

ReconciliACTION Oak Bay

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

ReconciliACTION Oak Bay is a collaboration of Oak Bay-based organizations deeply committed to building community to community relationships with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and to taking concrete action to advance the process of Reconciliation in order to build a just future together.

We are animated by the spirit of the Sno'uyutth Welcome Pole which was raised on the grounds of Oak Bay High School to “spread good energy” and symbolize the beginning of a new relationship between the Oak Bay community and the Songhees and Esquimalt peoples in whose traditional territory Oak Bay is situated.

We support public engagement and action around Truth-telling and Reconciliation to foster awareness of the importance and potential elements of Reconciliation.

Inspired by the need for local and national momentum around the calls for action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we seek, through collaboration and partnership, to extend the work of our participating organizations.

We also seek to support and encourage the commitment made by Oak Bay Council in March 2021 to explore “more meaningful and collaborative ongoing working relationships with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations” and “advance local initiatives and projects that achieve the goals and principles of Reconciliation and ultimately bring our communities closer together.”

ReconciliACTION Oak Bay was formed in September 2021. Among our potential activities in the first year are:

- establishing respectful relationships with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations;
- creating Oak Bay's own calls to action, both short and long term;
- developing a public engagement and action strategy focused on Truth-telling and Reconciliation between the Lək'wəṅən Nations and the Oak Bay settler community;
- partnering with Council and other community groups/organizations on activities and initiatives, where these are welcomed and determined to be of value by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations;
- supporting the Songhees Indigenous Marine Trail/participation in the Oak Bay marina lease/Spewhung redevelopment—as the most significant projects in front of us with the potential to advance Reconciliation in Oak Bay, particularly from an economic development perspective;

- building knowledge and awareness in our community through webinars/community education events (e.g. KAIROS blanket exercises) and reading/discussion groups on local, BC and Canadian history, Ləkʷəŋən knowledge and place names/ heritage, decolonization and structural racism etc.;
- revising the Oak Bay Community Green Map co-produced with the Songhees Nation in 2010;
- advocating for a prominent place for Reconciliation on the District of Oak Bay website—as a living community resource which collects and displays relevant information and resources as they are produced/become available;
- supporting heritage, conservation and school-community programs in partnership with Oak Bay groups (schools, churches, conservation, heritage, UVic, Council etc.).

Recognizing that the multiplicity of local jurisdictions and settler communities within Ləkʷəŋən territory seeking to advance reconciliation within their boundaries could easily create a burden on rather than support the expressed interests of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, ReconciliACTION Oak Bay will promote collaboration and coordination with other governments, organizations and initiatives in the region.

Our meetings will be held roughly monthly, with a rotating chair, to share information among our member organizations, coordinate activities and identify opportunities for collaboration.