



**WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council and District of Saanich
ÁTOL,NEUEL (“Respecting One Another”) Memorandum of Understanding**

FAQs
December 3, 2021

What is happening with the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council and District of Saanich?

- The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council (WLC) and the District of Saanich formalized their partnership and opportunities for collaboration with the signing of an ÁTOL,NEUEL (“Respecting One Another”) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The WLC collectively represents the Tsartlip, Tseycum, and Tsawout Nations.

Why are the WLC and Saanich doing this?

- The WLC and Saanich are committed to developing a strong and fair government-to-government relationship based on respect, co-operation, and partnership to address shared interests and priorities. In SENĆOŦEN, this is known as ÁTOL (respect), ČÁINEUEL (co-operation), and HIWESTEL (partnership). The MOU represents and formalizes this commitment

What is an MOU?

- A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is an agreement between two or more organizations indicating a commitment to common interests and actions.

What are the WLC and Saanich trying to achieve with this MOU?

- The MOU represents a commitment by the WLC and Saanich to develop a strong and fair government-to-government relationship based on respect, co-operation, and partnership to address shared interests and priorities.

What’s included in the MOU? What are the priorities?

- The MOU outlines key areas of interest and priorities within themes such as governance and implementation of MOU; environmental concerns; protection of ancestral sites; public art and education projects; economic development opportunities; and park management with respect to shared initiatives. In addition, priorities include Saanich Recognition of Douglas Treaty Rights and Oral History of the Douglas Treaties and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- You can read the full MOU at saanich.ca and wsanec.com.

Are there other areas for collaboration?

- The MOU is a starting point for continuing work over generations. Saanich and the WLC will meet regularly to determine opportunities for collaboration where appropriate.

Does Saanich have MOUs with any other organizations?

- Yes, Saanich has existing MOUs with the [University of Victoria](#) (UVic) and the Capital Regional District (CRD).
- The MOU with UVic builds on a shared vision for the region including collaborations on economic, social, environmental and technological interests.

Will Saanich establish MOUs with other First Nations?

- Saanich is committed to building relationships with neighbouring First Nation Governments. Further MOUs may be part of that process.

How was WLC involved in the Cordova Bay LAP?

- Saanich worked closely with the WLC in the development of the [proposed Cordova Bay Local Area Plan](#). The important feedback from the WLC on the plan, and the relationship that was built in the process, provided the seed for the discussion of topics beyond the scope of the LAP. This was the beginning of the work toward the MOU.

Will there be renaming of Saanich places, landmarks, etc. with Indigenous names?

- Pursuing place name changes, including street name changes, to recognize W̱SÁNEĆ names in SENĆOŦEN is a priority area within the MOU.

Why are place names important?

- Place names recognize Indigenous culture and history. Public art and other place-making initiatives provide ongoing opportunities for residents to learn, engage, and connect with W̱SÁNEĆ culture, history, and values.
- Place names provide a way to welcome and meaningfully include W̱SÁNEĆ Nation in the current fabric of the community, including renaming sites of significance.

How will this MOU tie into other Saanich processes?

- Saanich and WLC will continue to meet regularly to determine opportunities for collaboration where appropriate.
- The MOU will facilitate a greater level of cooperation and collaboration to examine the big picture.

How is the MOU related to Saanich's Strategic Plan?

- Council's [2019 to 2023 Strategic Plan](#) includes a strong focus on Indigenous relations as part of community well-being. Saanich's Strategic Plan goals in this area include the following:
 - Commit to a leadership role in reconciliations
 - Strengthen relationships with Indigenous populations
 - Implement projects and initiatives that improve government to government relationships

What are the benefits for the community?

- Non-ᵂSÁNEĆ community members have expressed a growing interest in connecting with the ᵂSÁNEĆ Nation. In response, members of the ᵂSÁNEĆ Nation have expressed interest in sharing information with Saanich related to ᵂSÁNEĆ history, culture, values, and territory. With this information, both communities can move toward reconciliation by practicing culturally-appropriate behaviour, caring for the environment, and treating ancestral and cultural places with respect.
- By creating public art, educational signage, and changing place names, the public will begin to learn about and respect ᵂSÁNEĆ culture, values, and history and the importance they play in their lives today.
- The rich learning and deepening understanding of ᵂSÁNEĆ culture will support Saanich residents on their paths of truth and reconciliation.

Was there an opportunity for public input on the MOU?

- The terms, themes and priorities of the MOU were established by the District of Saanich and the ᵂSÁNEĆ Leadership Council as the two governing bodies committed to the partnership.
- The goal for public involvement for this initiative is to inform the public and support community learning.

Are there resources available where I can learn more about Truth and Reconciliation?

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [Calls to Action](#) is available online.
- The Government of Canada has a [helpful website](#) with more information as a place to [begin your learning journey](#).
- The ᵂSÁNEĆ Leadership Council created a [settlers webpage](#) designed to help educate non-Indigenous people about the history, language, culture and land of the ᵂSÁNEĆ people.