



January 18th, 2021

## For Immediate Release

### *Hul'q'umi'num Signage Project / Nanum tu Sul-hween i tu Smuneem*

The Downtown Duncan BIA is thrilled to announce that Duncan City Council has passed our initiative to install bilingual Hul'q'umi'num and English street signs in downtown Duncan.

Hul'q'umi'num is the language traditionally spoken by our local Indigenous community, Cowichan Tribes. Street names will now appear in both English and Hul'q'umi'num on signage for seven streets. Traffic signs will not be changed.

The streets which have been given a Hul'q'umi'num translation or title include Canada Avenue, Government Street, Station Street, and 1st - 4th Streets.

Moving forward, signs on those streets will read as follows:

**Canada Avenue** - Q'lhan Shelh

**Government Street** - St s'hwulmuhw Shelh

**Station Street** - Liloot Shelh

**First Street** - Yuwen Shelh

**Second Street** - Sxwuts'ts'ulii Shelh

**Third Street** - Smuyuqw'a Shelh

**Fourth Street** - Thuthiqut Shelh

Each of these names was chosen for the significance of the Hul'q'umi'num word in Cowichan Tribes' culture or provides either a direct translation of the English name or a close translation of the English title

For Canada Avenue, Q'lhan Shelh was chosen because the original name of the avenue is "Front Street" and "Q'lhan" means "ahead of." Smuyuqw'a means ladybug, an important figure in Cowichan story-telling, while Yuwen means first. Liloot means train, for the railway station for which Station Street is named.

The Downtown Duncan BIA is also producing signs in Hul'q'umi'num to distribute to member businesses welcoming shoppers. The signs will read "Tth'ihwum 'i mi nuwilum. Huy ch q'u" indicating "Please come in. Thank you."

The Hul'q'umi'num Signage project, or "Nanum tu Sul-hween i tu Smuneem" in Hul'q'umi'num, results from a partnership between the Downtown Duncan BIA, Cowichan Tribes, and the City of Duncan. The Downtown Duncan BIA hopes that this initiative will reflect the downtown business community's leadership in building relationships and fostering meaningful connections with Cowichan Tribes. While Cowichan Tribes members have recently experienced racism from some members of the community, member businesses in the downtown Duncan BIA want Cowichan Tribes members to feel welcome in our shops.

The Hul'q'umi'num signage project began in 2019 when the Downtown Duncan BIA partnered with Cowichan Tribes and the City of Duncan to apply for the provincial Rural Dividend Grant.

Between June and December 2019, the Downtown Duncan BIA engaged in a consultation process with Cowichan Tribes to learn Hul'q'umi'num and the story behind the English street names in downtown Duncan. The special committee of Cowichan Tribes and the Downtown Duncan BIA used this knowledge to discuss possible Hul'q'umi'num translations for a select group of streets' names.

Due to Covid-19, the project was paused in 2020. However, as the community adjusts somewhat to the new normal, this project presents a starting point for a revitalization of the downtown alongside a revitalization of Hul'q'umi'num. We hope this initiative will beautify the downtown in an inclusive way while highlighting the importance of our relationship with Cowichan Tribes, whose members are always welcome in downtown Duncan.