

Community Engagement Sessions were held in late April and early May in Malachan, Port Alberni and Nanaimo to consult on the DFN Learning Strategy and updating of the Village Plan. Presentations on the two projects were followed by small group discussions where meeting attendees provided their input to various questions.

**Learning Strategy Update:**

Consultations for the DFN Learning Strategy have been taking place through interviews, surveys, focus groups and engagements sessions. There has been a great deal of excellent input on what is needed to strengthen educational opportunities and pathways for DFN members, including:

- Continued incorporation of history, culture and language in education and also finding ways to make these accessible to those who live outside of Malachan
- Supporting families in ways to support their children's success in schooling (for all ages)
- Outreach and connection with students attending school (K-12) in other communities
- Preparation and practical skills building for those who will be taking post-secondary education, trades, technologies, or other training away from home
- Ongoing supports and mentoring, including on funding, housing, and practical skills, as well as connecting students with supports in the communities and schools they are attending
- Providing counselling and supports (financial, psychological, mental health and substance) and ensuring services are safe and confidential
- Incorporating Elders as supports
- Providing consistent communications on learning opportunities and supports (e.g. through website, newsletters, Facebook, etc.)
- Providing members of all ages, particularly youth, with the opportunities to learn outdoor and traditional skills – including fishing, hunting, tanning, boating and understanding about tides, weather and navigation, gathering and weaving
- Creating more opportunities for learning both traditional and non-traditional arts and music
- Continuing to build skills in dealing with emergencies, including oil spills
- Bringing more educational opportunities to Malachan, including trades, technologies and sciences
- Assisting with successful transitions to employment
- Building capacity for self-governance, delivery of core services, economic development, and management of natural resources
- Acknowledging contributions, efforts, and achievements, such as graduations

Consultations for the Learning Strategy will continue into the early summer.

- If you would like to provide input into the Learning Strategy or have thoughts that you'd like share, please contact Paula Beltgens at [pbeltgens@enco.ca](mailto:pbeltgens@enco.ca). We'd love to hear your perspectives!
- If you have /or are currently taking post secondary education or training and would like to provide your input on the experience, please go to:  
<https://ca.surveygizmo.com/s3/50041066/Post-Secondary-Student-Interviews>
- If you would like to take the Skills and Interests inventory, please go to:  
<http://ca.surveygizmo.com/s3/50002188/Ditidaht-Member-Survey-May-2017>

**Village Plan:**

Development of the Village Plan is ongoing and is being informed by the DFN Comprehensive Community Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Land Use Plan, as well as meetings with DFN staff and managers and through engagement with community members at sessions in Malachan, Port Alberni and Nanaimo.

Several key directions have emerged through the process of the plans development and include:

- A need for a greater variety of housing options for community members in order to accommodate different household sizes, ranging from individual members to large families, and ensuring that the size of accommodation is appropriate for the number of residents
- Elders housing complete with communal spaces for socializing and for hosting family visits as well as for a higher level of care and support for resident elders
- Temporary or seasonal accommodations for staff and workers during the busy summer seasons
- A multipurpose facility for community gatherings and cultural events, ceremonies, crafting, carving, weaving, as well as language, storytelling and learning spaces
- Language should not be isolated to a space but be more broadly integrated into the community through signage and use of place names, including naming of streets and facilities
- There is support for community oriented buildings to be associated with an outdoor gathering space that takes advantage of views to the lake and culturally significant landscape features
- There is a strong desire for improved recreation facilities especially for children and youth. Among the suggestions for active program are bmx, zip-lines, and a paintball course.
- A new administration building that is universally accessible since some members have difficulty or simply cannot access the existing building
- There is interest in opportunities for growing food within the village as well as a traditional food outlet for both community members and visitors
- The Village Plan should consider new lands acquired through the treaty process and that have been purchased by DFN
- Economic drivers should inform the plan for development to ensure that the scale of development does not outpace the economic base to support it
- In order to expand the ecotourism development opportunities there is a need for improved marina facilities and additional infrastructure
- One area of focus identified for ecotourism and cultural tourism development are tours of the lake and surrounding territory led by community members
- There has been strong demand for accommodations by visitors, perhaps through an expansion of the motel

Following the engagement sessions in Malachan, Port Alberni, and Nanaimo feedback is being incorporated into the village plan and the two concept plans that were presented are being refined and developed in greater detail. These plans will then be presented to community members again towards the end of June when there will be another opportunity to provide feedback.

The next Community Engagement Sessions will be over dinner on June 24<sup>th</sup> (Port Alberni), June 25<sup>th</sup> (Nanaimo) and July 3<sup>rd</sup> (Malachan). We look forward to seeing you and hearing your perspectives!