

Electoral Area B Community Update

September 2020
Issue 3

WELCOME

Welcome. We are glad to share this third issue of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Electoral Area B Community Update. While business has been operating in a different way than usual, there has still been a lot of work underway since our last update in February 2020.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the content, and share this update with others who may be interested.



Area B Director
Arzeem Hamir

Weighing in on Rural Roadside Garbage and Recycling Collection

The CVRD is considering the introduction of roadside garbage and recycling collection in neighbourhoods of Electoral Areas A, B and C – but before further planning is considered, homeowners and residents in those areas are being asked if it's a service they would like.

An online survey is available at connectcvr.ca/ruralroadsidecollection until September 11 – asking for residents' input on how they currently manage their garbage and recycling, and how they would like to manage it in the future. Residents of Area A, B, and C can pick the survey that applies to their specific neighbourhood. A program would be pursued only in areas where there is community support and if technical and operational requirements can be met. Please note that Mount Washington, Royston, Denman and Hornby islands are not included in this review.

In 2013 a referendum on rural roadside waste collection services failed. However, residents continue to express interest for this type of service and options for recycling have changed. Given the changed circumstances, we feel it is a question worth asking again.

The survey results will inform staff on the interest in moving forward with a service in the different Electoral area communities. They will be summarized and presented to the electoral area directors in October, for a future decision about whether to move forward with additional steps.



Addressing Air Quality in the Comox Valley

The Comox Valley struggles with poor air quality, particularly in the winter months - and while the causes are complex, the CVRD is committed to begin work that will improve conditions in the community. This summer, a three-year Airshed Roundtable project was launched which will develop and implement a Regional Airshed Protection Strategy and create an Evaluation and Monitoring Framework to track progress. The roundtable will host its first meeting in September 2020, with representation from local government, private sector, non-profits, government agencies, and the general public. This is the start of a complex process that will see jurisdictions working together for years to come to improve the region's air. For more information, visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/airshedroundtable.



Caring for your septic system

Over 9,000 homes in the CVRD rely on on-site septic systems to treat their domestic wastewater. These systems offer an effective, long-term treatment option for homes not connected to a sewer system – but they must be maintained properly to ensure they remain effective, and don't harm the environment.

In May 2020, electoral area directors agreed to further assess options for mandatory maintenance programs by requesting data from Island Health. This information will help the CVRD understand areas of challenge with septic care and determine whether a maintenance program would help enforce standards, and if so, how.

Information about septic maintenance is available on the CVRD's website at comoxvalleyrd.ca/septic. Watch for more information this fall about an online information session, hosted by CVRD staff, in lieu of in-person sessions for 2020.





COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Sewer planning offers opportunity to weigh in on area infrastructure

This fall, the CVRD will relaunch public consultation on the future of the sewer system that services Courtenay, Comox and K'ómoks First Nation. The focus of this consultation will be on three shortlisted options for the conveyance system – the pipes and pump stations that move wastewater to the treatment plant in Electoral Area B. This is a critical step to identifying the preferred alternative, so that plans can be made to reroute the current system, in particular the at-risk sewer pipe that runs, exposed, along Willemar Bluffs and needs to be decommissioned.

The route of these pipes, and the preferred options for the future of the sewage treatment plant, will have an impact on some Area B residents. While residents in the electoral area are not members of – and therefore don't pay into – the sewer service, having the infrastructure in the electoral area is an important consideration.

Residents in Electoral Area B – particularly around Lazo and Curtis Roads – are encouraged to weigh in and participate. An online survey and information about events and webinars will be available at www.connectcvrd.ca/lwmp.

Planning together for COVID-19 renewal

In March 2020, the government of British Columbia declared a state of emergency for our province – and the Comox Valley, along with communities around the world, responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While immediate steps were required to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the CVRD has also been focused on how to adapt plans for 2020 and future budget years, to meet changing community expectations and priorities, fiscal conditions and prepare to support renewal.

In May, Directors agreed to key principles that will guide the CVRD's actions moving forward. The Board's Renewal Plan will seek to:

- Keep services affordable
- Streamline processes
- Protect quality of life and;
- Care for the community

In September, the board will ratify a renewal plan, which outlines adaptations for the CVRD's 97 services for 2020 and into future years. The review considers the relevance and priority of projects, requirement for public engagement, financial impacts and cost saving, and new ways of service delivery.

Rethink Comox Valley is a thoughtful review of services to support community recovery. For more information about the CVRD's COVID-19 Renewal Plan, visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/renewal.

Community support from grants in aid

In May, grants in aid for community organizations were awarded by electoral area directors. Along with support for LUSH Valley, provided through a grant awarded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following organizations received funding this year from Electoral Area B: Anderton Therapeutic Gardens Society, Camp Gilwell, Comox Valley Cycling Coalition, Comox Valley Folk Society, CV Multicultural and Immigrant Support Society, Comox Valley Project Watershed Society, Comox Valley Social Planning, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society, Little River Enhancement Society, Merville Community Association, Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society, Strathcona Wilderness Institute, Tsolum River Restoration Society, You Are Not Alone, Youth and Ecological Restoration Program.

Questions?

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CELEBRATING SEAL BAY

In May, improvements to Seal Bay Nature Park were celebrated at a joint ceremony with the K'ómoks First Nation and CVRD. New and improved signage now emphasizes Ayajuthem, a Coast Salish language. This new signage will make it easier for park users to navigate the area while also honouring the cultural heritage and values within the park. For more information on the park and improvements, visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sealbay.