

### *Building the Huu-ay-aht Constitution: A Framework for Huu-ay-aht Governance*

*... As self-determining peoples, we accept the responsibilities inherent in governing ourselves and seek, with the assistance of Naas (the Creator), to govern with wisdom and respect for all people. Through the act of governing, we assume the power to preserve our natural world and enhance our identity. ...*

Excerpt from Huu-ay-aht Constitution Preamble

Prepared for BCTC Self-Governance Forum, March 10, 2015 by:



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### Beginning to Re-build

#### The Basics!

- Vision and Strategic Plan
- Adopting our own Constitution
- Accessing tools and authorities to govern ourselves (land and resources, financial resources, governing authorities)

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### Re-building our Nation

#### VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Identify the vision and priorities for our Nation; ground the vision and plan in community approval (and ownership)

- Twenty-five years from now (or ten, or fifty), what kind of society do you want to have?
- What do you hope will be different, and what do you hope will stay the same?
- What are you trying to change?
- What are you trying to protect?
- What do you hope to create or achieve?

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### Our Vision:

*The Huu-ay-aht envision a strong, self-governing and self-reliant Nation.*

*Iisaak will guide us as we work together to foster a safe, healthy and sustainable community; where our culture, language, spirituality and economy flourish for all.*

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### Constitution objectives

- Reflect on and guide us in achieving our Nation's vision
- The foundation for building and implementing good governance for social and economic stability and success
- The opportunity to once again govern ourselves based on who we are and what we believe in

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### Thinking about our Constitution

- Engage in strategic thinking throughout our Nation: Who are we? What is it we're trying to create? To protect? To change?
- Rethink governing systems: do we have the tools we need for effective pursuit of our goals? What can guide us from our past?
- Look for new ways to build both internal and external respect for our self-governance ... (beginning to do governance better and exercising our self-governance rights in a way that works for us)

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### Capable Governance Structures:

(from Harvard Project)

...are stable

- the rules don't change, at least not arbitrarily
- when the rules do change, the process follows established procedures

...are fair

- how people are treated does not depend on how they voted or who their friends are
- fairness and equality

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### Capable Governance Structures:

(from Harvard Project)

...are effective

- capable of dealing with contemporary circumstances and needs
- they can get things done!

... match our culture

- They reflect who we are, how we do things
- Who has authority and makes decisions
- How we organize ourselves and take care of our people

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### Constitutional questions

- How is the nation organized politically?
- Who has what rights, obligations, and authority?
- How, when, and where can that authority be exercised?
- How are disputes settled, including those over authority itself?
- How can the rules (including the constitution, if it's written) be changed?

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### Building our Constitution

Huu-ay-aht experience:

- Included citizens, build it from the ground up
- Our Constitution and the process of developing it, strengthened our Nation and provides hope for our future ... “We, the people of Huu-ay-aht, ... declare our unique identity ...”

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### Building our Constitution

What we asked:

- What does it mean to us to be Huu-ay-aht?
- What are our traditional values/practices ...?
- How can we make things work for today and tomorrow based on our own values?
- How can we make things work better for today and for tomorrow?
- ... variety of question about structure, authorities, lands, conduct, etc

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### Building our Constitution

What we heard:

- Recognition of our traditional system
- A say in decisions affecting our community (no matter where we live)
- Fairness in our government and community
- Accountability of our government
- Fair and strong leadership
- Control over our membership/citizenship
- Good decision making
- Working towards a vision for all of our people

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## Building our Constitution

### Why it worked:

- Citizen based - selected committee, provided input throughout
- Based on our collective vision and thinking
- Leadership was committed to the process and outcome, whether we achieved treaty or not
- Built on what we were taught and what our people have always believed in
- Incorporates our own values, beliefs, and thoughts

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## "Closing thoughts"

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## Closing thoughts

- Have a strategic plan and vision in place
- Visible leadership support for initiatives
- Build your constitution from the ground up - seek true engagement of citizens
- Develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy/plan to inform, educate and engage citizens, staff and leadership
- Look to your past to determine how to move forward in restructuring your government

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### Closing thoughts

- Keep realities in mind in developing your government structure - efficient and affordable, but still allowing for effective decision-making processes
- Implement the intent of your constitution as early as possible - start governing differently
- Start practicing better governance as soon as possible - implement new and better systems, confirm and clarify roles and processes

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### Thank you!



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