



Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw

Housing History Timeline

Pre-amalgamation

- In the late 19th century Skwxwú7mesh built their own homes with the help of their family and community.
- Most families had more than one home and moved between them as the seasons changed.
- Colonialization in the 1850s changed this by forcing Indigenous people to stay put on reserve lands.
- Nevertheless, the practice of families and community building homes continued. Chief and Council allocated residential lots on Eslha7án (Mission) and Xwmélch'sten (Capilano) reserves with the assistance of the Indian Agent and the Church.
- By 1887, homes on Eslha7án were built as a standard 20x15 size (2 rooms). In the early 1900s, there were approximately 45 homes.
- In the Squamish Valley, land was sold to Pacific Great Eastern Railway and many families used this money to construct their homes.



Group of Skwxwú7mesh men at Eslha7án (Mission Reserve), with newly-made canoe, circa 1912.
Source: Museum of North Vancouver Archives

1923 – 1940

- Council began formalizing the land allocation process for each Member.
- Each Member made an application for a loan of \$200 to purchase lumber and nails.
- At first wooden logs were purchased and split by hand to construct buildings. By the 1940s, saw boards from the local mill were purchased.
- 12 taps were installed on Eslha7án for running water.



Newman house on Squamish Indian Reserve, foot of Capilano Rd. at First Narrows, circa 1930's.
Source: Museum of North Vancouver Archives

1950 – 1970

- In the mid-1950s, the city of Vancouver offered the Nation several abandoned wartime homes in exchange for paying the moving fees and prepping the new sites with a concrete pad.
- 55 homes were transported to Eslha7án and Xwmélch'sten. They were placed at West Esplanade, West 2nd, West 4th, and West 3rd Streets, and Mathias, Rivers, and Lawa Roads.
- Council began budgeting annually for construction.
- There was no application process; Members simply wrote a letter to the Band Manager requesting a home. Three to six homes a year were built.
- In 1970, Chief Joe Mathias became the Administrator of Housing.



Playing baseball in North Vancouver. George Harry (Xwach-la-nexw) is up to bat.
Source: Squamish Public Library

1970 – 1981

- As the demand for housing grew, the Nation reached out to the federal government to ask for funding.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) only provided funding for multi-units, so Council agreed to the construction of townhomes on Eslha7án.
- In 1971, 41 townhomes were completed with a mix of two-, three-, and four-bedroom units. Rent was \$100, \$105, and \$110 respectively.
- During this time 15 homes (lots) a year were allocated to families (married couples) and Elders: five each on Eslha7án, Xwméłch'sten, and Squamish Valley.
- Families were interviewed by Council to determine if they would be approved for a lot and loan.

1982 – 2000

- At a general meeting in June 1982, Membership indicated that priority should be given to families, children, and Elders, rather than individuals.
- Since the early 1980s, homes (lots) have been allocated based on category and the date of application.
- The Nation decided that it would build all homes for Membership. Only custom lots would be allocated going forward, rather than CP lots.
- By 1987, all past housing loans were forgiven.

2000 – present

- Council requested the development of a Housing Policy to inform Members:
 - How to get on the housing list
 - The definitions of each category
 - How to change categories
 - How to select a lot
 - How to select a contract
 - How to select a house plan
- Meetings were held with Membership to make sure the categories were still reflective of the previously identified priorities. The categories were revised to: Single, Single parent, Married/common law and Pensioner.
- The Housing Policy was last updated in 2006 and has been used to allocate 15 homes (lots) each year.
- In October 2019, Council approved the creation of a housing society called Hiyám ta Skwxwú7mesh, which means The Squamish Are Coming Home, to lead the development and management of non-profit housing for Membership.

To continue this proud tradition of building homes on our land for our people and meet the Nation's strategic vision of housing every Skwxwú7mesh Member within a generation, Nexswxniw ntm ta Úxwumixw (Council) has requested that the Housing Policy be updated.

Ts'ixwts'ixwnitway (Member Services) and Ta na wa Shéway I7xw ta Úxwumixw (Planning & Capital Projects) will hold community meetings on:

- **February 16, 2022 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm**
- **February 23, 2022 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm**



Rendering of future 94-unit Xwméłch'sten Housing Project.



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Stay tuned for more details!
squamish.net/housing-policy-engagement