



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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City seeking boundary change to include Snuneymuxw First Nation reserve lands

Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) and the City of Nanaimo (City) have jointly requested support from the Province of B.C. in initiating a municipal boundary change that would see Snuneymuxw reserve lands included within the City of Nanaimo. This work supports the City's commitment to advancing Truth and Reconciliation and reflects direction in City Plan, which encourages collaboration with SFN, the Province and the Regional District of Nanaimo to strengthen opportunities for SFN members to participate in City elections. The City is taking steps to amend the municipal boundary in advance of the next municipal election, which will be held in October 2026.

Currently, SFN members living on reserve vote for a Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area Director and school trustees. If reserve lands were brought into the City's boundary, SFN members living on those lands would have the option to vote for the Mayor and Council of Nanaimo and take part in municipal assent voting processes.

A recent transfer of land from the Government of Canada to SFN has highlighted the need for a consistent and equitable approach. Because the recently transferred land is now reserve lands and already within the municipal boundary, SFN members living there in the future would be eligible to vote in City elections, while SFN members living on other reserve lands outside the boundary would not. Existing servicing agreements for infrastructure, transportation and other assets located on SFN reserve lands will not change as part of this process. These services continue to be delivered through agreements between SFN and other governments.

Under the Local Government Act, approval of the electors is required before municipal boundaries can be extended to include new lands. A report seeking approval to proceed with an elector approval process will be brought forward for Council's consideration at the February 23, 2026 Regular Council meeting.

Quotes

"The City Plan guides us as we address yet another priority, this time to provide a means for all those living in Snuneymuxw to vote for candidates that directly make decisions for the community in which they live. This change, unique for B.C., will align with future City growth and provide an equitable opportunity for all Snuneymuxw living on reserve lands."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"It makes sense that Snuneymuxw people are able to vote in municipal elections in the City that is named after us. This proposed boundary change is a practical step toward equity, ensuring our members who live on reserve lands have the same opportunity to participate in municipal decision-making as their neighbours. Arbitrary boundaries within our territory have limited our voices for too long. This work affirms the role of our communities in shaping the future of our shared city."

Michael Wyse
Chief
Snuneymuxw First Nation

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