
Reasserting Land Use Jurisdiction in Unceded Territory:

Unlocking Economic and Stewardship Opportunity





WHO ARE WE?

Giesbrecht & Company is a public and local government relations firm, serving First Nations and medium to large organizations in British Columbia and Alberta.

OUR TEAM



Patrick Giesbrecht
Key Principal & Owner

—
Governor of the BC Chamber of Commerce and Past Director of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce



Benjamin Neff
Senior Project Strategist

—
Master Degree in Public Policy (2018) University of Calgary



Theresa Blais
Chief Operating Officer

—
25+ years in Financial Service Sector & Business Management



Nikiel Lal
Relations Strategist

—
B of Kin from UFV, Former President of UFVSUS. Experience in Provincial & Federal advocacy



Desiree Baker
Senior Advisor

—
Indigenous Economic and Community Development



Noah Schoonen
Senior Urban Planner

—
BPI from UNBC



Colin Fry
ALC Consultant

—
ALC Consultant Former Director of Regional Operations (Retired)—ALC related land-use strategy, applications and permits.



Kuljit Pandher
Provincial/Federal Government Strategist

—
BA & MBA from York University



Amaan Hameed
Strategy Manager Government Relations, BC & Alberta

—
Former Service Canada & Federal Gov't staff.



Howard C. Ratzlaff
Senior Advisor - Environmental Professional

—
P.Ag., B.A. Phys. Geog., Dipl. Tech., WDTA Cert.

WHAT WE DO

Indigenous Relations

Giesbrecht & Co. offers comprehensive services related to First Nations, including strategic partnerships with land developers, negotiation of municipal servicing agreements, community engagement, execution of 99-year leases and partnership ratification campaigns.

We also provide economic development support and establish partnerships to facilitate sustainable growth.

Land-Use Consulting

While determining the highest-and-best-use of individual properties is central to what Giesbrecht & Co. does, we believe in building complete, sustainable communities, whether on-reserve or in municipal jurisdictions.

Rezoning and Development Management

Giesbrecht & Co. oversees rezoning and subdivision applications comprehensively, handling technical sub-consultants, engaging stakeholders & neighbourhoods and collaborating with Councils & staff throughout the process.

By crafting compelling narratives and advocating for clients, we ensure decision-makers recognize the value in proposals, address misinformation and prioritize client needs in interactions with both the community and various government entities.

Land-Use Planning and Community Engagement

Whether it is a Comprehensive Community Plan, Neighbourhood Plan, or simply a Land-Use update, community participation in the process is the cornerstone of an effective and holistic plan. Through various events as well as direct communication with neighbours and stakeholders, we are able to ensure that the communities affected by potential changes in land-uses are included in the planning process.

Local and Regional Government Relations

Giesbrecht & Co. primarily deals with municipal-level and First Nation land use issues, but recognizes that other government levels may also have jurisdiction or interest depending on the specifics.

To secure approvals, we maintain strong relationships with senior staff, selected officials, and councils in various Nations and municipalities (including ALC permits), selectively choosing projects to support.

We have connectivity to many First Nations and municipalities in BC and Alberta.

Due-Diligence Reports

Having the knowledge of whom to approach and how to inquire effectively prior to initiating an application can often save a project proponent time and money. In a short amount of time, we can create a report showing options for highest and best use on any given property. Providing both current and prospective clients these reports can be critical in making key investment decisions.

Political Consultation

Landowners, including First Nations and property developers often seek to understand the optimal use for their property and gauge the political stance of the local City or First Nation Council.

They also aim to engage with staff to gather insights. Our extensive network within First Nation, City Councils and Planning Departments allows us to initiate discussions regarding potential highest-and- best uses without compromising the public process.

OUR PARTNERS



Aboriginal Financial Office Association



Advanced Business Match

Objective

1. Explore how jurisdiction is being operationalized in land use planning and development
2. Identify barriers slowing progress
3. Redefine meaningful consultation on Nations own terms
4. Examine how economic development and stewardship can align
5. Exchange strategies that are working across Nations

Where are you currently asserting jurisdiction in land use decisions and where do you feel constrained?

- Internal constraints (capacity, governance, funding)
- External constraints (municipal, provincial, federal systems)



Reasserting Jurisdiction



- Land use planning as governance
- Strategic land designation
- Development corporations
- Additions to Reserve
- Servicing negotiations as leverage



Peer Exchange

What tools are Nations using right now to reassert jurisdiction in practical ways?



Peer Exchange

What tools are Nations using right now to reassert jurisdiction in practical ways?

- Development corporations
- Land code
- Strategic partnerships
- Revenue-sharing agreements
- Service agreements
- Municipal protocol agreements

The Real Barriers Right Now



What is slowing jurisdiction down?

- Structural (policy frameworks, funding models)
- Political (municipal resistance, shifting leadership)
- Capacity (staffing, technical expertise, burnout)



10 Minute Break

Meaningful Consultation

- When consultation works, what does it feel like?



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- If your Nation wrote the consultation rules, what would they include? What would be non-negotiable?



Meaningful Consultation

If your Nation wrote the consultation rules, what would they include? What would be non-negotiable?

- Process standards
- Timelines
- Creating expectations
- Decision-making clarity



Unlocking Economic & Stewardship Opportunity

Economic development and stewardship are governance decisions, not opposing forces.

- Long-term land strategy
- Revenue models beyond lease income
- Equity participation
- Stewardship-led zoning



Group Visioning Exercise

What would development look like if it was fully aligned with your Nation's values 20 years from now?



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- Land use priorities
- Revenue priorities
- Stewardship protections
- Partnership criteria





Strategy Exchange: What's Working?

- What has worked for your Nation?



Closing

- What is one strategic shift you're taking back to your community?



Conclusion

Reasserting jurisdiction isn't just a legal act. It's a daily exercise in governance, stewardship, and long-term vision.



Q & A



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