

Service 500 Planning Floodplain Bylaw Update and Hazard Management Project

ISSUE

- The 2025-2029 Proposed Financial Plan includes \$40,000 from service 503 and \$40,000 from service 500 to complete a comprehensive overhaul of existing floodplain development management tools

CHALLENGES

- The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) faces mounting challenges in managing land use within flood-prone areas, driven by factors such as sea-level rise, increased storm activity, and evolving climate conditions.
- The current Floodplain Management Bylaw No. 600 was developed in 2020 and requires an update to incorporate completed 2021 floodplain mapping, prescribe Flood Construction Levels (FCL), and modernize bylaw requirements to reflect current best practices and relevant legislation including the *Local Government Act* and the *BC Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Guidelines*.
- Issues have been identified by elected officials and staff regarding the risk-related challenges of land use decision making in hazard areas (e.g. granting site-specific floodplain exemptions).
- Managing development applications in flood hazard areas under the current CVRD system requires significant use of organizational resources, including staff and proponent/ applicant time and legal fees.

BACKGROUND

Service 503, the Planning Policy department, is responsible for long-range planning and sustainability. It develops land use plans and policies for the electoral areas and collaborates with member municipalities on regional strategies and projects. The department manages the Rural Comox Valley Official Community Plan (OCP), which, alongside the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), guides future growth and change in the three electoral areas, excluding Denman and Hornby Islands. The OCP reflects shared community values and goals, serving as a

The Comox Valley Regional District respectfully acknowledges the land on which it operates is on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.

strategic document that directs land-use decisions throughout the region. Through these efforts, Service 503 plays a crucial role in ensuring sustainable and coordinated development within the CVRD.

Strategic projects that have budget planning implications include:

Floodplain Bylaw Update and Hazard Management Project

2025 Workplan includes:

- Updating the Floodplain Management Bylaw;
- Development of decision-making support tools such as a risk tolerance tool and policy for CVRD Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC) and staff use to ensure all flood-related land use decisions/recommendations are lawful, consistent and transparent.
- Strategic engagement with the EASC, internal staff and relevant professionals (developers and engineers). Creation of clear and plain language public-facing education and outreach materials to explain the property-level impacts of changes to flood hazard land use management for the public.
- Streamlining development procedures associated with site-specific floodplain applications.

KEY POINTS

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a revised and workable flood hazard planning approach which is functional, aligned with the CVRD strategic drivers, and understood by the CVRD elected officials, staff, and external development community alike. • Minimize flood risk to development and liability to the CVRD and improve internal and external processes to ensure that development in and around flood-hazard areas is safe and aligned with all relevant provincial regulations, existing flood mapping and best practices.
Budget	\$40,000 from Function 503 (and \$40,000 from Function 500)
Direction	Provision has been made in the 2025-2029 financial plan to undertake a Floodplain Bylaw Update and Hazard Management Project, direction confirmed by the Electoral Areas Services Committee (December 9th, 2024)
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant obtained 2024 • Targeted completion date is late Spring/ early Summer 2025

OPTIONS

1. Proceed with including the Floodplain Bylaw Update and Hazard Management Project in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan
2. Provide staff with alternative direction