

# Sustainability at Musqueam

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*x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm*, Musqueam means place of *məθk<sup>w</sup>əy* in the *hənqəmiməm* language. *məθk<sup>w</sup>əy* is a flowering plant which grows in the Fraser River estuary in the tidal flats and marsh lands. At Musqueam “our people do not simply belong to the land, the river, the living creatures here; we are those places and beings” (Musqueam A Living Culture, 2006). The popularized definition of sustainability defined by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 is: “development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UNECE). At Musqueam Sustainability is not a term to define; it is a worldview woven into the very fibre of the culture and tradition of the Musqueam people. This past summer two events shaped the conversation regarding the definition of sustainability. On June 17th the Harper government approved the Northern Gateway Pipeline and on August 4th the Mount Polley Mine tailings pond dam broke spilling heavy metals into BC waters. These two events brought sustainability to the forefront and demonstrated the fragility of the ecosystem.

## What is sustainability?

AN ELDER SAYS... RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER AND RESPECT FOR LAND

A CHILD SAYS... SUSTAINING LIFE

A PARENT SAYS... ACHIEVING BALANCE

*Sustainability is listening:*

- *To the voices of the community*
  - *The stories of past generations*
  - *The wisdom of children*
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The overarching purpose of this project is to identify how the Musqueam community understands sustainability.

This project was completed in partnership with the University of British Columbia and Musqueam First Nation as part of the Sustainability Scholar program. The program provides graduate students with placements working on community projects regarding sustainability. As a result of confidentiality requirements at Musqueam First Nation, the discussion section of the report is for Musqueam First Nation only. The results gathered through a variety of different community engagement activities will be used to shape the direction of future sustainability projects at Musqueam and to further the sustainability objectives outlined in the Musqueam Comprehensive Community Plan. It is preliminary research that works to identify key issues and priorities from the perspective of the community.

This project was undertaken with two main goals. The first goal was to assess how the community perceives sustainability on the reserve today and the second goal was to identify concerns and priorities. These goals work to further the objectives of the Musqueam Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP). The CCP Core objectives are: *Become a self-sufficient, self-governing Musqueam Nation and to become a complete and healthy Musqueam community.* The Community Objective relating to sustainability outlined in the CCP is: *Protect our environment and conserve natural resources for our future use.*