

**Tl'azt'en Nation** Chief and Council

May 20<sup>th</sup> 2025

**Subject: Summary of Off-Reserve Member Meeting for Prince George.**

Dear Tl'azt'en Members living in Prince George,

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who attended the Tl'azt'en Nation Off-Reserve Members' Meeting in Prince George's on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Your presence, voices, and stories remind us of the strength and resilience of our people, no matter where we live.

This meeting marked a significant milestone: it was the first gathering held specifically to listen to the thoughts, concerns, and needs of Tl'azt'en members residing in Prince George. As the largest population of off-reserve Tl'azt'enne, your experiences are vital to shaping our programs, services, and governance approaches. We consider this meeting a first step towards strengthening our connection with our members who live away from home.

Each Councillor introduced themselves and had the opportunity to speak, and our Chief shared reflections and Nation updates directly with those present. We were especially heartened by the strong turnout, particularly on a Saturday during a long weekend, which shows the desire for continued engagement and dialogue.

**What We Heard from Membership:**

Your voices helped paint a clearer picture of the challenges and hopes faced by our urban members. The following key themes emerged from your feedback:

**1. Housing and the Desire to Return Home**

- A strong desire to return to the community was expressed, but members face significant housing barriers.
- High rental and real estate costs in Prince George's and a shortage of housing on reserve were identified as key challenges.
- There were questions about the role and availability of the Housing Manager and updates on new housing opportunities (homes, trailers, or apartment builds).

**2. Outreach and Services in Prince George's**

- Members emphasized the need for local outreach in Prince George, particularly for individuals living on the streets or navigating the hospital system.

- Interest was expressed in establishing a satellite office in Prince George to support members directly in the city.
- Youth homelessness was identified as an urgent concern, and suggestions were made for programs and supports, including summer employment for youth in both Prince George and Middle River.

### **3. Health, Wellness, and Treatment**

- Calls were made for funding to be readily available for those who are ready to access treatment services.
- Members requested improved communication about patient travel and how to access available support.
- There was interest in food security, cultural preservation, and training opportunities related to food harvesting and conservation.

### **4. Economic Development and Governance**

- Members requested updates on taxation from major projects on Tl'azt'en territory, particularly regarding economic benefits to the Nation.
- The discussion included potential economic development partnerships, such as those through PGNAETA (Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association).
- Environmental concerns were raised about the PFX Nickel Mine and its potential impacts on the land and waterways.

### **5. Transparency and Financial Accountability**

- Members asked for an update on the forensic audit and the INAC (now ISC) audit.
- Specific concerns were raised about past band administration practices and requests for more organized and transparent financial communication, including updates on the Middle River budget and Nations accounts.
- Clear lines of communication and more structured processes for decision-making were highlighted as important priorities.

### **6. Cultural Values and Respect**

- A strong call was made for cultural protocols to be respected, including pausing government operations during wakes and funerals.

- Members expressed interest in reviving the Keyoh and Potlatch systems in our governance conversations.
- There was also a desire to see a dedicated committee or society that speaks on behalf of Middle River residents.

## **7. Education and Youth Development**

- Members advocated for more funding support for schooling and post-secondary education.
- There is interest in summer employment programs for youth living both in Prince George and Middle River, as well as training and skills programs.

### **Next Steps:**

Chief and Council have taken these concerns seriously and will be reviewing all feedback to inform next steps. We are committed to:

- Creating a structured follow-up plan and reporting back to members on progress.
- Exploring outreach models, including the possibility of a satellite office.
- Strengthening communication strategies and ensuring transparency on key issues.
- Continuing regular engagement sessions with off-reserve members, starting with Prince George and expanding further as needed.

We thank you once again for your honesty, your strength, and your commitment to Tl'azt'en. This meeting was just the beginning. Together, we will continue to build bridges between home and away-from-home, so that every member, regardless of where they live, feels seen, supported, and included. Please don't hesitate to reach out to our councillors with any thoughts or comments not shared at the meeting held in Prince George's.

On behalf of Tl'azt'en Council,

Mussi Cho

Christian Harpe