

Electoral Areas Community Update

September 2023
Issue 10

The Latest News from your Electoral Area Directors

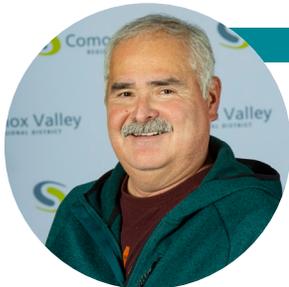
With a beautiful summer behind us and busy autumn ahead, we're pleased to share this Electoral Areas Community Update – our second of 2023. These newsletters have been created to keep you informed about current initiatives and projects affecting your communities. Each newsletter includes updates from all three of the Comox Valley Regional District's electoral areas, along with topics of interest for people throughout the region. We hope you enjoy this update – and we encourage you to get in touch if you have any questions or comments!

Who's Listening



Electoral Area A Director Daniel Arbour

Baynes Sound – Denman/Hornby Islands stretches from the southern boundary of the City of Courtenay south to Cook Creek. This area includes Minto, Royston, Union Bay, Fanny Bay and Denman and Hornby islands.



Electoral Area B Director Richard Hardy

Lazo North includes the Comox Peninsula, Little River, Balmoral Beach Area, Point Holmes, Bates Beach, Huband Road and the Tsolum regions.



Electoral Area C Director Edwin Grieve

Puntledge - Black Creek includes Merville, Black Creek, Dove Creek, Saratoga Beach, Arden (west of Cumberland Road), Powerhouse, Lake Trail, Marsden and Plateau Road as well as Mount Washington. The northern boundary of Electoral Area C is the Oyster River

Upcoming Event!



Come Out and Say Hello!

Electoral Area Directors Daniel Arbour, Richard Hardy and Edwin Grieve are hosting a community update/meet-and-greet and you're invited.

Join us to learn more about important initiatives underway, or to chat with your Electoral Area Director about an issue that's important to you!

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023

4:00 – 7:00 pm

CVRD's Civic Room – 770 Harmston Ave. Courtenay

Learn more about this – and other engagement opportunities – at

www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/electoralareas



The Path Ahead for Recreation Facility Plans

After a few years of studies, assessments and public outreach, the CVRD has mapped out a path ahead for proposed field, ice and aquatic recreation facility upgrades. In June, two events were held to update the community about the next steps on that path.

The plan identifies field upgrades as the priority, with ice and aquatic facilities to follow. There are a number of preliminary assessments that have to be completed for each before decisions can be made by the Comox Valley Recreation Commission about potential construction.

Highlights for the Path Ahead



Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategies: A review of current ice/aquatic facilities and plan ahead to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is underway now, to be complete by the end of the year.



Turf Field Assessments: Geotechnical review, design work, feasibility study, environmental, parking and cost analysis for a new turf field is underway.

Fall 2023 Decision: Comox Valley Recreation Commission decision regarding field improvements.



Ice Facility Assessments: Greenhouse gas emissions study, design work, parking assessment, environmental assessment and feasibility study will begin in fall 2023.

Summer 2024 Decision: Comox Valley Recreation Commission will consider results of assessments and make decision about ice facility improvements.



Aquatic Facility Assessments: Greenhouse gas emissions study, design work, parking analysis, environmental assessment and feasibility study will begin in winter 2024.

2025 Decision: Based on the results of the assessments, the Comox Valley Recreation Commission will make a decision about aquatic facility improvements.

Follow along for the latest news as this planning work proceeds at www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/recplan - sign up to receive email notifications as work moves ahead.



Regional Housing Action Plan to kick off this fall

The CVRD is looking to strengthen its support of affordable housing in the region.

This fall, work will get underway on a Regional Housing Action Plan to identify the community's housing needs, establish a common agenda, and identify local government's plans to reach shared goals.

It will include recommendations from a recently-completed review of the Homelessness Support Service and the Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service. A Homelessness Needs Assessment and companion community plan will also be developed.

Some preliminary steps have already been taken, including a commitment in April to continue with enabling secondary dwellings in all residential zones with only a building permit required, and a decision in June to focus on partnerships and investigating potential approaches for the development of new non-market rental housing.

The CVRD's Board also continues to advocate to senior government to help address visible homelessness and the region's most vulnerable residents.

These plans/reviews will be completed in 2024.



Weigh In On Waste

Comox Strathcona Waste Management is looking ahead to reduce waste, with an update to their long-term plan for managing garbage, recycling and organics.

The Solid Waste Management Plan guides the CSWM's programs, services, infrastructure, and policies, bringing it all together to reduce the amount of waste that is produced in the region. A renewal of the plan was started in November 2022. A round of public engagement on the goals and guiding principles to the plan wrapped up on Sept. 25 - thank you to everyone who participated by completing a survey, or stopping by one of the eight community booths held throughout the summer.

When feedback is collated, it will help inform the guidelines for the updated plan - laying a foundation for the next steps, which includes developing strategies to achieve waste reduction goals!

Follow along for the latest updates on this important work at www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/swmp

What's On The Go Electoral Area A



Firehall Planning Moves Ahead for Union Bay and Denman

The CVRD is moving forward with assessment and planning work for the necessary fire hall replacements in Union Bay and on Denman Island. Environmental studies for the Union Bay location are now being completed. Once all the information is in hand, the CVRD will be able to make decisions about next steps for design and construction planning.

In Spring 2023, the CVRD board approved the financial plan, which included an additional \$460,000 to support fire hall replacements and Rural Fire and Search and Rescue Services. Grants were also awarded, totalling about \$2 million.



Next Steps Underway for Royston Road Safety Upgrades

The Royston Road project will look to improve safety conditions for pedestrians and cyclists along Royston Road, including children travelling to Royston Elementary School. Staff recently presented the Active Transportation Network Plan Implementation Strategy to the Board and Royston Road was one of the identified high priority projects. The Board also approved next steps to prepare a grant submission through the BC Active Transportation grant.

Staff will begin working with stakeholders on the design for the Royston Road/Elementary route, with more information coming in the fall.

What's On The Go Electoral Area B



Updated Route for Sewer Project Announced

Over the summer, the CVRD provided updates about the revised route alignment for the Sewer Conveyance Project. This project – a multi-year construction project to replace the pipes and pump stations that move sewer to the treatment plant on Brent Road – was originally planned to tunnel below Lazo Hill. Further investigations indicated that a traditional 'cut and cover' approach would be better suited. In July, geotechnical tests were completed in Lazo Marsh to better understand ground conditions in the area and help determine the final route. Community updates will continue in the fall/winter: follow along at www.engagecomoxvalley.ca/conveyanceproject



Electoral Area B Growth Shown in Latest Stats

Planning and development activity for Electoral Area B has had steady activity in the first half of 2023, with statistics to June showing permits on track to meet last year's activity.

So far Electoral Area B has accounted for 37 per cent of the rural areas' new units with 16 single-family dwelling permits granted for the first half of the year. When including all permit types – such as garages and mobile units, Electoral Area B accounted for 33 per cent of the permit activity for rural areas.

What's On The Go Electoral Area C



Saratoga Speedway: Update on Rezoning Bylaw

The Rezoning Bylaw, which would allow rezoning of five lots in the Black Creek area, between the Island Highway and Macaulay Road, including Saratoga Speedway, is now with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for review.

The bylaw was given third reading on August 15. Because this rezoning bylaw affects lands adjacent to a highway, it must be

signed by the Ministry before adoption. Once a signed copy of the bylaw is returned to the CVRD, it will be brought to the Regional Board for consideration of adoption and next steps.



New Source Well Secured for Black Creek-Oyster Bay Water System

The capacity of current wells in the Black Creek-Oyster Bay (BCOB) water system has been impacted by climate change, drought and population growth and another source is needed to supply the area and allow new connections. Exciting progress has been made this year, with a source secured on Shelter Point Farms property.

In July 2023, the CVRD completed a submission to the Ministry of Forests for a new ground water license. Next steps in 2023 will include: completing design drawings, attaining permits and bringing on a contractor, with construction estimated to be complete in winter 2024. The current goal is to get approval for the water license in 2024/2025 and activate the new production well at that time.



Protecting Our Water to Protect Our Community

While people might be eager to get back to normal water usage, everyone in the Comox Valley is encouraged to continue water conservation practices into the fall – for the good of our watersheds and our water systems.

Know Your Water System

Did you know? The CVRD operates six different water systems – and each has their own challenges to consider in ensuring they continue to operate effectively. For example, the amount of water available is different for each system, and so are water restrictions. Visit comoxvalleyrd.ca/waterrestrictions to learn about current restrictions for your system.

To learn more about the different systems, visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/watersystems

Conserving Water

We can all reduce water usage on a day-to-day basis with simple steps like shorter showers and turning off taps when not using them. Additional conservation measures can be taken by adjusting your landscaping with native plant gardens and replacing shower heads and toilets to low flow designs.

Check out comoxvalleyrd.ca/conservation for information about ways you can reduce your household's water consumption.



MARIS PARK DONATION:

A small acknowledgment and plaque-reveal event was held in spring to recognize and thank Christopher Investments for their donation of 40 acres (16 hectares) of land in memory of founders, John and Diane Fiegl. The park will be named Maris Nature Park – and park management plans are underway now to determine how the property can be used while protecting the ecological value of the land. Here, Director Grieve and Director Hardy reveal a plaque with a representative from the donor.



Grant Funding Awarded to Support Infrastructure Projects, Programs, and Services

This spring, the CVRD Board approved grant funding for capital projects and non-profit groups within electoral areas that will support the community and expand services.

Growing Communities Grant Funds

The CVRD Board approved several projects for the Province of BC's Growing Communities Grant Funds within the CVRD. These funds focus on ensuring critical services are in place to support growing communities. Recipient projects included:

- Denman Island Fire Hall Replacement Project (2025) \$850,000;
- Mount Washington Fire Hall Project (2023) \$600,000;
- Union Bay Fire Hall Replacement Project (2024) \$1,195,000;
- Denman Island Cross Trail (2024) \$25,000;
- Goose Spit Trail (2024) \$90,000;
- Seal Bay Nature Park (2025/2026) \$120,000;

Rural Community Grants Awarded

Over \$225,000 in funding was awarded through the Rural Community Grant Program (formerly know as Grant-in-Aid) which helps non-profit community organizations benefitting the general community. The funds will support initiatives by 38 organizations, including:

- Indigenous Women's Sharing Society (\$17,000)
- Comox Valley Land Trust (\$14,500)
- United Riders of Cumberland (\$14,500)
- Comox Valley Watershed Society (Kus-Kus-sum) (\$12,000)
- Eureka Support Society (\$12,000)

See the full list of successful participants at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/communitygrants

Let's Talk!

The CVRD hosts an online hub specifically to collect feedback and input from the community about projects and new services. The site – www.engagecomoxvalley.ca – offers an easy way to stay looped in on interesting projects, and to influence how services are delivered. Along with regular news updates, there are often opportunities to pose questions, complete surveys, review webinars and more.

Come on by to get the latest about what's going on!