Xwmélch'sten

Capilano I.R. No. 5

Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw
Squamish Nation

NCH'KAY̓

Hiy̓ám̓ Housing

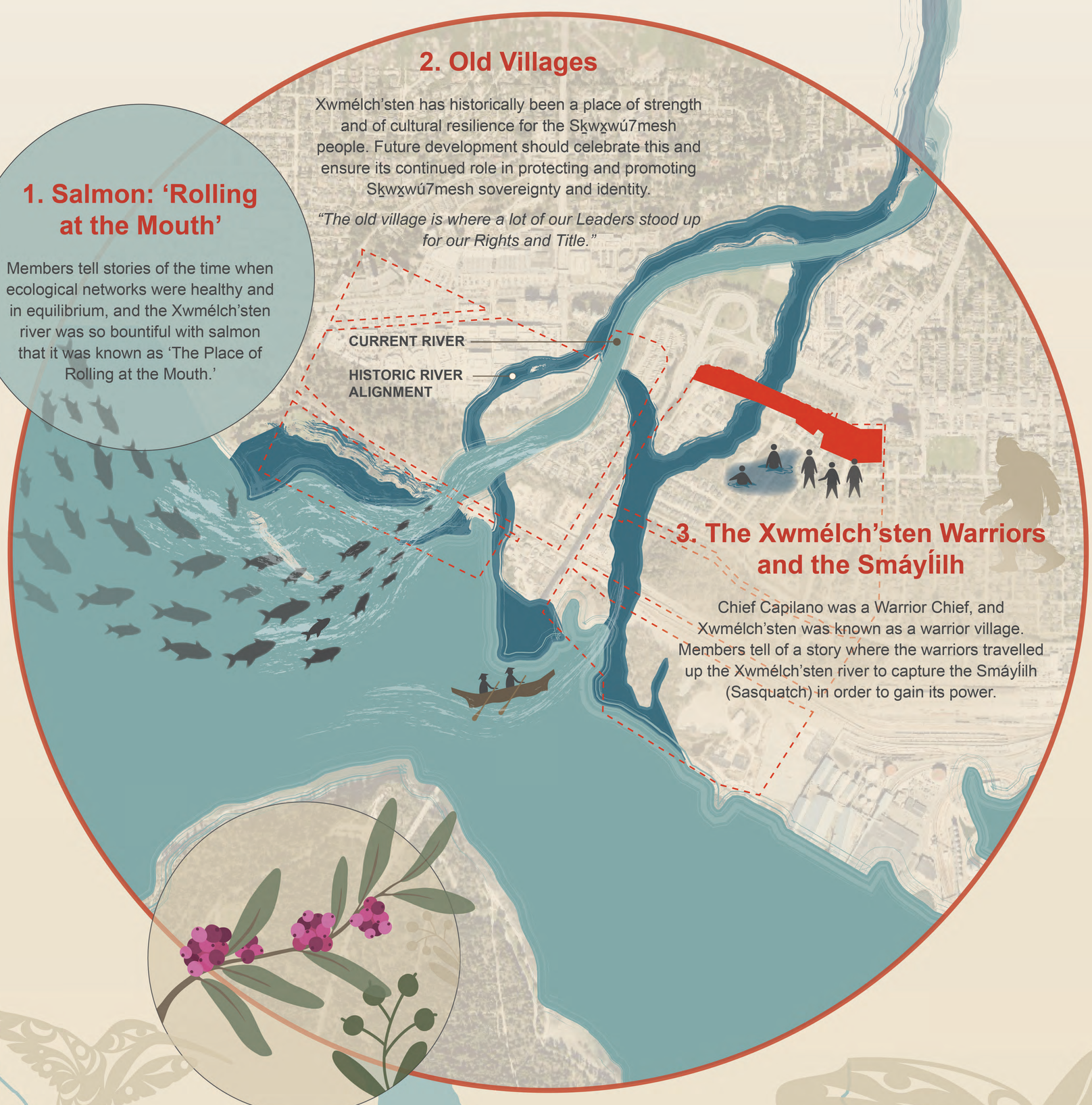
1. Salmon: 'Rolling at the Mouth'

Members tell stories of the time when ecological networks were healthy and in equilibrium, and the Xwmélch'sten river was so bountiful with salmon that it was known as 'The Place of Rolling at the Mouth.'

2. Old Villages

Xwmélch'sten has historically been a place of strength and of cultural resilience for the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh people. Future development should celebrate this and ensure its continued role in protecting and promoting Sḵwx̱wú7mesh sovereignty and identity.

"The old village is where a lot of our Leaders stood up for our Rights and Title."



3. The Xwmélch'sten Warriors and the Smáyĺlh

Chief Capilano was a Warrior Chief, and Xwmélch'sten was known as a warrior village. Members tell of a story where the warriors travelled up the Xwmélch'sten river to capture the Smáyĺlh (Sasquatch) in order to gain its power.

4. Cultivation

Fruits and medicinal plants cultivated close to home: Crabapple, Indian Plum, Huckleberries, Salmon Berries, Blueberries

Cultivate a Landscape of Resilience

Preserve and enhance the landscape's abundance for future generations. Embrace designs that embody the interrelated concepts of Sḵwx̱wú7mesh ecological and cultural resilience, while ensuring adaptability towards an uncertain future climate.

Design strategies:

- Let the Ch'ích'elxwi7k̲w river breathe.
- Plan for climate emergency and sea level rise.
- Prioritize member access to the shoreline to foster stewardship.
- Support canoe landings and fish spawning.
- Encourage community self-reliance through food security.
- Encourage self-reliance and prosperity with sustainable economic development.

Connect the People, Trees, and Animals

The Sḵwx̱wú7mesh People have a long history of stewarding the land to create balanced ecological networks, using responsible and sustainable management practices. Future development should celebrate the landscape of kinship and foster abundance, through designs which improve the productivity and health of ecological networks.

Design strategies:

- Recognize the long term need for reconnecting the fragmented reserve lands.
- Establish habitat areas in low-lying, wetter areas.
- Connect the habitat corridor from the mountains to the Ch'ích'elxwi7k̲w River.
- Reconnect the canoe route from Ch'ích'elxwi7k̲w to Xwmélch'sten.
- Protect Sensitive Ecosystem areas and restore Ch'ích'elxwi7k̲w estuary habitat.
- Use development funds to remediate damaged Sḵwx̱wú7mesh lands.
- Create riparian habitat and green infrastructure.

Embrace the Embodied Spirit of the Place

Xwmélch'sten and Ch'ích'elxwi7k̲w hold unique and important positions within Sḵwx̱wú7mesh history, stories, and culture. The future development should respect and reflect each site's unique Spirit of Place, ensuring that their historic and continuing importance to the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh People is protected and promoted.

Design strategies:

- Listen to the land and the stories (oral histories).
- Celebrate the ways of doing.
- Orientate member housing and longhouses towards the water.
- Recognize and celebrate the old location of Xwmélch'sten riverbed that use to flow through the middle of the site.
- Encourage community, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency.

"A Squamish Nation that is made of sustainable communities that are geographically dispersed but are unquestionably linked by our traditions, heritage, and culture. We will embrace a balance of environmental protection and economic vitality on our lands. This approach to land use will provide a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for us to live, study, work, play, and enjoy a high quality of life now and for future generations of squamish people."

Squamish Community Development Plan Vision Statement