of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the Province of British Columbia, and the First Nations Summit with funding from the Indigenous Business & Investment Council (IBIC). The project aims to showcase the growing number of successful economic development collaborations and partnerships between First Nations and local governments, while highlighting lessons learned and key steps to success.

The pathways to collaboration communities take are unique, reflecting the context of the communities involved, and involve different activities. Common pathway activities include protocol and communications agreements; servicing agreements and shared infrastructure projects; collaborative land use planning and development projects; joint economic development initiatives; and shared tourism projects. Like signposts along a pathway, these pathway activities are identified in the case study series.

For more information on the project, please contact the communities profiled, or visit www.ubcm.ca.



Indigenous Business and Investment Council
Sharing Success