



**Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw**  
Squamish Nation

a aa ch ch' e h i ii

**Skwxwú7mesh**

k k' kw kw' k k'

**Úxwumixw** kw

kw' l l' lh m m' n

ń **Naming** p p' s

sh t t' tl' ts ts' u

uu w **Guidelines**

w' xw x xw y y' 7

# **Guidelines for the use of Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh sníchim in the naming of buildings, streets, parks, and other assets.**

Version 1 January 2024



**Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumíxw**  
Squamish Nation

**Ta na wa Ns7éyxnitm ta Snewíyelh**  
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# Contents

**Glossary** \_\_\_\_\_ **4**

**Squamish Homelands** \_\_\_\_\_ **5**

**Introduction** \_\_\_\_\_ **7**

**General Principles** \_\_\_\_\_ **13**

**Naming Conventions** \_\_\_\_\_ **17**

**Process & Timeline** \_\_\_\_\_ **21**

# Glossary

**Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh**

*Squamish*

**Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (capitalized)**

*Squamish Nation*

**sníchim**

*language*

**Paháyikwup**

*Language Commission*

**Ta na wa Ns7éy̱nitm ta Snewíyelh**

*Language and Cultural  
Affairs*

**méhmen**

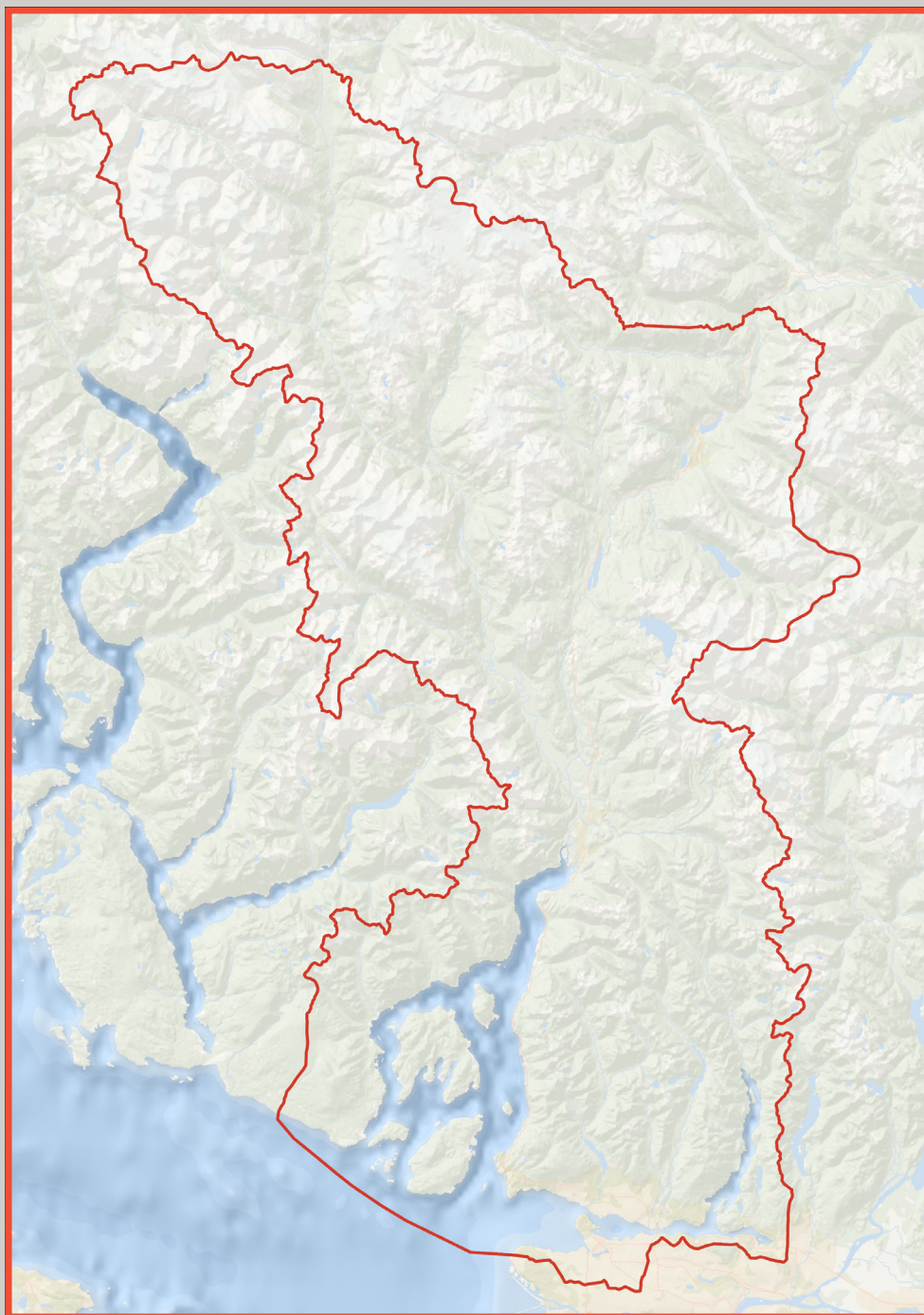
*children*

**úxwumixw (lower case)**

*community, people, village*

# Squamish Homelands

The map below identifies the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh homelands, within which a Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh sníchim name may be requested for the use of the Squamish Nation, Nation-owned entities, businesses or organizations operated by Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Members, as well as external agencies such as other types and levels of government, institutions, businesses, non-profit organizations, community groups, and others not listed here.



*Squamish Homelands*



# 1.0 Introduction

# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the guidelines for naming assets owned by Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), as well as assets owned by other governments or outside organizations. These guidelines set out the importance and significance of naming assets on Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) homelands, the current challenges for naming, and the intent of the guidelines.

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## Purpose of Guidelines

These guidelines outline Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw policy for naming new and as-yet unnamed Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw-owned assets, such as roads, community centres, and parks. It outlines the general principles, naming conventions, and process that is followed to request and select an appropriate name.

This document also serves as a guideline for other governments and organizations developing assets within the homelands of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw who wish to use a Skwxwú7mesh name for the naming of those assets. This may include organizations working within Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw communities or elsewhere on Skwxwú7mesh homelands, for example, a local government or institution based in a neighbouring municipality requesting a Skwxwú7mesh sníchim (Squamish language) name as part of their organization’s reconciliation efforts. Outside organizations need to take the opportunity to go beyond naming by educating the public about the name; for example, by providing a plaque explaining the name’s significance and making an audio recording of the pronunciation readily available, adding Skwxwú7mesh art, planting native plants, etc.



The guidelines are intended to ensure that Skwxwú7mesh names

- are appropriate and easily identified by the public and key services (such as emergency, postal and courier services)
- reflect the unique identity, culture, and environment of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw
- help tell the story of Skwxwú7mesh history, geography and heritage
- are selected through a consistent and transparent process for naming that ensures that the naming process incorporates the views of knowledge keepers and Skwxwú7mesh sníchim speakers and learners

The guidelines are also intended to ensure that the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw meets its strategic objective of increasing the use of Skwxwú7mesh names throughout Skwxwú7mesh homelands.

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## The Importance of Naming Buildings, Streets, and Other Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw Assets

There are many reasons Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw will name its own assets in Skwxwú7mesh sníchim. Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw is asserting their fundamental human right to name its own assets. This right is also spelled out in UNDRIP, Article 13:



*Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and **retain their own names for communities, places and persons.** [emphasis added]*



The FPCC Report on the Status of BC First Nations 2022 (p. 34) suggests that Nations promote the use of their languages in government and businesses, ensure that signage on reserve is in the Nation's language(s), and ask non-First Nations communities to provide signage in the language(s). Having guidelines will help increase the amount of signage around the Skwxwú7mesh homelands and will help support the Official Language Strategy (currently being drafted). It will also help Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw complete one of its strategic objectives, to increase the use of Skwxwú7mesh names throughout Skwxwú7mesh homelands.

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## **Context on Current Naming Challenges**

Naming practices vary across cultures and nations. Having appropriate names is important and will help protect Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw rights and title, as well as reaffirm the connection of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to the land and seas in our homelands. Names reflect the culture, history and landscape of a people, help tell stories about where we are now and how we got here. Historically, Skwxwú7mesh place names located landmarks and helped with navigation. Names also help identify where places are located, which is crucial in emergency situations.

Many Skwxwú7mesh place names have been displaced by European ones. These guidelines will help return to the original place names, especially for Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw assets.

Some challenges that exist include the following:

- Names are being used without consultation with Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (e.g., Ch'ich'iyúy for a new housing development in the downtown east side)
- Names are being created that look Skwxwú7mesh but are not (e.g., 7mesh)
- Names are sometimes not reflective of Skwxwú7mesh grammar


If names are to reflect Skwxwú7mesh values and worldview, the process outlined in these guidelines needs to be followed. It is not enough to simply have someone on your team or a consultant with Skwxwú7mesh heritage, though they may be able to provide other forms of cultural services. For outside organisations, it may be useful to have Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw branding somewhere so the community knows it has been provided by Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw and vetted by Paháyikwup (the Language Commission).

If your organization had previously used an inappropriate name in the naming of an asset, please reach out to us through the process outlined in this document to work with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to identify a more appropriate name or steps to rectify the error.

Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw reserves the right to decline a naming request.







# 2.0 General Principles

## General Principles

The following overarching principles must be considered in future naming of buildings and streets.

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### **Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh Values and Worldview**

The Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh values applicable to these guidelines are:

- **Úxwumixw** – names reflect the Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh people and Nation
- **Wanáxws** – names respect the knowledge of our ancestors and accurately relay that knowledge
- **Snewíyelh** – names are chosen after seeking advice from knowledge keepers and speakers, and reflect the faithful transmission and understanding of our cultural heritage

These guidelines recognize the Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh worldview, including a connection to the land and seas, reminding people that their families and stories are from specific places on the land. Reclaiming place names can teach Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh úxwumixw (the Squamish community) about the land and their culture and traditions, since place names communicate what the place was (or is) utilized for or its cultural/spiritual significance. The Elders have been meeting and naming locations after village sites to bring back awareness to Sḵw̱x̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw. Naming connects us to spirit.

These guidelines also recognize the importance for Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to use their sníchim in naming contemporary landscapes, buildings and/or features. They acknowledge the uniqueness and importance of the Skwxwú7mesh worldview and connection to both the people and the landscape. They will help re-establish Skwxwú7mesh place names on sites of importance, primarily village sites; place names may be used on a case-by-case basis for buildings and landscape features. These guidelines will help Skwxwú7mesh méńmen (Squamish children) born today to see Skwxwú7mesh sníchim and culture reflected to them across their homelands. Naming is an exercise in Skwxwú7mesh sovereignty and exercise in jurisdiction regarding Skwxwú7mesh homelands.

The first obligation is to our méńmen and future generations. Naming is an opportunity to use our language in a visible way throughout our homelands.

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**Who Should Use This Document**

Any person, department, or organisation who wishes to request and use a Skwxwú7mesh sníchim name for a building, street, etc. should use this document.

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**How Should This Document Be Used**

This document should be consulted before requesting a Skwxwú7mesh sníchim name. It will be amended as needed.

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## **Principles of Naming in Overlapping Territories**

Where possible, names will be shared with neighbouring Nations, for example, sθəqəlxenəm ts'exwts'áxwi7 Park (Rainbow Park) in downtown Vancouver, which has both a hə́h'qəmíhə́h' name (the language of the Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh) and a Skwxwú7mesh sníchim name.

Where only one name is to be chosen, the requester needs to let each of the Nations with homelands in the overlapping region know before they begin the naming process.

It is the responsibility of the requester to communicate and coordinate with all Nations with homelands relevant to their naming request.







# 3.0 Naming Conventions

# Naming Conventions

Names have cultural significance, and what counts as a name varies across cultures. In English, place names (names we give to locations, aka toponyms) are a type of proper name (names we give to people, places, organizations, days of the week, etc., aka orthonyms). The names we give to people (personal names) are often used in names of buildings or organizations in English. The distinction between personal names and other types of proper names in English is not strong.

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## Personal Names

Sḵw̱wú7mesh personal names are generally not used in naming of buildings, organizations, etc. While we acknowledge that English names for Sḵw̱wú7mesh people have been used for buildings, streets, etc., this is not a practice for the Nation going forward for the names of buildings, streets, etc. in Sḵw̱wú7mesh sníchim.

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## Location

Assets may be named by location, on a case-by-case basis, using place names in Sḵw̱wú7mesh sníchim, for example, Xwemélch'stn Etsímxwa'wtxw, which literally means 'Capilano littlest ones' building' and is often translated as 'Capilano Littlest Ones School'. The correct place name must be used, as determined by Sḵw̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw. Place names are part of the Sḵw̱wú7mesh education of méh'men and would have been shared with neighbours and enemies.

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**Type of Use/What Takes Place at the Location**

Assets will be named preferably by a descriptive in Skwxwú7mesh sníchim (e.g., ayás lań 'peaceful house'). These descriptives will often describe what the building is used for, how it will be used, who will be using it, or the type of activity that takes place at the location. This reflects long-standing place naming in Skwxwú7mesh sníchim, for example, St'ít'ewekw' (now known as Second Beach), which describes a place where there is a lot of diatomaceous earth that could be dug up.

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**Culture and Heritage**

Names will reflect the culture and heritage of the Skwxwú7mesh people. This could include mentions of animals that are or were found at a particular location, plants that are or were harvested in that location, or other culturally relevant activities that take or took place there.

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**Other Criteria**

Where possible, duplicates will be avoided. Place names are sometimes used in multiple locations, but for assets, names will be distinct, even if they use a place name. Simplicity of pronunciation will not be a consideration. However, recognizable words may be preferred.

Skwxwú7mesh names will not necessarily be a direct translation from English. Each language has its own word-building rules and grammar that do not correspond one-to-one. Phonetic spellings will not be provided, as the English alphabet is unable to represent Skwxwú7mesh sounds in most cases. Where possible, an audio recording will be provided. We encourage the use of QR codes to allow people to hear and correctly pronounce the chosen name.

All spellings must be accurate. Ta na wa Ns7éyxnitm ta Snewíyelh (Language & Cultural Affairs) must check all names multiple times before production. A final review before going to print must be completed by two language teachers in Ta na wa Ns7éyxnitm ta Snewíyelh to ensure the correct spelling. A log of all previously used names will be kept so that names are not given to multiple buildings, streets, etc.





# 4.0 Process & Timeline

# Process & Timeline

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**Overview of Process**

Naming requests take time, as they go through many layers. All naming requests are administered through the Language & Cultural Affairs department. Requests for Skwxwú7mesh names must go through the process outlined below, including requests by internal requests by other Nation departments and external requests from other types and levels of government, businesses, institutions, non-profit organizations, community groups, and others that may not be listed here.

**Cost for Requesting a Name**

The Ta na wa Ns7éyxnitm ta Snéwíyelh (Language & Cultural Affairs) team maintains a fee schedule for requesting a name, which includes a sliding scale that factors in different types of requests and the level of time required to respond. The fee schedule will be provided to the requester immediately after a request has been received. If a requester would like to consult the fee schedule prior to submitting a request, please contact [language\\_culture@squamish.net](mailto:language_culture@squamish.net).

**Obligations for Requesters**

By requesting a Skwxwú7mesh name, a requester commits to engaging respectfully with Skwxwú7mesh language and cultural practices, including using selected names only as intended. This may include additional requests from the Nation, such as planting appropriate plants that reflect the given name. The given name is not to be used for other purposes outside the original request.

Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw reserves the right to decline a naming request.

## Steps for Requesting a Name



1. **Request:** A requester submits an initial inquiry is submitted to [language\\_culture@squamish.net](mailto:language_culture@squamish.net). (See Appendix for internal and external translation request forms.) Once a request is received, a fee schedule will be provided to the requester.



2. **Translators:** The Ta na wa Ns7éyxnitm ta Snewíyelh (Language & Cultural Affairs) team then works internally with the language teachers to identify possible names. As the translators are teachers, translations and names are dependent on teaching schedules.



3. **Paháyikwup:** The Ta na wa Ns7éyxnitm ta Snewíyelh (Language & Cultural Affairs) then forward the request to Kwétsiúit na wa Nexwníwmintúmulh (Squamish Nation Advisory Committee; SNAC) (if necessary) and Paháyikwup. SNAC meets once a month and Paháyikwup meets twice a month, so requesters should keep that timeframe in mind when requesting a name.



4. **Name:** Requesters will be emailed with the name, along with audio recordings (where relevant/possible). Names will be added to the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw archival database, to ensure that names are not duplicated.



5. **Final Check:** Requesters will send mock-ups or proofs to ensure the correct spelling (including all diacritics, such as stress marking (e.g., á) and glottalization (e.g., ́)) to [language\\_culture@squamish.net](mailto:language_culture@squamish.net). Ta na wa Ns7éyxnitm ta Snewíyelh teachers will do a final check.

Following Skwxwú7mesh values and worldview:

**Haw chet k'alh i wa ts'áyx̣tsut t'l'at wa ts'its'áp'**

*We don't rush our work.*

**Chet wa ayát**

*We are gentle with it.*







a a a ch ch' e h i i i k

k' kw kw' k k' kw

kw' l l l h m m' n n' p

p' s sh t t' t l' t s t s' u

u u w w' x w x xw

y y' 7 a a a ch ch' e

h i i i k k' kw kw'

k k' kw kw' l l l h

m m' n n' p p' u u w