Iskut On-Reserve Land Code

Virtual Town Hall

January 21, 2026

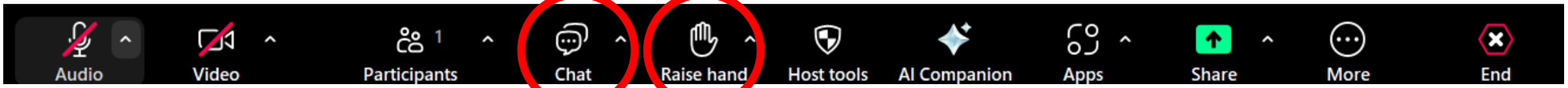
Welcome and Opening Remarks

Agenda

01	Zoom Housekeeping
02	Project Team Introductions
03	Purpose of the Town Halls + How We Will Communicate
04	What is the On-Reserve Land Code?
06	Land Code Process + Timeline
07	Voting Information
08	Q&A

Zoom Housekeeping

Use the **Raise hand** function to unmute / ask a question out loud



Use the **Chat** function to ask questions during the presentation

Project Team Introductions

Purpose of the Town Halls

- Share **bi-weekly updates** with members about the On-Reserve Land Code process
- Present **sections of the Land Code** to help members better understand the document
- Provide members with an **opportunity to ask questions** to the project team
- Ensure members feel confident and **well-informed on voting day**

How We Will Communicate

- **Bi-weekly Virtual Town Halls**
- **In-person Community Meetings** (dates TBD)
  - Terrace/Kitimat
  - Fort Nelson
  - Prince George
  - Whitehorse
  - Fort St. John
  - Dease Lake
  - Iskut
- **Land Code webpage:** iskut.org/on-reserve-land-code-2025-2026
- **Email updates**
- **Facebook**

What is Land Code?

Current Decision Making Process

Indian Act On Reserve Lands

- **Band Council decisions are subject to federal oversight** by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).
  - **Any bylaws** developed by Band Councils **must be APPROVED** by the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).
  - Even if a Band Council gets membership support via a vote to lease on reserve land, the Minister of ISC must still approve the decision.
- The Minister of ISC plays a crucial oversight role in land use decisions on reserves. **Nearly all significant decisions, such as passing bylaws, leasing land, or surrendering land, require ministerial approval**.

What is Land Code?

A Land Code enables a First Nation to **opt out of the 44 land management sections of the Indian Act**, gaining greater control over how reserve lands are managed.

It places **decision-making in the hands of the Nation**. With a Land Code in place:

- Our Band will make our own **land-related decisions**, not the federal government.
- Our members will help **guide how on-reserve lands are used and protected**.
- Our **cultural values** will shape the rules that govern our on-reserve lands.

Land Code – What comes under Iskut jurisdiction?

- Transfer of land
- Leasing of land
- Surrender of reserve land and processes for managing surrendered land
- Environmental regulation
- Resource management (wildlife, fish, minerals, forestry)

Framework Agreement

- The Framework Agreement is the overarching agreement that allows First Nations to transition away from the lands-related sections of the *Indian Act* and create their own Land Code. Iskut Band leadership signed a Framework Agreement in 2017.
- The Framework Agreement covers these key points:
  - Land Code Development Process and Funding
  - Transfer of Land Management Authority (once ratified by members)
  - Environmental Protection Policies and Assessment on reserve
  - Economic Development and Self Governance (on reserve)

Benefits of adopting an on reserve “Land Code” vs operating under the Indian Act

- **Self-Determination:** Communities have the authority to make decisions regarding their land and resources, promoting self-reliance and reducing dependency on federal oversight.
- **Tailored Land Management:** First Nations can create land management regimes that reflect their unique needs, values, aspirations and language.
- **Reduced Bureaucracy:** With less federal oversight, decision-making processes are streamlined, allowing for more timely and responsive actions.
- **Under the *Indian Act*:**
  - Federal Control: Land and resource management decisions require approval from the Minister of Indigenous Services, limiting autonomy.
  - Uniform Regulations: The *Indian Act* imposes a one-size-fits-all approach, often failing to address the specific circumstances of individual First Nations.

Challenges of Land Code

- Must maintain a Lands Department with a lands manager – hard to find people for this position
- Band becomes responsible for all environmental contamination in the future
- Developing and maintaining implementation laws can be cumbersome

The On-Reserve Land Code…

IS

- ✅ Replaces land management sections of the *Indian Act,* giving Iskut full control over our on-reserve lands
- ✅ Allows for more access to funding for land-management
- ✅ Enables Iskut to make laws to protect our lands
- ✅ Simplifies processes for members to start businesses on reserve and for businesses and investors to work with Iskut

IS NOT

- ❌ It is not a treaty or a land claim
- ❌ Does not impact Tahltan Rights and Title
- ❌ Does not impact Indian Status
- ❌ Does not impact personal taxation
- ❌ Does not apply to other programs and services (health, education, social assistance)

Land Code Process

2017 Land Code Vote

IBC can determine threshold and make their decision known via a BCR to Government of Canada

- in 2017 there were 554 elegible voters 18 yrs+ on IBC membership list
- ONLY 179 registered to vote on the Land Code
- 140 voters was determined to be threshold for "yes" ratification

BCR >50%

IBC must establish a percentage of eligible voters who MUST participate in vote to be binding

60%

IBC can request that a percentage greater than 50% of participating eligible voters must vote to approve Land Code

VOTING % REQUIREMENTS CAN BE FOUND IN CLAUSE 7.4 OF FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON FIRST NATIONS LAND MANAGEMENT

Vote in 2017 Results:

- Minimum "Yes" vote needed was 140
- Vote Results were:

114 "yes"

65 "No"

Vote can be held in 2025 for IBC Land Code

Overview of Land Code Process

Establish Land Code Development Coordinator
Spring 2025

Draft Land Code Available for Community Review
January 2026

In-person Community Meetings
Spring 2026

Community Vote
Spring2026

Project Kickoff

Drafting the Land Code

Community Engagement on Draft Land Code

Ratification Vote

Establish Land Code Committee
Spring 2025

Review and Update 2017 Land Code
Summer/Fall 2025

Virtual Town Hall Meetings
January – April 2026

Legal Review of Land Code
Spring 2026

Community Ratification Vote

April 2026

- To bring the On-Reserve Land Code into effect, members must vote “Yes” or “No” on whether to approve it.
- Members can vote: In person OR by mail.
- Everyone who is 18 or older and a registered member can vote.
- Proposed that there be no minimum number of voters.

Questions?

Next Virtual Town Hall:

Wednesday, February 4
7 - 8PM

Topic: Introduction to Land Code – Continued

For more information, visit:

iskut.org/on-reserve-land-code-2025-2026

Questions?

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