

Community Sustainability Plan

Creating a Path for Future Generations



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a result of the *Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP)* process linked to the Federal Gas Tax revenues.

The Federal Gas Tax revenues are being given to municipalities and First Nations throughout Canada. This program gives money to support environmentally sustainable infrastructure and related capacity development to help ensure cleaner air, cleaner water and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Our plan reflects our perspectives and values related to the sustainability of Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC). The Gas Tax dollars are primarily allocated to infrastructure upgrades or new infrastructure (such as community energy systems and active transportation corridors) for centrally located communities of people. TKC has no central community centre, as its population is distributed throughout Whitehorse and beyond. It also has little infrastructure due to the history of TKC's involuntary amalgamation into the Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) during 40 years of its existence.

The priorities identified for the Gas Tax Dollars include:

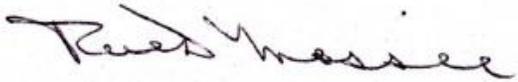
- All season improvements for Helen's Fish Camp
- Retrofits to existing or new administrative building
- The design and construction of a model green subdivision
- Research into water quality around the south end of Lake Laberge
- Research into the existence and use of roads and trails through TKC's Traditional Territory
- The reduction of vehicle emission related fossil fuels
- The establishment of a community garden

Beyond the scope of the ICSP dollars, TKC will be using this plan to guide future strategic direction, operational decisions, budgeting and organizational development.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

I am pleased to present this Community Sustainability Plan. The Plan incorporates our vision for the future of our community. The Plan directs us to balance the health of the land and the needs of our people. Ta'an Kwäch'än culture and identity is grounded in the land and resources of our traditional territory. For thousands of years, the Ta'an Kwäch'än people have utilized their territory for subsistence needs. As stewards of the land, it is our responsibility to ensure protection of our homeland and that economic development benefits the well-being of all living things. We have been carrying out our culture and traditions since time immemorial and will continue to do so for generations to come. When implemented together, the various components of this plan will contribute to the sustainable future of our territory and the protection of our values. Sound planning is important to our future.

Truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruth Massie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Ruth Massie, Chief

Ta'an Kwäch'än Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan is dedicated to the memory of Chief Jim Boss, a man who worked tirelessly to improve the lives of the Ta'an Kwäch'än people. His vision and leadership inspires everyone in his homeland.

We recognize our leadership, Elders, citizens, youth and staff for their contributions and participation in visioning, scoping, conducting assessments, prioritizing, editing and providing guidance for this sustainable community planning process. Without their knowledge and ongoing participation, this exercise would not have been possible. We had great participation in this planning process and appreciate the time, thinking and hard work that was contributed. In addition to the contribution made by leadership and our Elders, we would like to acknowledge the following individuals for contributing their ideas and comments for an improved Plan. Thanks are due to G. Anderson (Deputy Chief), J. Ahlgren, G. Campbell, R. Gill, E. Fairclough, P. Martin, R. Massie (Chief), M. Nelson, D. Tramm, H. Sahagian, B. Edzerza and G. Gottschall. Thanks to J. Ahlgren, M. Nelson, D. MacKinnon, A. Walkley and S. Lapointe for providing photographs.

Special thanks to A. Walkley from Cambio Consulting for all of the time and care she put into organizing and facilitating workshops; compiling information; and assembling all of the pieces together into a proposed *Draft Plan* for Board approval. Without her help, this plan would not have been possible.

Sincerely, on behalf of the Planning Team,

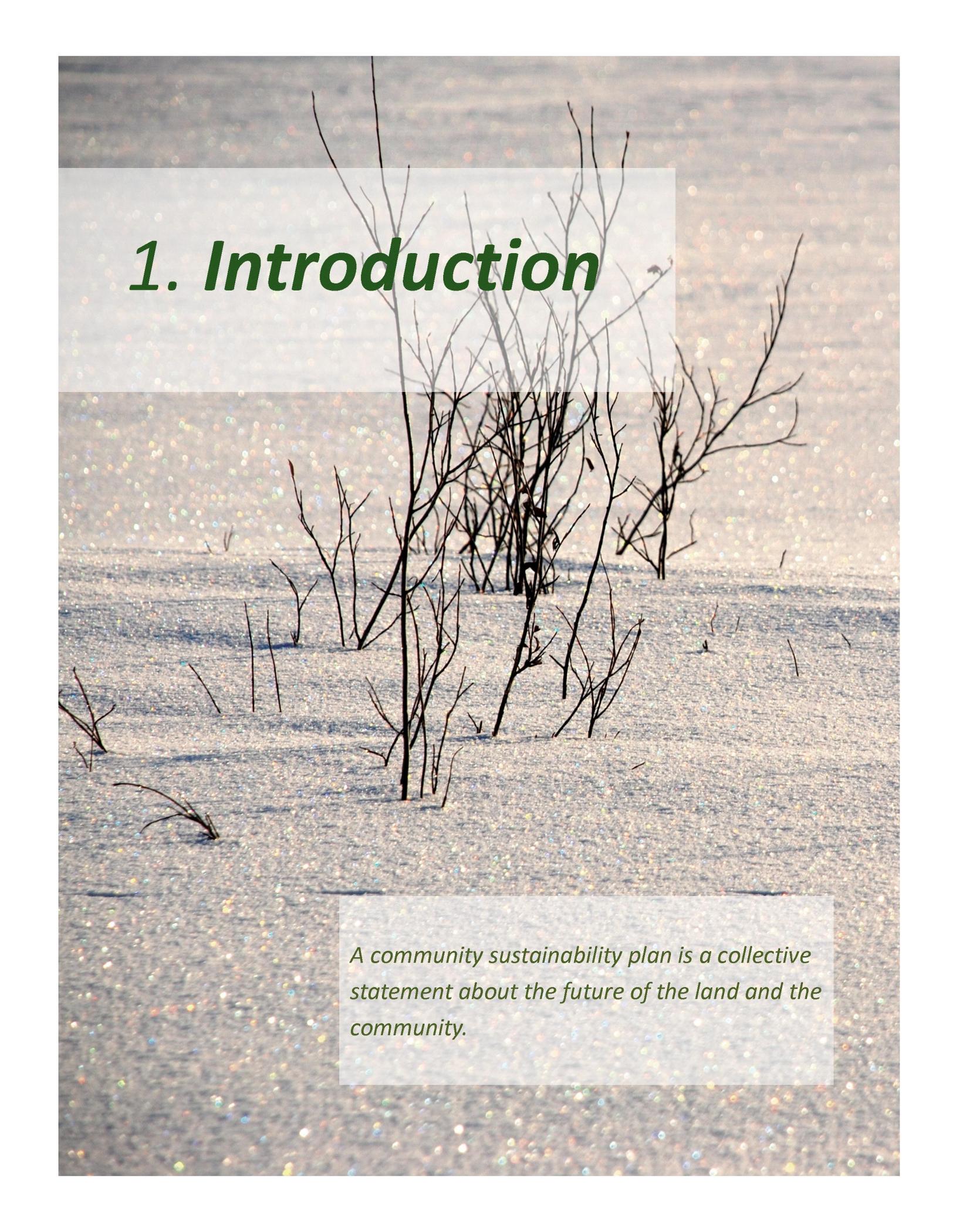
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Lapointe', written in a cursive style.

Simon Lapointe, Lands Manager
Lands, Resources & Heritage Department

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1. Introduction

A community sustainability plan is a collective statement about the future of the land and the community.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

PREAMBLE

A community sustainability plan is a collective statement about the future of a community. The Ta'an Kwäch'än (TK) people have been living in harmony with nature for thousands of years. Today, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council (TKC) has the opportunity to ensure that future generations carry on the same path. Like most Yukon First Nations, the Ta'an Kwäch'än traditional way of life was based on fishing, hunting and trapping and historically, families moved seasonally to harvest the various resources.

This plan describes how TKC and community propose to achieve their potential while protecting the environment, jobs and culture for the benefit of future generations. The Plan will be used to guide how decisions about projects, programs and spending are made by TKC staff and leadership. It will also provide access to dollars from the Federal Government to support infrastructure projects that respect TKC values for the environment and the community.

This document is a result of the *Community Sustainability Planning* process linked to the Federal Gas Tax revenues.

This plan was produced by TKC Lands Branch in collaboration with Cambio Consulting. This plan strives to achieve a balance between the land, the pursuit of traditional activities, the culture and economic development.

DECISION-MAKING AND DIRECTION

TKC Board of Directors, Chief and Deputy Chief were engaged throughout the planning process and authorized each stage and product. The BOD comprises the following individuals:

Chief Ruth Massie
Deputy Chief Gail Anderson
Alice McGuire
Jackie Bazett
Carol Chamber-Boss
Julia Broeren
Gordon Harvey Jr.
Doreen Grady
Glenda Jones

PLANNING PROCESS

The TKC planning process followed the requirements set out by Yukon Government but was tailored to meet the needs and interests of TKC.

The four pillars of TKC community sustainability are: **Unity**, **Elder's Teachings**, **Self-sufficiency** and the **Land**. Maintaining these key features of community is essential for TKC community sustainability.

Figure 1. TKC Integrated Community Sustainability Planning Process



INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The following documents were reviewed and served to inform the creation of this sustainability plan:

- ICSP Plans for Carmacks, Faro, Carcross Tagish First Nation, Selkirk/Pelly Crossing, Teslin/TTC and Haines Junction.
- The Gas Tax Agreement (<http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/ip-pi/gtf-fte/gtf-fte-eng.html>).
- *TKC Strategic Plan & Report*, 1997, prepared by Jeffrey Cook, Cook & Associates.
- *Improvements for Helen's Fish Camp*, TKC Community Dinner, (March 28, 2007).
- *Draft TKC Sustainable Development Strategy* (2005).

- *Porter Creek Bench Charette Concept “Whistle Bend”* (November 8, 2006).
- *Draft TKC/Mundessa Development Corporation 25 Year Community Economic Development Strategy* (March 31, 2007).
- *Draft TKC Strategic Planning Results* (March 31, 2006).
- *Draft TKC Housing and Infrastructure Workplan* (June 1, 2007)
- *TKC Heritage Strategic Plan and Work Plan* Prepared by Mark Nelson and Michelle Telep (2007).

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND INPUT

The TKC Planning Team held a series of meetings and workshops to get citizens’ input into the Plan. The first public workshop was held on May 5, 2008 at the Council of Yukon First Nations. Citizens were invited to share their vision, goals and values for the future of their community. This workshop addressed critical issues such as the *environment, green infrastructure, health, education, culture* and the *economy* among others. The workshop was advertized via newspaper, email and a newsletter. Approximately 32 people attended the workshop. A second workshop was held with the Planning Team on May 6, 2008. Using the results from the previous day, the Planning Team further articulated the goals and vision statement for the Plan.

A Youth workshop was held on the evening of May 27th, 2008. Together, 7 energetic and cheerful youth from TK community worked together in crafting their vision for the future of the Ta’an community.

A tour of infrastructure and Settlement Lands was organized on July 18th, 2008. Citizens and staff were invited to join the Planning Team for a look at the land and infrastructure. The purpose of the tour was to assess existing assets and identify options for the future. This tour was the second community meeting to create a Ta’an Kwäch’än Council Community Sustainability Plan and was advertized via newspaper and email. All together, 9 people participated including staff, Elders and BOD members. The feedback collected during the tour was very insightful and invaluable to this plan.

Another public workshop was held at the Mt. McIntyre Recreation Centre on October 20th, 2008. The workshop was advertised via newspaper and email and a total of 33 people attended. Citizens were invited to identify and discuss community priorities including:

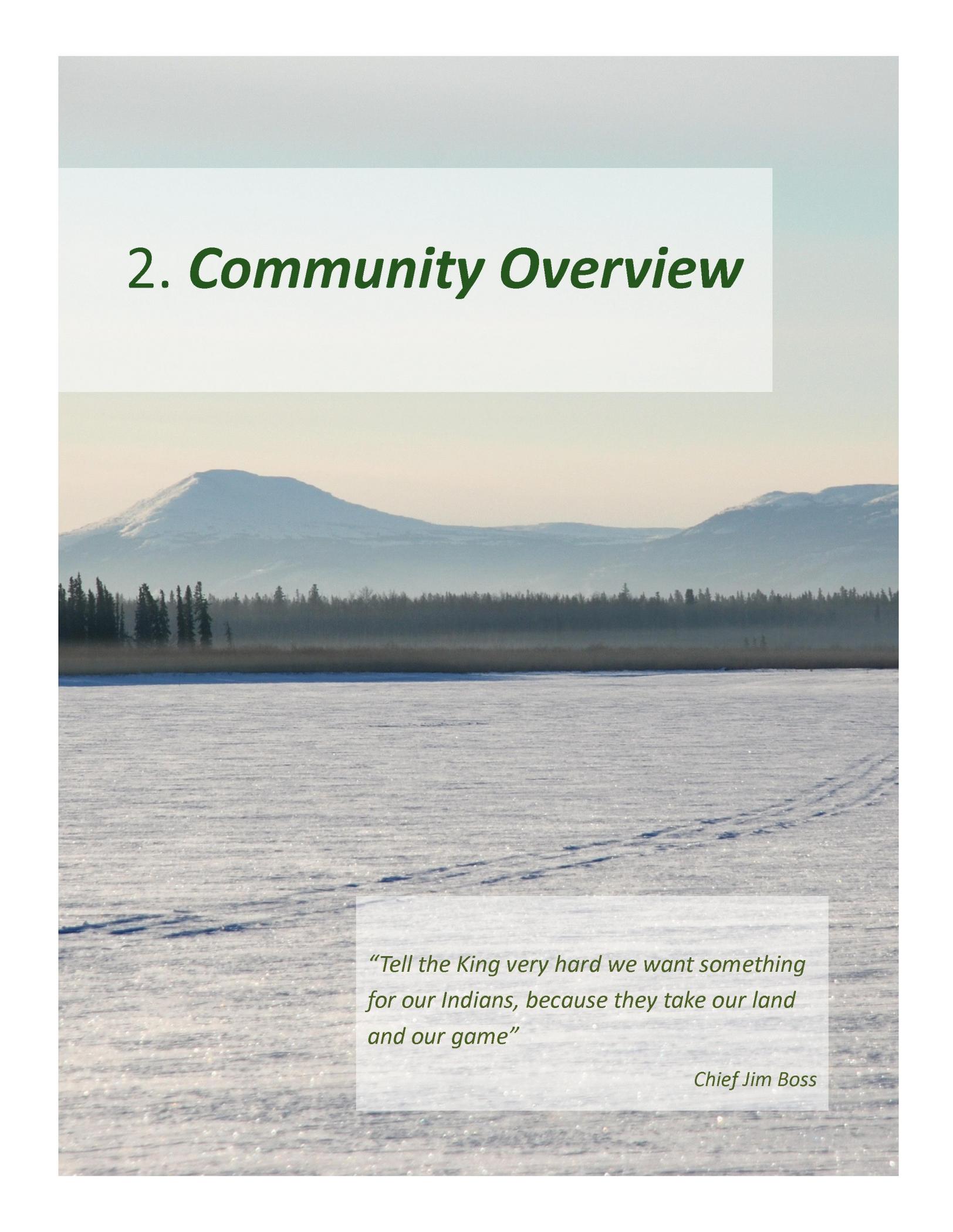
- Building Unity
- A green subdivision
- Helen's Fish Camp
- Greening the TKC administrative building
- Energy retrofits for TKC homes and much more

The final public meeting was held on December 1st, 2008. The meeting was advertised in the Yukon News and via email messages. The final meeting consisted of a presentation to the BOD. The contributions made throughout the entire exercise were invaluable to the Planning Team and played a key role in the success of this plan.

THE TKC PLANNING TEAM

The role of the Planning Team was to provide technical advice throughout the process, edit and approve drafts of the survey report, advertisements and sections of the plan as they were developed. The Planning Team also provided considerable insight on how to engage the community and took a key role in making these events happen. Individuals on the team included:

Simon Lapointe, Lands Manager
Tosh Southwick, Human Resources Manager
Dietmar Tramm, Legislation and Policy Development Manager
Rosemary Gill, Executive Director
Gordon Campbell, Manager of Finance
Gail Anderson, Deputy Chief
Mark Nelson, Heritage Manager
Bob Edzerza, Housing and Infrastructure Administrator
Pat Martin, Health Manager
Emmie Fairclough, Renewable Resources Manager
Helen Sahagian, Office Manager

A scenic landscape photograph of a snow-covered field with a forest and mountains in the background. The foreground is a vast, flat, snow-covered area with some faint tracks. In the middle ground, there is a dense line of evergreen trees. In the background, there are several mountain peaks, some with snow. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

2. Community Overview

“Tell the King very hard we want something for our Indians, because they take our land and our game”

Chief Jim Boss

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

TA'AN KWÄCH'ÄN

The Ta'an Kwäch'än take their name from Tàa'an Män (Lake Laberge) in the heart of their traditional territory. Their ancestral lands extend north to Hootalinqua (at the confluence of the Yukon and Teslin Rivers), south to Marsh Lake, west to White Bank Village at the confluence of the Takhini and Little Rivers, and east to Winter Crossing on the Teslin River.



Like most Yukon First Nations, the Ta'an Kwäch'än traditional way of life was based on fishing, hunting and trapping and historically, families moved seasonally to harvest various resources. The villages and camps of the Ta'an Kwäch'än are centred around Lake Laberge, Lower Takhini River and Fox Lake Areas with foot trails radiating in all directions.

HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE



The culture of the Ta'an Kwäch'än is strongly associated with the land and traditional pursuits. Ta'an Kwäch'än citizens include people of Southern Tutchone, Tagish and Tlingit descent. Approximately 50 per cent of the population now lives in the Whitehorse and Lake Laberge area, with the balance living throughout Canada, the US (predominantly Alaska) and abroad. The Ta'an Kwäch'än are speakers of Southern Tutchone (known in the language as "dän k'e" or "native person's way"), which is part of the larger Athabaskan language family. Southern Tutchone place names demonstrate the significance of sites around their traditional territory to the Ta'an Kwäch'än people, and illustrate a long history on the land.

The Ta'an Kwäch'än experienced significant impacts from the Klondike Gold Rush Stampede because their homeland lay directly in the path followed by non-aboriginal newcomers. In 1900, at the height of the Gold Rush, Chief Jim Boss (Kishxóot) of the Ta'an Kwäch'än recognized that his people needed protection for their land and hunting grounds in the wake of the influx of people. Chief Boss petitioned the Commissioner of the Yukon, William Ogilvie, for a 1600 acre reserve at Tàa'an Män (Lake Laberge), which he had already surveyed. A reserve of only 320 acres was granted. As newcomers continued to infringe upon the Ta'an Kwäch'än's lands, Chief Boss wrote to the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa in 1902, demanding that over-hunting by newcomers be

controlled and that his people be compensated for lost land and impacts on wildlife. This letter contained his famous quote *“Tell the King very hard we want something for our Indians, because they take our land and our game”* and represents the first attempts at land claim negotiation by a Yukon First Nation. One hundred years after Chief Jim Boss first petitioned the Canadian Government for recognition, TKC signed its Final Agreement and became recognized as an official government.

The construction of the Alaska Highway and the end of the sternwheeler traffic on the Yukon River and Lake Laberge in the 1950s also profoundly changed how Ta’an Kwäch’än people made their living on the land. The history of the Ta’an Kwäch’än is, however, still very much present in the landscape and in the determination of Ta’an people to keep their traditions and knowledge of the past alive.

In 1956 the Ta’an Kwäch’än people were amalgamated into Kwanlin Dün First Nation (then known as the Whitehorse Indian Band) by the Federal Government without consent of the people. In 1987, the Lake Lebarge families re-established the Ta’an Kwäch’än with a council to represent their interests in land claim negotiations.

On January 13th, 2002 TKC became the eighth of the fourteen Yukon First Nations to reach a final agreement.

“From the days when the Gold Rush brought massive and irreversible change to the land, the people of Ta’an have struggled to find a balance between the old ways and the new, to welcome newcomers and new ideas, while holding on to our cherished traditions, our languages, land and our beliefs.” Elder Frances Woolsey at the official signing ceremony, Yukon News, Jan 14, 2002

THE TA’AN KWÄCH’ÄN COMMUNITY

Ta’an Kwäch’än citizens acknowledge being part of both the Whitehorse community and the Ta’an Kwäch’än community. They place high value on the Ta’an Kwäch’än community, thus valuing culture and traditions, common history and a common relationship with their traditional homeland.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

By best estimates, Ta'an Kwäch'an citizens residing in Whitehorse represent less than 1% of Whitehorse's 24,890 people (Yukon Statistics, Aug 2008). The Ta'an Kwäch'an total population is estimated at 435 people (TKC Population Analysis, 2008). Overall, 54% of Ta'an Kwäch'an citizens live in the Yukon and the remainder live in other parts of Canada and the world.

Several Yukon First Nations sustain similar or smaller populations. Most other Yukon First Nations make up at least half of the population of their larger communities and some, such as Selkirk, Ross River and Old Crow, make up as much as 87% of the population.

ECOLOGICAL SETTING

TKC traditional territory lies within the Yukon Southern Lake and Yukon Central Plateau Ecoregions. It extends from Hootlinqua in the north to M'Clintock Valley and Marsh Lake in the south; and from the confluence of the Takhini and Little Rivers in the west to Winter Crossing on the Teslin River in the east. Settlement land parcels are scattered over 12,079 km² of land.

The ecological setting around TKC settlement lands is influenced by the Takhini River, Shallow Bay and Yukon River and Lake Laberge. Each area provides for a variety of ecosystem types. Much of the terrain lies between 1,000 and 1,500 meters in altitude. The highest peak on settlement land is Joe Mountain followed by Lime Peak. Walking on settlement land, one is likely to come across a variety of landform types – high elevation mountains, rolling hills, broad valleys, flat and rolling plains – which produce very distinct vegetation complexes.

Two main drainage systems carve through mountains and valleys around settlement lands and, as a result, have a strong influence on ecological processes found within. These are the Yukon River and Takhini River. Lake Laberge is the largest lake found in the Traditional Territory. Other significant rivers in the Traditional Territory include the Teslin River as well as the Big Salmon River.

Several significant smaller size streams include the Little River, Thirty Seven Mile Creek, Flat Creek, Deep Creek and Fox Creek. A considerable portion of rural settlement land parcels are forested, and represent a range of ecosystem types, most commonly Pine/Bearberry, Aspen/Bearberry, and White Spruce/Willow. Pine is generally the dominant species. White Spruce is most common along flood plains and flat plains.

GOVERNANCE

The TKC government structure, in accordance with its Constitution, is comprised of the General Assembly, the BOD, the Elders Council, the Youth Council, and the three judges on the Judicial Council who are non-Ta'an Kwäch'än citizens appointed by the Elders Council. Nine BOD are appointed by the five traditional families. Ta'an Kwäch'än citizens elect a Chief and Deputy-Chief every three years. The headquarters of the TKC are located in Whitehorse, Yukon. The administration has 30 approved positions in six departments.

SETTLEMENT LAND

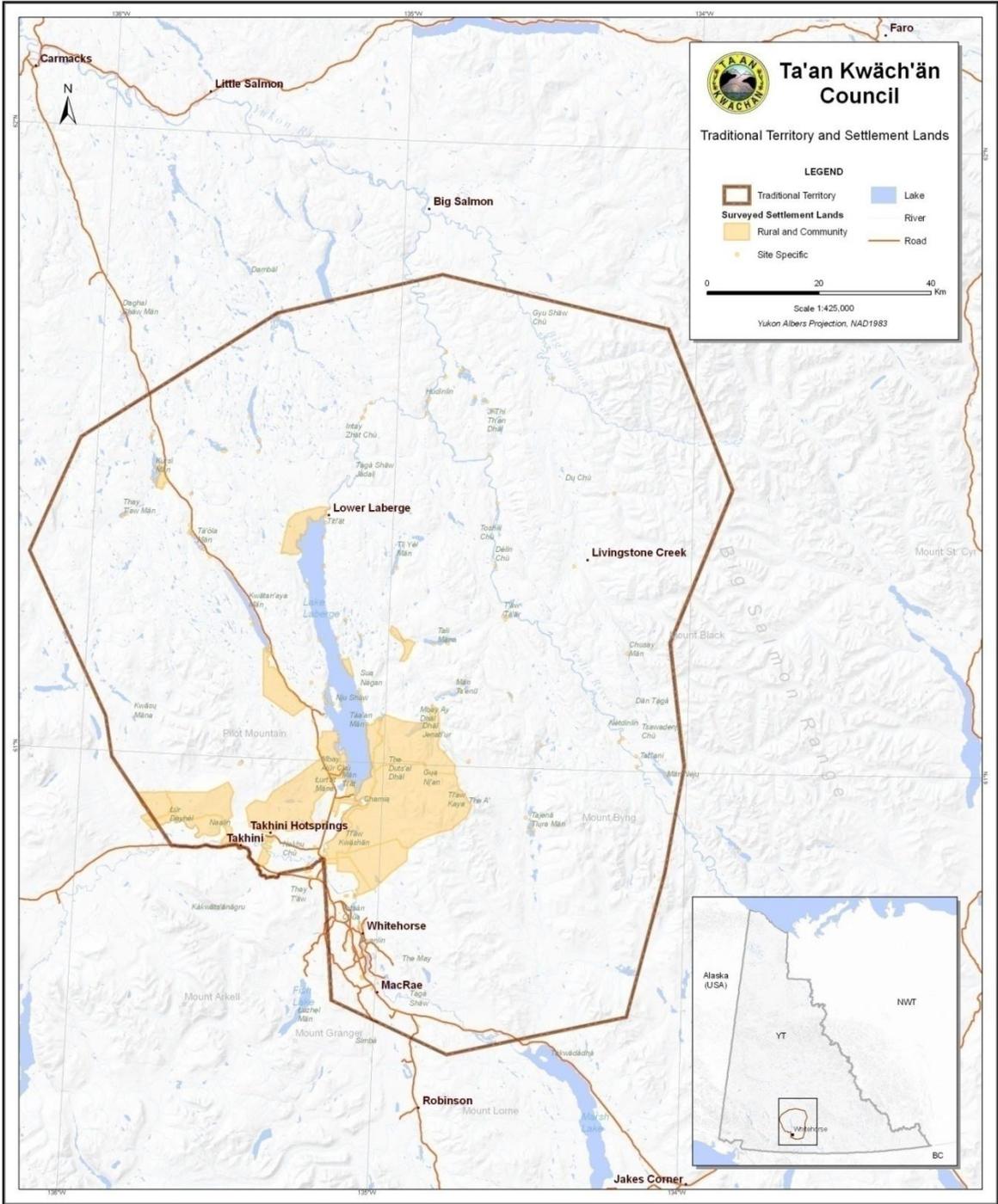
TKC owns approximately 800 km² of land that are centered around Lake Laberge, lower Takhini River and Fox Lake. The landscape along with exceptional biophysical features of these areas provides for a variety wildlife habitats and significant ecosystems. Exceptionally well located, these tracts of land present unparalleled opportunities for land development.

COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT LANDS

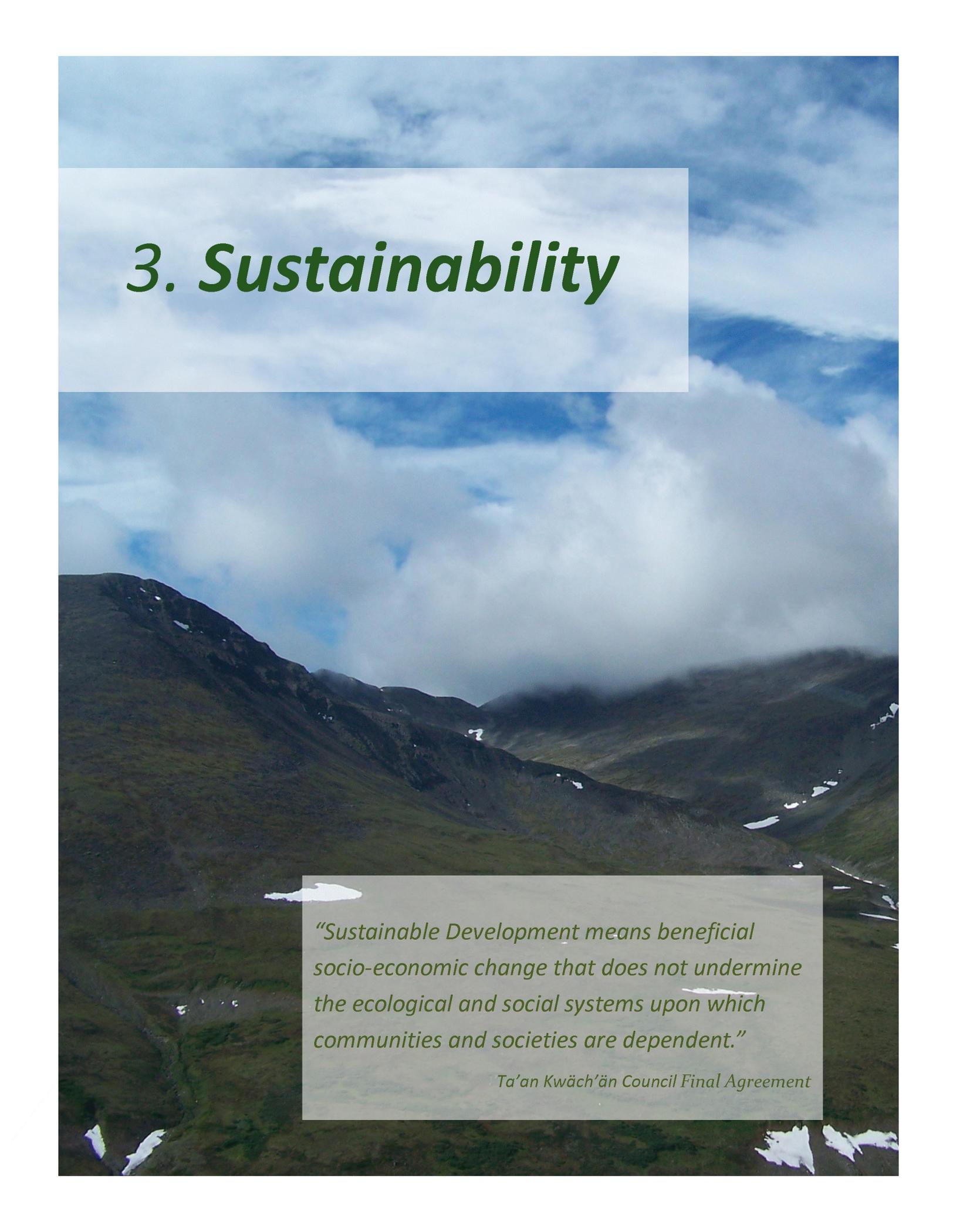
TKC owns forty-seven parcels of land of varying size, forty of which are located within the municipal boundary of the City of Whitehorse. The remaining seven parcels are located to the north and south of Whitehorse, just outside the municipal boundary. These parcels, called *community settlement lands*, were selected primarily for their development potential and to meet the needs of present and future generations of TK citizens.

RURAL SETTLEMENT LANDS

TKC owns an extra 22 larger land parcels. Located in rural areas around Lake Laberge, Lower Takhini River and Fox Lake, these larger tracks of land vary in size. Pursuant to the Final Agreement, the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council has retained five (5) Category "A" parcels for a total of 405 km² as well as seventeen (17) Category "B" parcels for a total of 365 km². On Category "A" settlement land the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council owns both surface and sub-surface resources. On Fee Simple and Category "B" settlement lands Ta'an Kwäch'än Council owns surface but not sub-surface resources.



DATA SOURCES: Base data: 1:250,000 National Topographic Data Base (NRCAN); 90m shaded relief (Yukon Environment); Thematic data: First Nations Traditional Territories (Yukon Environment); Surveyed First Nations Settlement Lands (NRCAN); Unsurveyed First Nations Settlement Lands (Claims & Indian Government)
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3. Sustainability

“Sustainable Development means beneficial socio-economic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and societies are dependent.”

Ta’an Kwäch’än Council Final Agreement

SUSTAINABILITY

The TKC Final Agreement (FA) provides guidance with respect to Sustainability principles. Sustainable Development, as defined in Chapter 1 of the TKC FA, is:

“Sustainable Development means beneficial socio-economic change that does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and societies are dependent.”

SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES

Consistent with the Vision Statement, the Plan is also based upon application of Sustainability Principles. A principle is a rule that is used to guide future actions and decisions. Participants who attended community meetings crafted the following principles:

1. BALANCE

With the Earth and the ecosystem at the centre we will strive to achieve balance among the following pillars: economy, socio-cultural and governance.

2. PROTECTING OUR LAND

All infrastructure development and land use should include a clear assessment of potential impacts; identify ways to reduce negative environmental impacts and to support the long term protection of TKC land values.

3. SHARED STEWARDSHIP

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of our environment, our community and themselves. The TKC takes responsibility for its decisions while sharing responsibility for the stewardship of the land and their community with other levels of government, their citizens and others in the community.

4. CULTURAL IDENTITY

All infrastructure development and land use should be culturally appropriate in design, location, and orientation.

5. SELF-RELIANCE

Infrastructure development, land use, social services and TKC programming should support TKC members while not imposing a financial burden on individual members or creating dependencies.

6. KNOWLEDGE-BASED DECISION MAKING

TKC will make decisions that are informed by Traditional as well as Scientific Knowledge.

7. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Infrastructure, planning and development should include consideration of how to optimize economic opportunities for the TKC community.



4. Vision, Values & Goals



VISION, VALUES AND GOALS

TKC VISION

The Plan's overarching vision is to balance the culture, community, economic well-being with the land. TKC Vision statement is:

“We respect our sacred relationship with our environment, empower TKC citizens to be self-sufficient, and support a vibrant culture, consistent with the teachings of our Elders. Ta'an Kwäch'än will develop its Government and community in ways that are environmentally, culturally and economically sustainable.”

VALUES

The values for the Plan address four general areas of sustainability, as expressed by the community:

1. **Unity** for TKC means mutual respect, connections between family and friends, trust and openness. TKC values the opportunity to stay connected, work together and play together.
2. **Elders Teachings** refers to the southern Tutchone language, culture, traditional practices and values such as respect and inter-generational connections.
3. **Self Reliance** is the value of having independent people with self respect and a strong sense of identity carrying out healthy lifestyles.
4. **Land** refers to the relationship that TKC citizens have with the land, the use of the land and the protection of the land. The value of the land relates to the conservation of the TKC traditional territory, fish and wildlife. It also refers to the care for the earth and taking action day-to-day to demonstrate decisions that promote stewardship of all land and resources.

TKC GOALS

TKC goals for the sustainable future of their community speak to conservation, adaptive management, stewardship, self-sufficiency, green infrastructure, capacity building as well as culture and language. The goals expressed by the community include:

1. To conserve and protect fish, wildlife, water, air, cultural resources and habitat.
2. To demonstrate environmental stewardship and incorporate environmentally sound technologies, actions and practices into our day to day work.
3. To be economically self-sufficient, increase economic growth through investment in diversified, sustainable opportunities.
4. To promote healthy lifestyles, self sufficiency and unity.
5. To develop and maintain TKC infrastructure which meets the needs of the community and is environmentally friendly and energy efficient.
6. To build capacity within government and community through education and training.
7. To preserve and enhance Southern Tutchone cultural and linguistic knowledge and incorporate them into our government and community.
8. To preserve and enhance Elder's Teaching and knowledge and incorporate it into our government and community.

5. Measures of Success

Ta'an Kwäch'än culture and identity is grounded in the land and resources of its territory.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

To address sustainability values and goals, this plan includes explicit indicators allowing measurements of success over subsequent years. Indicators consist of measurable signals used to assess performance. The proposed indicators to measure success for the future of TKC community are outlined below.

VALUE: LAND

GOALS	INDICATORS	TARGETS
To conserve and protect fish, wildlife, water, air, cultural resources and habitat	Percentage of organic compostable materials diverted from the landfill	50%
	Percentage of recyclable material recycled	100%
To demonstrate environmental stewardship and incorporate environmentally sound technologies, actions and practices into our day to day work	Percentage of area stream corridors that have been protected	30%
	Abundance of moose population	400 moose per 1000 km ²
	Land area set aside for conservation	50%
To develop and maintain TKC infrastructure which meets the needs of the community and is environmentally friendly and energy efficient	Percentage of community members enrolled in energy efficiency programs	60%
	Green or LEED eligible buildings constructed	100%

VALUE: UNITY

GOALS	INDICATORS	TARGETS
To preserve and enhance Southern Tutchone cultural and linguistic knowledge and incorporate them into our government and community	Early childhood and adult language learning program	1 language learning program
	People participating in cultural/traditional activities	100%

VALUE: ELDERS' TEACHING

GOALS	INDICATORS	TARGETS
To preserve and enhance Elder's knowledge and incorporate it into our government and community	Year-round activities at Helen's Fish Camp	1 cultural event per season
To be economically self-sufficient, increase economic growth through investment in diversified, sustainable opportunities	Community Employment rate	60%
	Percentage of the wealth created through sustainable business activities	50%
	Population living above the low income cut-off	100%

VALUE: SELF-RELIANCE

GOALS	INDICATORS	TARGETS
To promote healthy lifestyles, self sufficiency and unity	Population without diabetes	80%
	Homelessness	NONE
To build capacity within government and community through education and training.	Annual expenditure allocated for training per employee	Adequate funding allocated to community members and employees
	Adults with post-secondary education	50%

6. Community Assessment

7. Service Agreements



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

The community assessment was based on a self-assessment workshop, as well as information collected from existing documents, one-on-one interviews and a Van Tour of existing TKC infrastructure. The following is a summary of the findings.



Assessment Mural done by Amber Walker, October 2008

ELDERS' TEACHINGS

Cultural values and practices are presently kept alive in the homes of individuals and families and within the offices of the Ta'an Kwäch'än through Elders' Teachings. The connection to the land and cultural activities is considered vital to maintaining TK cultural identity.

TKC community is part of the Southern Tutchone language group, but is culturally and politically distinct from other Southern Tutchone First Nations. TKC community demonstrates great resiliency in preserving its cultural identity as it has been one of the most dramatically affected First Nation in the Yukon due to the huge influx of non-First Nation people into the area starting in the Gold Rush and growing exponentially during the building of the Alaska Highway.

Recommendations

- Support for the Heritage Department goals and programs is key to the sustainability of the Ta'an Kwäch'än Community as they are an important foundation to ongoing cultural identity and practice.
- Helen's Fish Camp is an important asset for the cultural sustainability of the TKC community. Preserving the role that it currently has for TKC and expanding the use of this facility will be key strategies for providing a place for cultural practice and celebration.

THE LAND –LAND MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

The Ta'an Kwäch'än Council's traditional territory encompasses the City of Whitehorse. This area is the most intensively developed and populated region in the Yukon. The region contains the highest road density in the Yukon. Competing interests for resource use include: First Nation traditional use, recreation, forestry, agriculture, and hunting among others. Yet the region supports vast, relatively unaltered ecosystems. This area is without specific conservation targets and for years, Elders have been indicating a serious decline in observed key wildlife species. Today, there is no systematic conservation effort and no ecosystem information to support decisions pertaining to land and resource management and planning.

LAND USE

Ta'an Kwäch'än culture and identity is grounded in the land and resources of its territory. For thousands of years, the Ta'an Kwäch'än people have utilized the land for sustenance. Many TK citizens participate actively in the economy. Even today, many citizens participate in subsistence harvesting and still spend time on the land. TKC citizens and staff who are out on the land play an important role as TKC's eyes and ears.

TKC's traditional land is the most intensely used land in the Yukon with the highest diversity of land uses. Three quarters of the Yukon population lives in the Whitehorse region. Of particular concern to TKC is the increase of agricultural activity around Lake Laberge and the construction of cabins and homes all along the shore line of Lake Laberge. This has had a significant impact on the cultural landscape, natural state of the land, as well as fish and wildlife populations. TKC has witnessed significant changes on the landscape and water quality in the area. Each development and activity that occurs on the land may not have a significant impact on its own, but together their cumulative effect on wildlife populations, water quality and ecosystem health is significant.

TK citizens use settlement land for a variety of purposes. The Lands Branch receives requests for fuel-wood cutting, agricultural development as well as residential development. Currently, the Lands Branch is not equipped to assess the merit of these applications and requires qualitative and quantitative data.

LAND USE PLANS

Mounting interest in developing TKC's land holdings led TKC to develop a land use plan for parcels located within the City of Whitehorse. The Plan was completed by the Lands, Resources & Heritage Department in April 2006. The purpose of the Plan is to guide decisions about future uses and development of the community land parcels. The Plan includes an assessment of the suitability of community land parcels for different land uses, recommends a land use designation for each parcel, and provides criteria to evaluate development potential.

The Lands Branch is now working on regional scale mapping and inventory. The inventory work will lead to the creation of a regional vision for land use and conservation for the land.

Several levels of land use planning exist in the Yukon. Regional land use plans cover the largest geographical area of all levels of plans and represent the highest level land use plan in the Yukon. Yukon Government and First Nation Government are generally responsible for preparing regional land use plans. Government and any affected Yukon First Nation may agree to establish a Regional Land Use Planning Commission to develop a regional land use plan. The Whitehorse planning region encompasses both TKC and KDFN traditional territories. It covers approximately 15,000 square kilometres.

There is currently no regional land use plan within the TKC traditional land. Regional land use planning in the Yukon is dependent on the settlement of overlap agreements as well as the willingness of all parties involved, which includes First Nations Government, Government of Yukon and Government of Canada. Presently, TKC is in discussions with overlapping First Nations.

Sub-regional land use plans are the second highest level land use plans in the Yukon followed by District land use plans. Governments and First Nations are responsible for the creation of sub-regional and district land use plans. Local area plans are the responsibility of Government. They may or may not include First Nation lands. Municipalities are responsible for the creation of Official Community Plans and zoning bylaws for land within municipal boundaries. Yukon First Nations are responsible for the creation of land use plans on their settlement lands.

Local area plans cover relatively small areas and are fairly detailed in nature. There is a Grizzly Valley Area Development Regulation in place and two local area plans including Takhini Hotsprings and Golden Horn within the TKC traditional territory. These plans provide important guidance to development and help to facilitate orderly development. Currently, there is no Local Area Plan for the Fox Lake area. As a result, land continues to be allocated without a regional vision for how development should occur on the landscape. The negative impact associated with incremental development is having a toll on the land.

Land use planning generates a stream of positive benefits to the people. Land use planning helps communities to prepare for future impacts; to address current and future needs; and to build on strengths and opportunities. A land use plan would give TKC the tools to decide how land is used and guide the more detailed site development planning required for land development. A land use plan would set out a clear road map for how and where long-term growth should occur and would identify potential economic opportunities.

A land use plan would inform community processes such as: Capital planning, housing, community physical development and leadership level decision making. A land use plan would communicate Ta'an values for the land to municipal as well territorial and federal governments. Finally, a land use plan facilitates the assessment of compatible land uses and is of great assistance to Lands, Resources and Heritage staff dealing with land use applications and environmental assessments.

Recommendations

- TKC should begin land use planning to ensure long term sustainability of the land and the protection of TKC values.
- In preparation for multi-sectoral processes, TKC should pursue mapping and inventory of land and resources.
- Continue to advocate for Local Area Plans in key areas of their Traditional Territory.
- Establish guidelines, best practices, protocols or agreements that provide security to TKC land values.
- Identify areas suitable for personal fuel-wood cutting on settlement land.
- As an alternative to integrated land use planning, TKC should continue to encourage land and resource management planning on their own lands and wherever possible.

- Information needs to be gathered on what land uses presently exist. This would include information on what roads are out there and how these roads are used.
- Support staff & citizens to be out on the land as TKC's eyes & ears.

FISH AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Related to wildlife, TKC has been active with the Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee, has abstained from caribou harvest, and will be focusing attention on the need to reduce the quantity of salmon being harvested in Alaska. The mandate of Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee is to coordinate the management of moose, caribou, sheep and other wildlife populations and habitats in the Southern Lakes Region, and to promote the recovery and conservation of wildlife with consideration for the future subsistence needs of local First Nations and the needs of other users, both consumptive and non-consumptive.

The Renewable Resources Branch works to manage and protect the land as well as fish and wildlife. The Renewable Resources Branch is responsible for wildlife resource inventory, fish and wildlife research, population and habitat management, and fish and wildlife management planning.

TKC has a game guardian who patrols the land. TKC presence on the land helps educate and builds relationship with hunters, fishers and others land users. TKC staff and citizens are the 'eyes and ears' for the fish and wildlife and for land management issues in Ta'an Traditional Territory.

TKC is also involved in hands-on projects such as the multi-year clean-up of the Range Road dump site on McIntyre Creek and the annual Community Stewardship Program. TKC is working on a long-term stock restoration plan for Chinook salmon in Fox Creek and is currently incubating brood stock in partnership with the Northern Research Institute, for release into Fox Creek the summer of 2009.

Recommendations

- TKC Renewable Resources Branch should continue to gather fish and wildlife information for use in management and land use plans, and environmental and socio-economic project assessments.
- TKC Renewable Resources Branch should identify population targets for the TT.
- TKC Renewable Resources Branch should continue involvement with co-management initiatives such as the Southern Lakes Wildlife Coordinating Committee and the Yukon River Watershed Management Working Group.
- TKC Renewable Resources Branch should pursue programs and services aimed at promoting and assisting citizens with traditional activities on the land such as hunting, fishing, trapping and berry picking.

- TKC Renewable Resources Branch should establish a base line ecosystem health monitoring program to track changes to the land and fish and wildlife populations resulting from climate change and encroaching development.

THE LAND – INFRASTRUCTURE

Key factors:

- TKC owns and maintains very little infrastructure on their lands.
- TKC owns their administrative building on Industrial Road, 14 houses, one well and several summer structures at Helen’s Fish camp.
- The TKC government building is not an energy efficient or green building.
- TKC owns 19 parcels of land that are suitable for residential development and 14 with commercial potential (TKC Community Plan).
- TKC owns a few properties suitable for a government building, cultural centre or community gathering.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING

The current location of the administrative building is less than preferable. The building is located on Industrial Road a distance from the downtown core where most administrative work occurs. The building envelope and size offers less than acceptable energy efficient standards. TKC’s administration has grown to a point where the space is no longer adequate. There is a lack of meeting and office space, lighting is sub-standard in many areas, and drafty conditions occur almost everywhere.

Ta’an Kwäch’än is considering two options for their administration building. The first option is to retrofit the existing building to solve problems associated with poor energy efficiency. Building codes and City bylaws create challenges to retrofitting and building improvements.

The second option is to acquire or build a new administration building.

HOUSES

TKC owns 14 houses. Those houses are inhabited by Ta'an Kwäch'an citizens. The majority of these houses were built by Kwanlin Dün First Nation (then known as the Whitehorse Indian Band) and were transferred to TKC after the separation from Kwanlin Dün. Prior to land claims, First Nations housing infrastructure was looked after by the Department of Indian and Northern Development. TKC is unique because of their amalgamation with Kwanlin Dün. Most TKC citizens own their own homes or rent from someone else.



Compared to other First Nations, TKC infrastructure is relatively new. As a result, TKC does not have to deal with high maintenance and operating costs. TKC has the opportunity to create a housing policy that promotes self-reliance and can create something that is unique to its circumstance.

HELEN'S FISH CAMP

An essential stopping place from fishing grounds to Ta'an Kwäch'an villages, Helen's Fish Camp has historic significance and was once a bustling place. The distances between the fishing grounds to the villages was too far to travel to keep the fish in good condition before drying. Used to smoke fish and gather with friends and families, Helen's Fish camp was an important stomping ground. Today, Helen's Fish Camp continues to be an important gathering place for TKC and its citizens.

A number of buildings are scattered over the site. These include a cook shack, shelters for eating, wall tents, outhouses, a playground and a fish smoke house. The setting is exceptional with access to Lake Laberge, camping facilities and great views. One or two log cabins are being built on the site this year as part of a log cabin building course for First Nation participants.

Every summer, TKC hosts a culture camp at Helen's Fish Camp and during the summer of 2008, TKC hosted the Council of Yukon First Nations General Assembly. A number of other government and non-government organizations have used Helen's Fish Camp to host events.

Helen Fish Camp is TKC's only gathering place. It is a summer-only facility and the development of this site has been a topic of discussion and priority for TKC for many years. TKC citizens and leadership would like to see improved and winterized facilities that can increase the use of the area.

THE LABERGE VILLAGE

Ta'an Kwäch'än holds an area of land that is referred to as the *Reserve*. This section of land was originally negotiated by Chief Jim Boss at the turn of the century. This area comprises an estimated 11 homes. These homes are not serviced by a centralized water or sewer system nor is there access to waste management. The closest waste management facility is the Deep Creek dump. The village has a playground, skating rink and trails. The playground and skating rink require continuing maintenance.

The Village is within close proximity to Helen's Fish Camp. Decisions related to Helen's Fish Camp should involve citizens residing in the area. Close attention should be made to avoid duplicating services already provided or infrastructure already existing at the Village.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Ta'an Kwäch'än citizens who live within the City of Whitehorse have access to the City of Whitehorse waste management services including general waste pick-up and compost pick-up. Internal to the TKC Government building there is currently no special initiatives in place to reduce waste or re-direct waste from the landfill such as recycling and composting programs.

WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

Ta'an Kwäch'än citizens who live within the City of Whitehorse have access to water and sewer infrastructure. TKC is building its first subdivision. The residents living in the subdivision will rely on septic fields and individual wells for water treatment and water supply. A shared water treatment or waste management system would be a more sustainable option for TKC to consider for the future.

There is a significant amount of agricultural activity and residential development with individual outhouses and septic fields at the south end of Lake Laberge. The cumulative effects of the chemical fertilizers, pesticides and run-off minerals are of significant concern to TKC.

There is a capped well located on TKC Reserve land. However the well has never been used. It has never been equipped with a pump or connected with pipes. The location is considered too far from any homes to be considered economical to get water to the people who live in the area. There is another well in the Horse Creek area and potentially a third on a site specific location.

KISHWOOT ISLAND

Kishwoot Island is located off the bank of the Yukon River at the north end of town. The area is now known as *Whitehorse Waterfront*. Elders participating in the Community Sustainability planning process recall times when they would berry pick on the island.



The Kishwoot Island lease was established in 1991 between the Yukon Government and the City of Whitehorse for a term of 30 years. TKC selected the parcel during land claim negotiations. The parcel is subject to the existing lease agreement between the City and the Yukon Government.

For a number of years Kishwoot was accessible by a bridge that was maintained by the local Outdoors Club. In 2007, the City determined the bridge to be unsafe and the bridge was closed soon thereafter for safety reasons. The bridge is not included as part of the Kishwoot Lease Agreement between the two parties. The City has no plans for recreational development on the island and is asking Yukon Government to surrender the lease.

The fate of the bridge will necessitate consultation with Yukon Government, the City of Whitehorse and TKC. The department of Housing and Infrastructure is the lead department on this issue.

There is funding available from MRIF to either remove or retrofit the bridge once TKC has decided how they want to manage the island.

Recommendations

- The topic of housing requires some significant work to determine what the long term policy will be regarding home ownership and maintenance and operation of homes on TKC land.
- The TKC administrative building is not currently setting an example for environmental sustainability. Nor is it meeting TKC needs. The present building should be retrofitted and a greening the building program put in place. Gas Tax dollars could be a good fit for this work.
- A new administrative building should set standards for environmental sustainability.

- The present subdivision development does not set standards for environmental sustainability. Future subdivision development should incorporate environmental design and environmental standards. Gas Tax dollars could be used for water quality, waste water management systems or community energy systems.
- Helen's Fish Camp is a priority area for development and for the sustainability of Ta'an culture. Dollars should be allocated for creating a vision for the area as well as a site plan.
- TKC should ensure that the housing policy addresses ownership, care and maintenance of present and future TKC homes.

SELF RELIANCE

TKC is progressively building its governance model and capacity. TKC is interested in building the capacity of all staff and building the capacity of TKC citizens to work with TKC Government.

Many citizens are well-educated and occupy a diversity of positions throughout the Whitehorse community and beyond. Citizens interested in furthering their education may access training dollars. Community surveys and workshops facilitate prioritizing for education programs.

Today, TKC does not have a housing policy which deals with acquiring housing or covering rent/mortgage payments for citizens. As TKC develops their housing policy it will be a priority to maintain the self-reliance that many citizens presently demonstrate.

Problems associated with unemployment, substance abuse and other challenges related to lifestyle choices and health affect a number of citizens. Nurturing healthy, self-reliant citizens is a top priority. TKC citizens who live within close proximity to Whitehorse have access to the highest quality services available in the Yukon. In addition to the access to services offered to the general public in Whitehorse, TKC offers culturally oriented services.

Chief Jim Boss was a man of vision and action. His actions led to self-reliance. He set an example for all Yukon First Nations and is a great source of pride. He provides a rallying point for all Ta'an citizens.

Recommendations

- TKC housing policy should include maintaining and promoting self-reliance.
- Continue investing in citizen and staff capacity development (involving both training and organizational development).
- The memory of Chief Jim Boss inspires TKC citizens and staff and should be used to bring citizens together and to further the work of TKC in setting environmental, social, cultural and economic standards.
- TKC should continue to promote individual and community health (mental, physical, and financial) through TKC led initiatives.

SERVICE AGREEMENTS

TKC does not hold any service agreements with other Governments. This situation is expected to change in the near future as it is anticipated that service agreements may be necessary for road maintenance on TKC Lot C-23B located on the Mayo Road.



A photograph of a winter landscape. The foreground is a vast, flat expanse of snow, with a series of footprints leading from the bottom center towards the middle ground. The snow is bright white, and the sky is a pale, clear blue. In the background, there are dark, bare trees and a wooden fence or structure. The overall scene is peaceful and serene.

8. *Priorities*

PRIORITIES

The following priorities are those that most closely meet the criteria of the ICSP guidelines:

COMMUNITY GARDEN AND/OR GREENHOUSE

A community garden addresses all four of the TKC values for sustainability by providing a positive land-based activity for citizens. This project would contribute immensely to the overall well-being of the community and its self-reliance. TKC has observed the successes of Inuvik and Carmacks and wishes to pursue the opportunity for a community garden.

HELEN'S FISH CAMP

In the immediate future, TKC will be creating a design concept for Helen's Fish Camp. The goal is to develop the area for year-round gathering, based on state of the art green technology and energy principles. The facility as envisioned today should include a usable kitchen and facilities for proper water access and waste water treatment. Furthermore, the design is anticipated to include the following elements:

- Signage explaining the history and encouraging good stewardship of Helen's Fish Camp
- Composting toilets and grey water systems
- Waste management, composting and recycling systems
- Winterized structures
- Year-round road access
- Alternative energy source and green technology (solar and wind energy)
- Landscaping and camping facilities

GREEN SUBDIVISION

As stewards of the land TKC wishes to incorporate green principles to its land development initiatives. TKC would like to develop a green/ sustainable subdivision in Whitehorse. In doing so, TKC will ensure that the subdivision not only sets environmental standards but also reflects Ta'an Kwäch'än cultural and social values.

Key fundamentals of a green subdivision include but are not limited to:

- Building standards that encourage solar gain (window orientation and type), heat retention (R40 or more, and construction such as straw bale and rammed earth) and design restrictions such as maximum building heights.
- Smart lot design maintaining natural features and resources (e.g. north side tree barrier, south sun access) and promoting natural landscaping and urban agriculture. Ideally creating lots where moose and other wildlife can still inhabit and travel through.
- Care for water through grey-water recycling, run-off barriers for farming near waterways, sewage system such as swamp filtration or individual composting toilets.
- Use of alternative energy systems such as geothermal and district heating, solar or wind power.
- Location that maximizes accessibility to and from main services.

TKC ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING RETROFIT

There is the potential to significantly reduce energy use through investment in retrofits for the existing administrative building, thus reducing fossil fuels and resulting in lower energy bills. Savings could be allocated for other TKC priorities and funneled into programs and services. Potential building improvements include:

- Retrofitting windows, doors, flooring, insulation and exterior.
- Upgrading the existing heating system or replacing it with alternative energy systems and improving the overall air circulation.
- Allowing more natural light through additions and changes including: Skylights, larger windows and opening up the basement.
- Changing the lighting to Energy Efficient light bulbs.

- Using building height to increase space.
- Switching to energy efficient appliances and taking measures to reduce power consumption.
- Changing to grey-water recycling and low flush toilets.
- Placing recycling and compost bins throughout the building and working towards a paper free office.

NEW AND/OR REMODELED TKC ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING(S)

While changes may be made to the existing building in the short term, the existing building does not meet TKC's needs. The extent of retrofits required to bring the building to standards necessitate major systemic changes that may not be financially viable.

Hence, TKC will investigate the option of acquiring or building a new administrative building to meet its needs. A priority is to design this facility with energy efficiency and green design principles.

The new or remodeled administrative building(s) would be one that could be certified for meeting LEED environmental standards.

REDUCING VEHICLE EMISSIONS

TKC owns a fleet of vehicles that it uses for its operations. Upwards of 30 staff members travel to and from work every day. In order to reduce vehicle emissions, TKC has identified the following strategies:

- Convert trucks to hybrid and/or downsize where possible.
- Provide facilities such as lockers, showers and storage to encourage cyclists.
- Institute an Idle-free parking lot.
- Invest in a "Smart" car for use that does not involve passengers or hauling material.
- Promote carpooling.

WATER QUALITY RESEARCH

A significant amount of agricultural activity and residential development occurs around Lake Laberge. The chemical fertilizers, pesticides and run-off minerals enter the creeks and accumulate in places such as Shallow Bay and other outlets and increase contamination levels in Lake Laberge and its main tributaries.

Conducting research into the water quality in vicinity of Lake Laberge is a priority to TKC. Future studies should focus particular attention on the following topics:

- Natural springs for drinking water and the feasibility of setting up protection measures for these springs.
- Septic systems and contaminants around Lake Laberge.
- Cumulative effects of agricultural run-off.

ROADWAY & TRAILS RESEARCH & INVENTORY

The traditional territory is laced with roads and trails. Indeed, TKC traditional territory has the highest road density in Yukon. Some of these roads are in active operation while other roads are used for hunting and wilderness access. While the total extent of roads and trails may seem low, the incremental expansion of the road network associated with recreational pressures on the land has become a concern. Many trails and rough roads are not represented on legal or NTDB map sheets. The omission of these features paints a misleading picture of the overall development level in the territory. TKC is interested in researching and mapping roads and trails to determine how to manage access, long term road infrastructure development and cumulative impacts.

Contact Information

If you would like more information regarding the TKC Community Sustainability Plan, please contact:

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