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Squamish Nation



Señákw Development

Art Integration Plan

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2024.03.20



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Kitsilano Welcome Totem, Darren Yelton, 2006. (Image Credit: senakw.com).

Introduction

Señákw is a place with a rich indigenous history. Many stories of transformation and change have occurred within this area throughout the history of the Squamish People. The Señákw Development will serve as a means to continue this tradition of storytelling through thoughtful design, planning and implementation.

Art has the unique ability to act as physical manifestation of the Squamish stories. It is a vessel through which residents and visitors alike find new meanings of engagement with the Land and the Water, and rekindle the memories that the identities and voices of the Squamish People are built upon. It has the power to connect people and place through time.

The Señákw Art Integration Plan outlines the vision and approach of potential cultural art opportunities within the development. It provides a road map to a thoughtful and inclusive process, with the ultimate goal of showcasing the Squamish stories, their values and teachings.



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Part 1.

The Señákw Development



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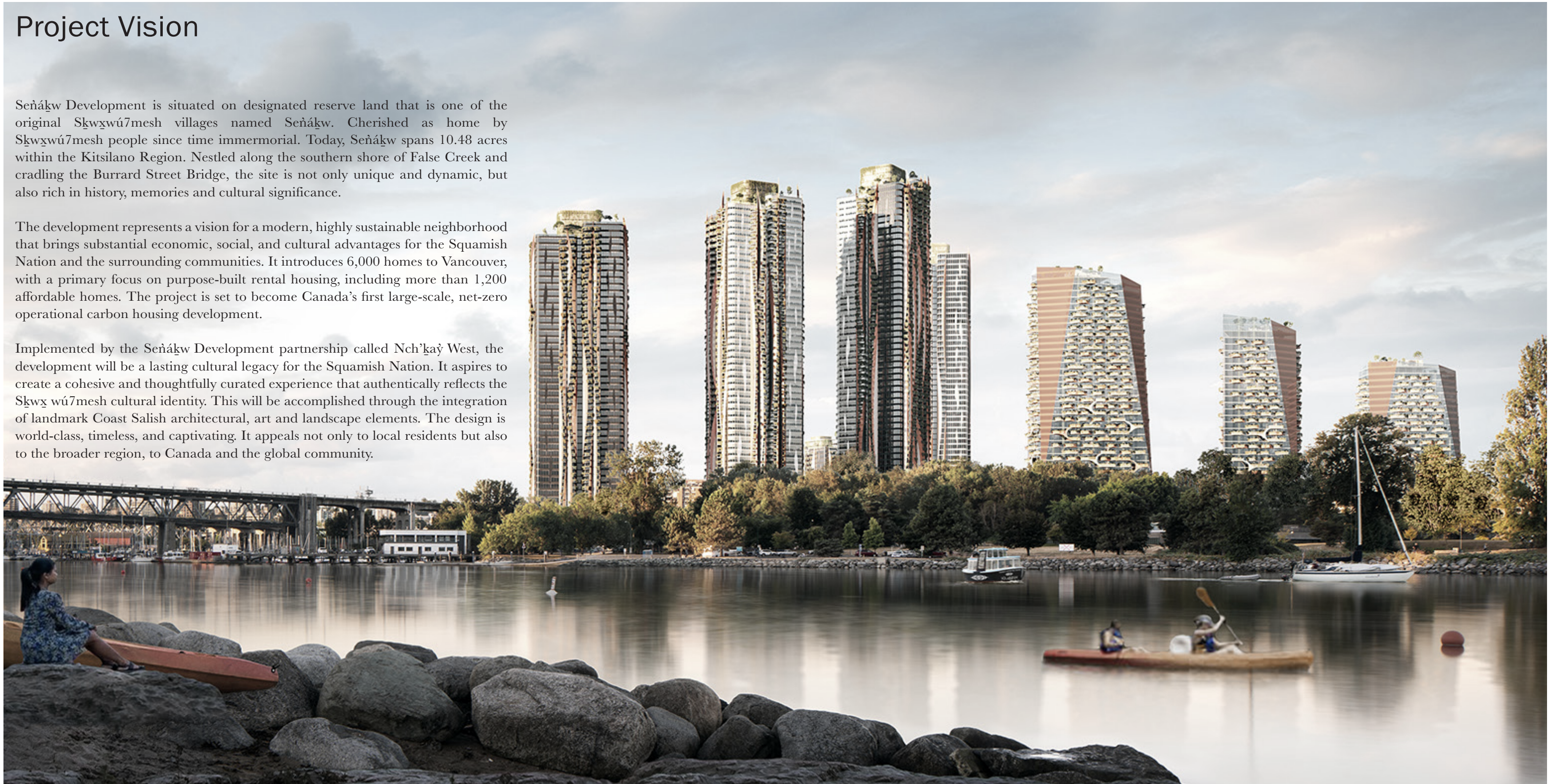


Project Vision

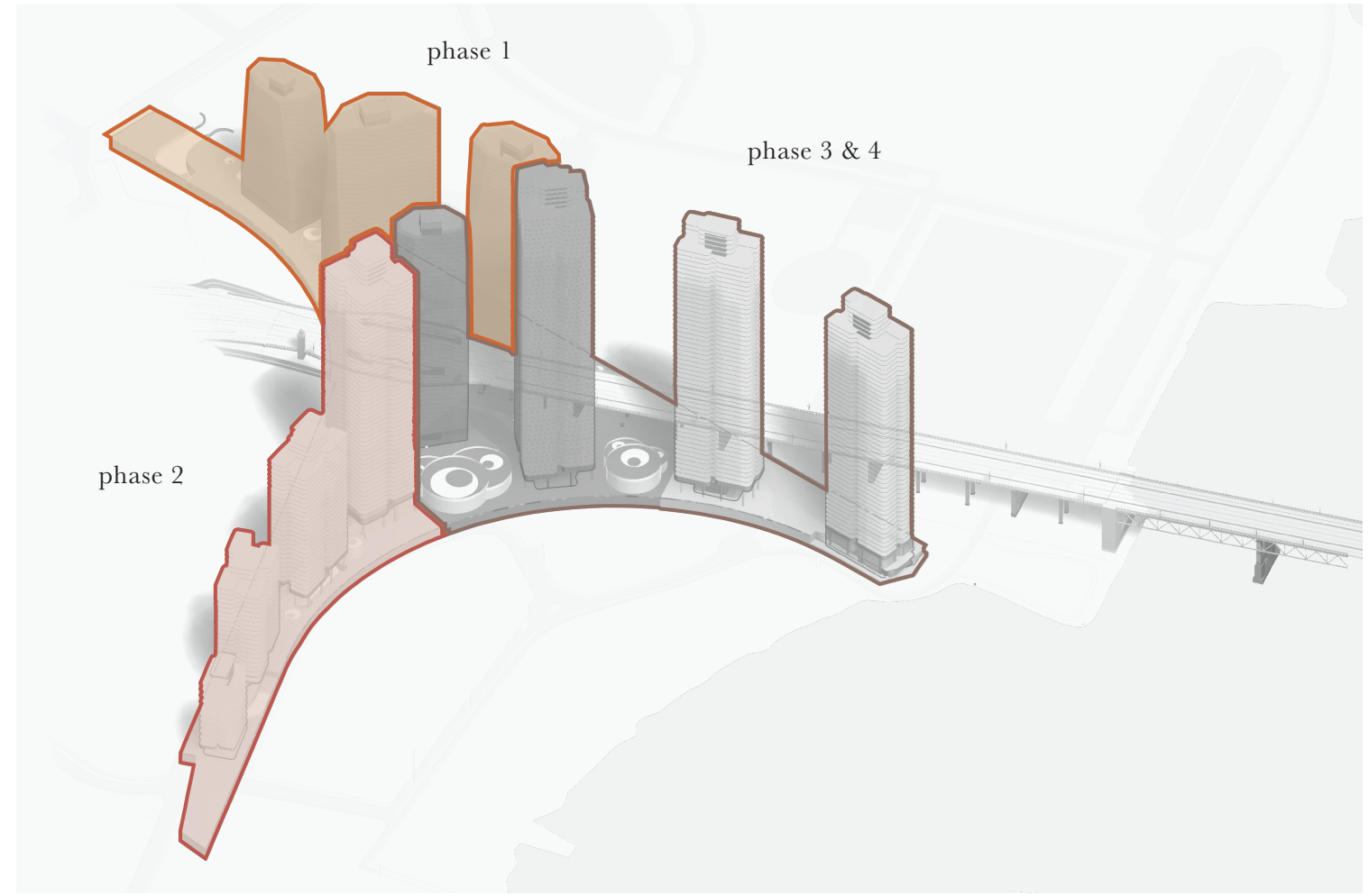
Señákw Development is situated on designated reserve land that is one of the original Skw̓wú7mesh villages named Señákw. Cherished as home by Skw̓wú7mesh people since time immemorial. Today, Señákw spans 10.48 acres within the Kitsilano Region. Nestled along the southern shore of False Creek and cradling the Burrard Street Bridge, the site is not only unique and dynamic, but also rich in history, memories and cultural significance.

The development represents a vision for a modern, highly sustainable neighborhood that brings substantial economic, social, and cultural advantages for the Squamish Nation and the surrounding communities. It introduces 6,000 homes to Vancouver, with a primary focus on purpose-built rental housing, including more than 1,200 affordable homes. The project is set to become Canada's first large-scale, net-zero operational carbon housing development.

Implemented by the Señákw Development partnership called Nch'kaŸ West, the development will be a lasting cultural legacy for the Squamish Nation. It aspires to create a cohesive and thoughtfully curated experience that authentically reflects the Skw̓ wú7mesh cultural identity. This will be accomplished through the integration of landmark Coast Salish architectural, art and landscape elements. The design is world-class, timeless, and captivating. It appeals not only to local residents but also to the broader region, to Canada and the global community.



View of Señákw Development from Sunseet Beach. (Image Credit: senakw.com)



Left: Aerial View of Senakw Development. | Right: Phasing Diagram. (Image Credit: senakw.com).

Phasing & Timeline

1. Phase 1 - Located to the west of the Burrard Street Bridge, this phase encompasses three residential towers and comprises over 1,400 units. It also includes more than 37,700 square feet of ground-oriented commercial spaces and a district energy plant.
2. Phase 2 - Situated to the south of the bridge, Phase Two comprises three residential towers housing over 1,500 units, a commercial tower and a daycare facility.
3. Phase 3 & 4 - These phases occupy the remaining eastern portion of the development. Currently, there are plans for over 3,000 residential units in these final phases. At the ground level are pavilions and spaces designated for various commercial and communal purposes.

Commencing in 2022, this project is projected to reach completion by 2030. Phase 1 and 2 are on track to be finalized by 2027, while planning for Phase 3 and 4 is currently underway.



Overall Project Site Plan

Phase 1

- T1 - Residential Tower 1 - 26 storeys
- T2 - Residential Tower 2 - 32 storeys
- T3 - Residential Tower 3 - 41 storeys
- P1 - Pavilion 1: Wellness Centre

Phase 2

- T4 - Office Tower 4 - 12 storeys
- T5 - Residential Tower 5 - 22 storeys
- T6 - Residential Tower 6 - 30 storeys
- T7 - Residential Tower 7 - 53 storeys
- P2 - Pavilion 2: Daycare

Phase 3 & 4

Currently under planning



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Architecture & Public Realm Design

Rooted in the abundant cultural traditions of the Squamish Nation and their profound connection to Nature, the architecture and public realm design at Señákw takes inspiration from their traditional oral storytelling that speaks to the Squamish People's intimate relationship with the Land and the Water. It reimagines the concept of 'Towers in the Park'. Bright, open courtyards, liberated ground planes, rich and vibrant multi-tiered landscape for social spaces, commercial and recreational activity will be created, and artistic interventions that seek to enrich the natural and cultural contexts of the site.

A total of eleven towers will be constructed, surrounded by public spaces that include neighbourhood amenities such as restaurants, a fitness centre, a grocery store and a daycare. In collaboration with the City Parks Board, new outdoor sport and leisure facilities below the weather protection of the existing Burrard bridge will be enjoyed by residents and the general public throughout the year.

The Señákw Development envisions a more comprehensive, sustainable, and integrated multi-modal transportation network, it provides significant opportunities to bolster economic and cultural growth in the region. Moreover, it presents the possibility of improving transverse connectivity through the revitalization of the streetcar line, an upgraded aqua bus, ferry services, and enhanced cycling options.



View of Burrard Street Bridge through Señákw Development. (Image Credit: senakw.com)





Left: View of Señákw Development from Vanier Park | Right: “Long Tower” typology. (Image Credit: senakw.com).

Building Design

Phase 1 and 2 of the Señákw Development has naturally emerged from a series of urban design, programmatic and aspirational influences that respond to the unique location and historic context of the site. It presents two main building typologies, both of which draw inspiration from the breathtaking Salish coastline, the lush forests, and their deep terrains, embracing the diverse and abundant nature of its colour palettes.

Building Typologies

The Phase 1 ‘Mountain tower’ typology has an organic massing with abstracted balconies forms reflecting the rugged, earthy, and musky qualities of mountain

terrain, cave ponds, evergreen forests, waterfalls, and sea clouds. It incorporates heavier, dimmed tones that echo the depth of the earth.

In contrast, the Phase 2 ‘long tower’ typology embodies a soft, undulating, and alluvial wave-like flow, capturing the lighter and gentler natural tones reminiscent of the traditional long houses of the Squamish village.

The ‘coming together’ of these two diverse, yet characteristically similar typologies endorses an urban dialogue with a broader vision of coexistence. In this spirit, the project recognizes the site’s historic roots while celebrating the path to its future. Designs for Phase 3 and 4 are currently in progress.



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Left: public realm under Burrard Bridge | Right: pavilion design. (Image Credit: senakw.com)

Public Realm Design

An important goal for the Señákw project is to form a seamless integration of art with the functional design of built form— an expression of the site’s rich cultural context as an embedded, interactive story that unfolds each day through its experience.

The art will be created by Squamish artists in a collaborative process blending artistic narratives with the tectonic language of architecture, balancing form with function. The perception of art through the lens of ‘lived experience’ is a transformative experience. It empowers the spirit of community and enriches the lives of residents, visitors, and the broader urban community.

Urban Design as a Sustainable Legacy

Señákw is a celebration of the Squamish Nation’s indigenous-based values centered on nature, well-being and community while showcasing the nation’s history

and culture. Designing in step with nature allows opportunities to employ natural light, air, water and movement through the site to nurture the spirit of healthy living and community. With the same lenses, we also reflect on the significance of the Land and Water as an attitude to site design.

As a gesture of paying homage to the Land and the Water, the design team proposes to develop this prominent site with a unique and cohesive strategy that we call the ‘Village in the Park’.

This alternate strategy essentially liberates the ground plane by lifting the main mass of the towers above to maximize its offering back to the public realm. An orchestra of crescent-shaped pavilions and integrated landscapes are organically arranged within a new urban park, activating the social and ecological fibres of this new regenerative ground plane.



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Part 2.

Art in Senákw



The Squamish Story

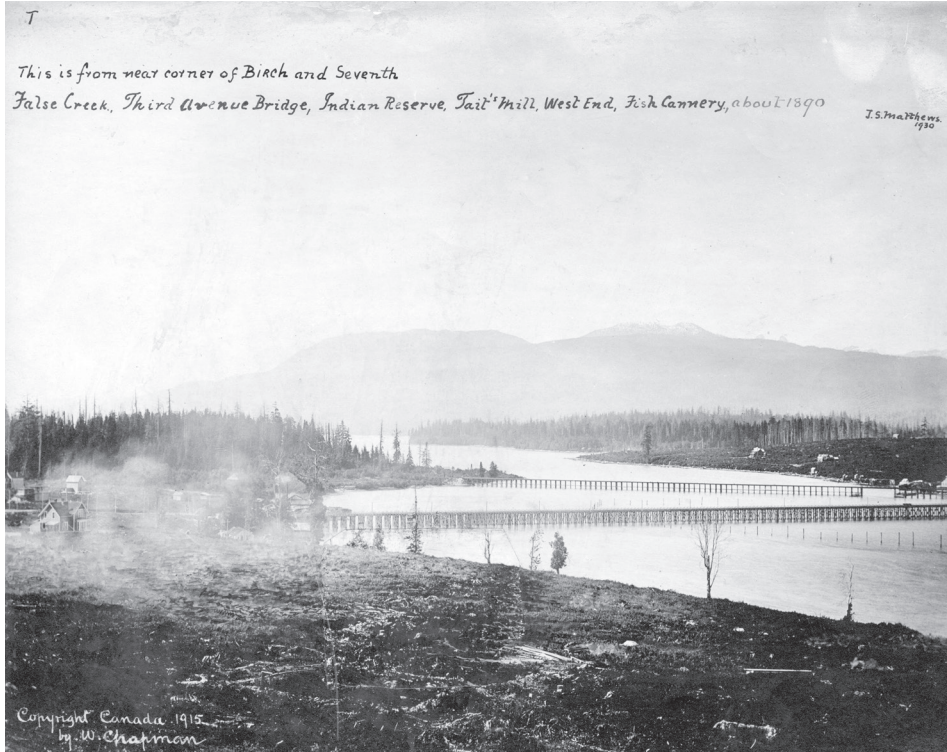
“A child born today will be able to walk with guidance, confidence, support, identity and independence in the life they choose and see Squamish language and culture reflected to them anywhere in the traditional territory.”

- Squamish Nation Strategic Plan 2020-23

The Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) culture is created from the land, water, and people over many generations. This land has bore witness to the settlements and ceremonies of their ancestors. It provides resources for food, medicine, and ritual. Enduring stories speak to the importance to the Squamish people of being near moving water. Rivers, streams, ocean tides, lakes through which waters flow from the mountains to watershed, into estuaries and the ocean. Water is a cleansing and life supporting force with the tremendous power to both sustain us and subsume us. People are humble to water.

Señákw and the surrounding lands have been occupied by the Squamish Nation since before recorded time. The name Señákw – interpreted as “The place inside the head of False Creek” – speaks to the Nation’s deep roots and connection to the land. It has been a place of gathering, culture, spirituality, and governance in a vibrant, Coast Salish village.

Squamish storytellers have the immense and important role of being historians in the community. History, law, and other knowledge and teachings were all preserved and transmitted through oral traditions, in stories based upon significant events or people in Squamish histories. Myths or legends were used to teach morals and values to the children and youth. In looking towards the future of Señákw, we seek to continue this tradition of storytelling and protect what was provided by the Squamish ancestors for the next generation.



Top Left: Señákw from Birch & 7th looking towards the North Shore mountains, 1890.

(Image Credit: City of Vancouver Archives).

Top Right: Señákw from Vanier Park, looking towards the North Shore mountains, 2023.

Bottom Left: Squamish Children (Image Credit: squamish.net).

Bottom Right: Señákw, 1891. (Image Credit: City of Vancouver Archives).

Señákw Art Program

Program Overview

A pivotal element within the landmark vision of the Señákw Art Program is to express the history, culture and values of the Squamish Nation through art. Squamish Art serves as a conduit to express, inspire, and reinforce the spiritual connections binding humanity to the land and water, uniting individuals across generations and fostering community bonds. It also bridges the realms of the Past, Present, and Future. The essence of Squamish Art remains deeply rooted in and aligned with the foundational principles of the Squamish Nation, steadfastly upholding these cherished values.

Guided by the wisdom and leadership of the Squamish People, the Squamish Art Program has been conceived in tandem with the overall project planning. This program's purpose is to formulate, strategize, and execute a long-term initiative focused on curating indigenous artworks tailored to specific locations. These artworks not only showcase the extraordinary talents of Squamish artists but also provide a platform to weave their cultural narratives into the integral fabric of the development.

Within the overarching framework of architectural and interior design, as well as the interconnected public spaces throughout the development, there lie myriad opportunities to convey the rich tapestry of Squamish stories. Throughout the expansive 10.5-acre landscape, numerous art installations, each characterized by diverse concepts and expressions, will be integrated. Various art forms, materials, and crafts will be employed to bring these narratives to life. These artworks will not only harmonize with the architectural and public elements of the entire development but will also stand as independent and evocative expressions, harnessing the unique potential of art in storytelling.



Weaving blanket, Anjeanette Dawson. (Image Credit: Squamish Nation Archives).



Theme “Voices of Our Land and Water”

Art in public spaces serves as place-makers, fulfilling a vital role in creating vibrant public realms and nurturing livable communities. They engage in a perpetual visual dialogue with their surroundings, enriching the overall spatial experience often engaging the people using the space aesthetically, intellectually, and spiritually.

The architecture, interior design, and public spaces of the Señákw development find its inspiration from the majestic Salish coastline, the lush forests, the deep terrains, and the magnificent colours found in its sublime nature. Therefore, the art within this development builds upon these elements of our natural world, principles which hold profound significance for the Squamish People.

The Squamish Nation’s vision for the future is for all to understand the value of their land and water, which also bear witness to their history and lessons from their culture. The art theme “Voices of Our Land and Water” reinforces the Squamish belief that the Land and Water hold deep spiritual significance and maintain a profound interconnectedness with their People. This relationship continues to inspire the Squamish expression in its various art forms and its profound bond with the environment.

Image Credits (Left to Right):

Jody Broomfield / Salishart.com
James Harry / Jamesharry.ca



Stan Joseph - Welcome Figure West Vancouver. (Image Credit: Squamish Nation Archive).

Guiding Principles in Design

1. Reflect the vision and spirit of Señákw.
2. Thoughtfully considers and respects indigenous connection to the Land and Water contextually, socially and culturally.
3. Develop a sense of place, community pride and identity.
4. Reflect the thematic “Voices From Our Land and Water”.
5. Reflect traditional Squamish style that are also contemporary.
6. Demonstrate artistic merits that delight and inspire.
7. Enhances experience, the environment and its neighboring communities.
8. Thoughtfully integrate with architecture.
9. Stands the test of time and meets maintenance requirements.
10. Delivered within approved budget and in line with established project timeline.

Art Budget

The allocated Squamish art budget for Phase One and Two of the Señákw development is \$600,000 CAD and \$1,600,000 CAD, respectively.

The table below summarizes potential art opportunities, their types, locations, and proposed budget allocations. These budget allocations are suggestive and may be subject to reconsideration and revision over time.

In addition to the budget allocated for artists for the design and fabrication of artworks (or design only, depending on the nature of the artwork), the total art budget includes honorariums, consultant and administrative costs. Nch'kaŸ West retains the right to select additional artists and designs, potentially increasing the budget to compensate the artists. Furthermore, Nch'kaŸ West reserves the right to award a single artist or artist team more than one series of works.



Squamish Nation Carving (Image Credit: squamish.net)

Se'ákw Art Opportunities

Indigenous art has a long tradition of creatively utilizing materials sustainably sourced from Nature. For the Squamish People, practices such as wood carving, metalwork, and weaving have been integral to their way of life. These traditions not only embody a profound connection to their land and water, but also chronicle many legends and lessons as heirlooms for young generations. In recent years, these traditional craft forms have found new avenues of expression in the realm of public art, fabricated in innovative ways to fulfill pragmatic and spatial needs, while respectful to the Squamish tradition.

The selection of art types and their respective placements is the result of a collaborative process involving Squamish leaders and the project design team. Numerous factors inform these possibilities and decisions, encompassing experiential aspects such as sightlines and access; thematic relevance; as well as practical considerations including operational, maintenance needs, structural and spatial compatibility, safety, and

Art Locations

1. Building Exterior & Public Realm:

Artworks located on building exteriors can take the form of freestanding pieces or be integrated into the architectural design, including the building's envelope. They can also function as site furniture, thoughtfully designed as part of the public realm and landscaping. Artworks placed in these exterior spaces are exposed to the elements, such as sun, rain, and snow, as well as human interaction. Therefore, they must be designed to endure such exposure.

2. Building Interior, Conditioned:

Artworks situated within the building's interior can manifest as freestanding pieces or become an integral part of the interior design elements, including interior furnishings. Alternatively, they can be curated art pieces positioned within dedicated interior spaces for viewing, akin to a gallery setting. Art in these areas is shielded from the weather, affording greater flexibility in terms of the chosen medium. Display options may include pieces with or without protective glass cases.

3. Covered, Unconditioned Space:

A small quantity of artworks find their home in covered yet unconditioned spaces, such as underground parking areas. These artworks are typically color and graphic applications on building surfaces.



Left to Right:

Typha - Puya Khahili, Charlotte Wall. 3D sculpture with integrated lighting.

Water off A Duck's Back - Douglas Coupland. 3D sculpture integrated with water fountain.

Spawning - Pat Talmey. 2D sculpture stand-off from wall.

Off-centre - Renee Van Halm. 2D glass artwork.

Vancouver Convention Centre - Derek Root. 2D interior tile pattern. (Image Credit: Derek Root).

Art Types

1. Three-dimensional Artwork:

Three-dimensional artwork encompasses welcome figures, sculptures, and artifacts that occupy a tangible space. Depending on their nature and intended location, these pieces can be crafted from materials like wood, cut metal plates (aluminum or steel), or cast bronze. They may also serve as site furniture or functional elements. Installation can occur in both exterior and interior spaces by anchoring onto bases or wall surfaces. To fully appreciate their physicality and interaction with space and light, three-dimensional artworks are best experienced from multiple vantage points. Sightlines are of paramount importance for these artworks, as their aesthetics and craftsmanship shine through from various perspectives. Typically, artists handle the fabrication of three-dimensional artworks.

Certain 3D artwork - including waterjet cut metal plates, shallow relief bronze casts, and wood carvings, has a shallower profile. They are usually affixed to wall surfaces in a manner that allows the artwork to stand as an independent creation. These artworks may also serve as secondary claddings atop building elements in exterior spaces, often designed with integrated lighting.

2. Two-dimensional Artwork:

Two-dimensional artwork encompasses a broad range of mediums and expressions. These artworks consist of artist-designed art, graphics, or patterns applied onto the surfaces of building or interior design surfaces. Examples include printing on wallpapers or fabrics (such as blankets, curtains, or rugs), painting, stenciling, or shallow engraving on building surfaces. They can employ two tones, stenciled or engraving effects, or multiple colours suitable for high-resolution printing. Due to the adaptable nature of this art application method, the artwork or pattern can be applied to multiple locations, creating a visual theme throughout a space or building. These applications can be situated either exteriorly or interiorly, contingent upon the location and substrate material. The Project Team typically oversees the fabrication of this type of artwork, with artists primarily responsible for submitting high-resolution graphics.

3. Glass Artwork:

Glass artworks are special two-dimensional art pieces applied to either exterior or interior glazing. They engender captivating interactions with space and light. Several techniques exist for applying art onto glass, contingent upon the desired visual effects and the technical specifications of the glass itself. Art applied to exterior glazing, as part of the building envelope, must meet stringent technical requirements. Currently, large-scale glass artworks are manufactured overseas, which necessitates additional considerations such as cost management, logistics for shipping and port entry, CSA standards compliance, and more. Placement of glass art is another crucial aspect, given the potential for breakage.

4. Curated Art and Artifacts:

Frequently, artists create smaller artworks designed for gallery settings. Senákw offers numerous opportunities for displaying this type of artwork. These can take the form of dedicated exhibit locations within amenity rooms or other public or semi-public spaces where Squamish art pieces or artifacts can be showcased. The selection of these artworks follows a separate process and will be directly overseen by the Squamish cultural team as part of a rotational exhibit(s).

Artist Selection Process



Squamish Nation Carving (Image Credit: squamish.net)

Process Overview

The Squamish Nation recognizes its fiduciary duty to create equitable opportunities for all Squamish Nation artists through a transparent and impartial Request for Proposal (RFP) process. This process includes an artist call and subsequent artist selection, fostering submissions of Squamish Coast Salish art style proposals for various art installations within the Señákw development.

For each RFP, a Selection Panel will be constituted. This panel will comprise members from the Protocol and Public Relations branch of the Chair and Council Office, the Language and Cultural Affairs Department, Squamish Nation knowledge keepers (such as elders and/or artists), and a representative from the external partnering organization in the project. Additionally, if there are fabrication or installation elements requiring technical expertise, a technical expert may be included in the selection panel. On occasions when a non-employee of the Squamish Nation joins the panel, these individuals, whether artists, knowledge keepers, or elders with an understanding of Coast Salish art, will be duly compensated for their time through an honorarium.

An independent art consultant, possessing expertise and knowledge in public art practice, will facilitate and manage the artist selection process. This consultant will work closely with the Squamish Nation and the project design team to ensure successful integration of art and architecture, both from a curatorial and technical standpoint.

One-Stage vs. Two-Stage Process

The nature of each specific opportunity will determine whether the RFP entails a One-Stage or Two-Stage Artist Selection Process. The selection panel will have the discretion to choose between these approaches.

One-Stage Artist Selection Process:

In this process, the artist or artist team submits an art design that aligns with the installation specifications at the time of submission. The Selection Panel makes its decision based on the artist or artist team's application package and the submitted art design. This approach is typically suitable for two-dimensional artwork intended for fabrication by external parties.

Two-Stage Artist Selection Process:

For this process, the artist or artist team responds to the artist call, demonstrating their qualifications for the specific art opportunity. The Selection Panel shortlists several artists to proceed to the second stage. In this stage, these artists develop a concept proposal for the specific art opportunity, based on additional information provided by the Panel and external parties. This information includes technical details not available in the open call. The Selection Panel makes a final selection based on the merits of the proposed design, the quality of the presentation, and other criteria predetermined by the Panel. Following the panel's review, a final artist or artist team is recommended for the opportunity.



Conclusion

The Señákw Development is a profound journey of reconnecting the human spirit with Nature, its tradition and heritage. It is a living testament to the foresightedness of the Squamish Nation. The development paves the way for the Squamish Nation to become a leader in holistic and thoughtful urban development that is a harmonious integration of nature, community, culture and technology.

Public art plays a vital role in honoring the Squamish Nation’s legacy that defines this remarkable site. The art at Señákw will encompass a diverse range of media, approaches, and scales. Public Art holds a unique power to breathe life into the public spaces, fostering engagement and dialogue on multiple levels. Moreover, art also has the ability to inspire, celebrate, educate, acknowledge and unite. Through this project, young, emerging artists, as well as seasoned professionals, are encouraged to apply, to contribute their unique expression to an integral Squamish Nation’s project that celebrates tradition, creativity, and inclusivity.

The Squamish Nation, their connection to the Land and the Water, their commitment to partnership, their vision to this transformative project are illuminating a path toward the future of their community and generations to come while leaving a new legacy and an indelible mark on the world.

View of Señákw Development (Image Credit: senakw.com).



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