



2007 Annual Report

FRONT COVER PHOTO Nymph Falls Regional Park (Puntledge-Black Creek - Area 'C')
PHOTOGRAPHER Chuck Russell



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Message from the Chair

On behalf of my colleagues on the Comox Strathcona Regional District board of directors, I am pleased to introduce the annual report for the year ending December 31, 2007.

This was my first year as chair of the board, and it was quite a year! We led many initiatives that have helped improve lives for residents in communities within our borders. We signed the 'healthy community partnership' with VIHA, partnered with Coast Sustainability Trust, Community Initiatives and Network BC to bring high-speed Internet to the Sayward Valley, and guided Comox Valley transit to continue to have one of the fastest-growing riderships in BC.

That, and much more, all contained in a year when we were also required to focus our thoughts and energies on the historic restructuring of the regional district. As most of you know, we received word from the provincial government in the middle of the year that the CSRD was to be divided into two new regional districts – one north of the Oyster River and one to the south. The province's stated reason for the restructure was to provide improved governance over issues that affect the residents in this very large geographical area.

The 2006 census figures showed that our region experienced a population growth of nearly six percent overall since the previous census in 2001, and all projections are for growth of at least that much to continue over the next several years. The restructure of the CSRD into the two new regional districts will allow for each area to provide more targeted governance of its growing population, with diverse needs and wants.

This is a very exciting time for us all, as the regional district that was the first one created in BC moves into a new phase. As with all adventures, there are some unknowns but I truly believe that the outcome will provide for more responsive and more functional governance that will take the two new regions, and their current and incoming residents and businesses, successfully into the future.

Starr Winchester,
Chair



Message from the CAO

At the beginning of 2007 -- the 12 months this annual report covers -- there was the Comox Strathcona Regional District, and by year's end we were looking towards the creation of two new regional districts under the restructure mandated by the provincial government. The CSRSD became the first regional district in BC, created in 1965, and -- at the writing of this report -- became the second-only regional district in BC to be divided into two.

The provincial government said that the decision to divide the CSRSD into two regional districts did not reflect negatively in any way on the organization's staff or on its delivery of services. The year held challenges and opportunities for the CSRSD staff, and I believe we met those challenges and took advantage of the opportunities in a most professional and resident-focused way. I've always believed that a regional district's responsibility is to solve problems at a local level so that residents can live in a sustainable and functional environment. I think that our initiatives throughout 2007 did just that.

The first-ever "Movies under the stars" brought thousands of people of all ages together to watch three different family movies for a very low price under starry skies at our Comox Valley exhibition grounds.

A total of 65 kg (143 pounds) of fresh produce from the "Plant a Row, Grow a Row" projects at our Comox Valley and Campbell River compost education centres was donated to the Comox Valley food bank and to Campbell River soup kitchens.

Once again our commitment to excellence in using technology was shown when we launched the Wi-Fi Internet service on selected Comox Valley Transit routes, which we partner with BC Transit and Watson & Ash to operate.

We also used technology to make it easy for those interested in opportunities to tender a proposal for a project or to bid on surplus assets. "RD Bid" was created for the CSRSD website and allows one-stop shopping for asset purchases or business opportunities.

Many more projects were undertaken in 2007 that positively affected the lives of those who live, work and visit here. Our annual polling confirmed that our citizens were even more satisfied with our service delivery and with the CSRSD as a whole than the year before.

Since this will be the last annual report for the CSRSD I want to thank all the past and present employees of the regional district for doing the finest job they could under challenging circumstances. As in life, change in our work is inevitable and we move forward focussing on the good that can come from that change.

This report showcases just some of the good work done in 2007, and I am proud to have been one of the employees who showed the leadership necessary to accomplish that work.



Bob Long,
Chief Administrative Officer



2007 COMOX STRATHCONA REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRONT ROW – LEFT TO RIGHT Jim Abram (Discovery Islands/Mainland Inlets – Area 'J'), Cliff Pederson (Village of Zeballos), Fred Bates (Village of Cumberland), Starr Winchester, CSRD Chair (City of Courtenay), Craig Anderson, CSRD Vice Chair (Village of Gold River), Paul Ives (Town of Comox), Tom Pater (Kyuquot-Nootka – Area 'G')

SECOND ROW – LEFT TO RIGHT Heather Sprout (Village of Sayward), Barry Minaker (Puntledge-Black Creek – Area 'C'), Barbara Price (Lazo North – Area 'B'), Roger McDonell (City of Campbell River), Carol Quin (Denman/Hornby Islands – Area 'K'), Peter Rambo (Sayward-Bloedel – Area 'H'), Don McRae (City of Courtenay), Laird Ruehlen (City of Campbell River), Jenny Hiebert (Cortes – Area 'I'), Dave McIntosh (Village of Tahsis), Brenda Leigh (Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake – Area 'D'), Roy Grant (City of Campbell River), Suzanne Murray (Baynes Sound – Area 'A')



COMOX STRATHCONA REGIONAL DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

FRONT ROW – LEFT TO RIGHT Bob Long, chief administrative officer; Graeme Faris, general manager, operational services

SECOND ROW – LEFT TO RIGHT Ron Neufeld, senior manager, operational services; Debra Oakman, general manager, corporate services; Leigh Carter, general manager, corporate communications; Ray Boogaards, general manager, parks and recreation services



Management's Responsibility for Financial Reporting

These summarized consolidated financial statements have been prepared by management from the complete consolidated financial statements for inclusion in this annual report. They provide a brief financial overview of the regional district's financial position at December 31, 2007 and the results of its activities for the year ended December 31, 2007.

Management maintains a system of internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded and that transactions are authorized, recorded and reported properly. Management also maintains a program of proper business compliance.

The board of directors is responsible for reviewing and approving the financial statements and for ensuring that management fulfils its responsibilities for financial reporting and internal control.

Meyers Norris Penny LLP, Chartered Accountants, the regional district's independent auditors, have conducted an examination of the financial statements in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and have expressed their opinion in their report which accompanies the complete audited financial statements available at the regional district office or online at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca.



E.J. Dunlop, CGA

Officer responsible for Financial Administration,
pursuant to Section 199 of the Local Government Act

Auditors' Report

To the Board of Directors of the
Comox Strathcona Regional District

The accompanying summarized consolidated statement of financial position and statement of financial activities are derived from the complete consolidated financial statements of the Comox Strathcona Regional District as at December 31, 2007 and for the year then ended on which we expressed an opinion without reservation in our report dated March 14, 2008. The fair summarization of the complete consolidated financial statements is the responsibility of management. Our responsibility, in accordance with the applicable Assurance Guideline of The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, is to report on the summarized financial statements.

Campbell River, British Columbia
March 14, 2008

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements fairly summarize, in all material respects, the related complete consolidated financial statements in accordance with the criteria described in the Guideline referred to above.

These summarized financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on the district's financial position, results of operations and cash flows, readers are invited to obtain a full set of audited financial statements, from the regional district office or online at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca.

Meyers Norris Penny LLP
Chartered Accountants

Comox Strathcona Regional District

Summarized Consolidated Statement of Financial Position
As at December 31, 2007 (Audited)

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
Financial Assets		
Cash and temporary investments	\$ 49,159,018	\$ 36,835,863
Receivables and inventory for resale	3,445,303	2,638,082
Debt recoverable from others	40,052,879	44,375,674
Total Financial Assets	<u>92,657,200</u>	<u>83,849,619</u>
Liabilities		
Payables and other liabilities	6,403,729	4,174,825
Long-term debt	76,170,375	81,876,043
Deferred revenue	4,511,480	3,989,982
Provision for landfill closure and post closure	2,589,734	2,248,166
Total Liabilities	<u>89,675,318</u>	<u>92,289,016</u>
Net Financial Assets (Liabilities)	<u>2,981,882</u>	<u>(8,439,397)</u>
Non-Financial Assets		
Prepaid expenses and inventory of supplies	59,720	69,715
Tangible capital assets	139,804,029	131,275,715
Total Non-Financial Assets	<u>139,863,749</u>	<u>131,345,430</u>
Net Position	<u>\$ 142,845,631</u>	<u>\$ 122,906,033</u>
Comox Strathcona Regional District Equity Position		
Equity in tangible capital assets	\$ 103,686,534	\$ 93,775,346
Fund balances	39,159,097	29,130,687
Comox Strathcona Regional District Position	<u>\$ 142,845,631</u>	<u>\$ 122,906,033</u>



E.J. Dunlop, CGA

Officer responsible for Financial Administration,
pursuant to Section 199 of the Local Government Act

Comox Strathcona Regional District

Summarized Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities
Year ended December 31, 2007 (Audited)

	2007 Actual	2007 Budget (Unaudited)	2006 Actual
Revenue			
Frontage and parcel taxes	\$ 198,644	\$ 197,290	\$ 202,370
Grants in lieu of taxes	545,170	300,095	442,813
Requisitions - electoral and municipal	22,349,302	22,349,302	22,489,865
Transfers from other governments	633,717	694,719	712,916
Sales of services and own revenue sources	15,619,492	13,662,185	14,096,215
Contribution from others	15,612,714	7,828,330	9,586,834
Debt proceeds to contribution services	-	-	191,338
Interest earned and actuarial adjustment	3,684,782	-	2,656,094
Total Revenue	58,643,821	45,031,921	50,378,445
Expenditures			
General government	3,617,612	4,776,084	3,339,113
Protective	3,459,740	3,940,129	3,234,434
Environmental health	16,367,355	25,422,049	12,991,328
Public health and welfare	46,150	61,979	10,546
Environmental development	2,139,454	2,519,836	2,013,492
Recreation and cultural	11,372,456	12,750,960	11,267,398
Transportation	1,901,499	2,132,520	1,655,833
Debt charges - Municipalities	7,976,709	7,708,330	8,109,678
Landfill closure and post closure allowance	341,568	-	307,276
Total Expenditures	47,222,543	59,311,887	42,929,098
Net Revenues (Expenditures)	11,421,278	(14,279,966)	7,449,347
Financing Activities			
New debt issued - Regional District	3,047,480	4,741,762	5,300,570
Debt principal repayments - Regional District	(1,606,862)	(1,610,301)	(2,120,754)
Actuarial reduction of debenture debt	(2,823,491)	-	(1,999,365)
Non financial asset valuation change	(9,995)	-	3,264
Decrease (Increase) in long-term financing	(1,392,868)	3,131,461	1,183,715
Change in Consolidated Fund Balances	10,028,410	(11,148,505)	8,633,062
Beginning Consolidated Fund Balances - as previous reported	29,981,002	29,130,687	20,497,625
Less: Prior period adjustment - deferred revenue	(850,315)	-	-
Beginning Consolidated Fund Balances - restated	29,130,687	29,130,687	20,497,625
Ending Consolidated Fund Balances	\$ 39,159,097	\$ 17,982,182	\$ 29,130,687

Dyke Road Park – Lazo North (Area 'B') PHOTOGRAPHER Chuck Russell





LEFT TO RIGHT: Sayward-Bloedel (Area 'H'); Ship's Point (Baynes Sound - Area 'A'); Village of Zeballos; Rugged Mountain, just north of the Village of Tahsis; Village of Sayward



LEFT TO RIGHT: Bill Mee Park (Denman/Hornby Islands - Area 'K'); Oyster River Nature Park (Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake - Area 'D'); Village of Gold River; Goose Spit (Lazo North - Area 'B'); Yuquot (Kyuquot-Nootka - Area 'G')



LEFT TO RIGHT: City of Campbell River; City of Courtenay; Granite Bay (Discovery Islands/Mainland Inlets - Area 'J'); Village of Cumberland; Town of Comox

ALL IMAGES - PHOTOGRAPHER: CHUCK RUSSELL



Building Community

Village of Gold River – the MV Uchuck III. PHOTOGRAPHER: Chuck Russell



Building Community

protect

TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT

The CSRD was gratefully acknowledged by the Nature's Trust Vancouver Island Conservation Management Program for the regional district's valuable contribution to the trust's success in acquiring and protecting land. The Nature's Trust owns more than 3,700 hectares of land in the CSRD.

This award was specifically related to work done to acquire Lazo Marsh, for granting tax exemptions for protected land at places including Millar Creek, Coal Creek and Fanny Bay, and for supporting stewardship programs such as Black Brant geese conservation.



Nature's Trust presentation; L to R: Paul Ives, CSRD director – Town of Comox; Starr Winchester, CSRD board chair; Tom Reid, manager, Nature's Trust Vancouver Island Conservation Management Program; Barbara Price, CSRD director – Lazo North (Area 'B')



L to R: Steve Savola, Canuba Cable; Brian Pearson, CSRD manager of information systems & GIS; Ian Clarke, Sayward Valley Communication

PHOTOGRAPHER:
Hans Peter Meyer

connect

HIGH-SPEED COMES TO A LOW VALLEY

Following on the success of bringing high-speed Internet service to the Village of Sayward in 2006, the CSRD, with funding from the Coast Sustainability Trust, Community Initiatives and Network BC, expanded high-speed coverage to the Sayward Valley in 2007.

The project was made possible by the agreement between the province of BC and Telus Communications, which fulfils the province's commitment to bring affordable high-speed Internet to the 151 communities currently on the "Provincial Digital Divide" list. The project is also supported through agreements with the local cable company, Sayward Valley Communications.

The Village of Sayward received a \$20,000 grant from the province's Network BC program and the CSRD received a \$15,000 grant from the Community Initiatives Fund of the Community Futures Development Corporation of Strathcona. A matching grant of \$35,000 was received from the Coast Sustainability Trust within the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.

With the 2007 expansion, high-speed Internet made 119 connections into the Village of Sayward and the Sayward Valley by year-end, with almost 40 more to be added in January 2008. Now residents in the rural area join those in the municipal area in having new opportunities to connect worldwide for business and education.

Community



L to R: CSRD chair Starr Winchester, VIHA chief medical health officer Dr Richard Stanwick

PHOTOGRAPHER: Koreen Gurak



New Year's Eve event – Strathcona Gardens, Campbell River

PHOTOGRAPHER: Koreen Gurak

CSRD SIGNS “HEALTHY COMMUNITIES” PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH VIHA

In March the Comox Strathcona Regional District and the Vancouver Island Health Authority signed a three-year agreement that will see the two organizations working in partnership to achieve healthy communities and improve the health status of citizens within the regional district.

The signing of this formalized agreement for the Healthy Communities Collaborative Initiative represented the opportunity to move forward with an integrated strategic plan and joint program initiatives as well as with communication and education.

FREE NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS

The CSRD partnered with the Comox Valley Tim Horton's and the McDonald's in Campbell River to once again make it possible for families to glide or splash their way into 2008 at the free swim and skate on the evening of December 31 at either the CSRD's Comox Valley Sports Centre or Strathcona Gardens. This event engaged families in physical activity as well as provided an inexpensive way to celebrate the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008.

Over 2,000 people attended the events that were the result of a team effort with the businesses already mentioned, plus local radio stations 98.9 Jet FM and 97.3 the Eagle, local government partners, active communities and numerous volunteers.

“MOVIES UNDER THE STARS” BRINGS COMMUNITY 21ST CENTURY DRIVE-IN

The Comox Strathcona Regional District hosted “Movies under the stars”, a unique outdoor cinema experience on the last three Wednesdays in August at the CSRD’s exhibition grounds. Over 10,000 people came to watch the latest and greatest movies on a three and a-half storey screen for just \$2 per person or \$5 per family – regardless of the number in the family!

The movie nights were the result of a team effort with local radio station 98.9 Jet FM, Canadian Tire, Sound Advice, the local McDonald’s, and the Comox Valley Echo newspaper, all of which came on board by

donating funds, equipment, advertising and volunteer support which helped offset the cost of hosting the special event. The Orcas swimming club spent many hours preparing and organizing a concession to sell movie snacks, the proceeds of which raised funds for the club to assist it with expenses in the 2007-08 season.

The unique event helped families have an unforgettable night out for very little cost, and the success of the event has the CSRD looking at a repeat performance in the summer of 2008.

“Movies under the stars” crowd gathers (double photo) PHOTOGRAPHER: Beverly Nelson



RE-DEDICATION CEREMONY AT ROYSTON BREAKWATER

On June 24 the Comox Strathcona Regional District hosted a re-dedication ceremony for the two interpretative panels that had been recently repaired and erected. They replaced the panels originally installed in 1997 at the Centennial Park on Marine Drive in Royston and overlook a prominent piece of historic industrial architecture: the Comox Logging and Railway Company's old ship breakwater. The first panel acknowledges the role that Comox Logging and Railway played in what was claimed to be the largest timber enterprise in the British Empire, the Canadian

Western Lumber Company. The second panel outlines individual histories of the historic ships that the logging company utilized for their hulk breakwater.

The heritage signs were originally the result of Field Sawmills Limited Partnership assisting the Royston Community Club and Recreation Commission with the sign project, while BC Heritage Trust provided financial assistance in order to increase public understanding of the history of British Columbia.

understand

Suzanne Murray, CSRD director for Baynes Sound (Area 'A') and members of the Royal Canadian Naval Association - Comox Valley Branch.





L to R: Brenda Leigh, CSRD director for Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake (Area 'D'); Jim Lorina, President of Oyster River Enhancement Society (ORES); Bruce Giles, ORES park coordinator; Bruce Pirrie, ORES treasurer.

PHOTOGRAPHER: Koreen Gurak



NEW FOOTBRIDGE OPENS IN OYSTER RIVER PARK

In November, the CSRD completed a much-needed footbridge that will offer an alternative route through the Oyster River Park in Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake (Area 'D').

The new 15 metre engineered bridge replaced a smaller bridge that was washed out several years ago. Park users can once again do a loop along the Fishermen's Trail to the Jack Hames and Ridge Trails while enjoying the sights and sounds of the Oyster River. Shortly after the bridge was built it was discovered that dogs did not like to walk on the metal grating at either end

of the bridge. In fact, some dogs refused to cross the bridge and would scurry under it instead. Covering the grating with plywood and shingles quickly resolved this unforeseen problem making the bridge accessible to all, including the four-legged creatures that accompany many park users during walks in the park.

The park is located on Regent Road just north of Saratoga Beach and situated next to Qualicum Farms (formerly the UBC Research Farm).

RECYCLING COMES TO SAYWARD

Recycling plays a major role in keeping items out of our landfills. Along with being seen as a “green” activity, household recycling is a key element of the waste reduction strategy of the regional solid waste plan at the Comox Strathcona Regional District.

In 2007 the CSRD introduced public recycling to the Sayward Valley, by stationing large green multi-materials recycling bins near the village centre. These bins collect a range of materials—including plastics, newspaper, cardboard and tins.

These bins expanded the CSRD’s network of public recycling bin locations to 23. Each location is hosted on a volunteer basis by property owners that agree to have bins on their site. The challenge of public

recycling relates to the fact that as public bins become more popular, the bins fill more rapidly and require more frequent emptying by the large trucks designed to do this job. It can create a noisy environment—especially when glass collection is involved—and it’s not always possible to keep the recycling bin sites perfectly spotless.

Staff from the Village of Sayward’s public works department is meeting this challenge. They have offered to monitor the recycling bin area to ensure it’s clean and that the bins are emptied when full. It’s a great example of local governments working together to bring recycling to a community that is keen to play its part in waste reduction.



CSRD director and Sayward village mayor Heather Sprout and CSRD director for Sayward-Bloedel (Area 'H') Peter Rambo
PHOTOGRAPHER
Hans Peter Meyer



Leadership

City of Courtenay PHOTOGRAPHER Chuck Russell



Leadership

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY . . .

Emergency programs are of paramount importance to all local governments, and in February the CSRD created a special focus on emergency preparedness for the northern parts of the region.

A position was created to manage the CSRD emergency programs, with specific attention on coordinating emergency planning for the northern communities. The northern communities emergency program (NCEP) includes Campbell River, Sayward, Gold River, Tahsis, Zeballos, Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake (area 'D'), Sayward-Bloedel (area 'H'), Cortes and Quadra Islands (areas 'I' and 'J' respectively), and Kyuquot-Nootka (area 'G').

These programs are responsible for emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery for their respective communities. In addition to government planning for emergencies, it's also essential that we plan – as individuals – for our own safety and disaster recovery. Neighbourhood emergency preparedness courses are held throughout the year to train people to care for themselves.

It is essential that not only does each area have its own plan, but that we work proactively to ensure that the plans are in harmony with each other, since many emergencies transcend geographic and political borders.

prepare

SKYROCKET HITS NEW HEIGHTS

When we launched the SkyRocket soil amendment in 2006 people asked “Why the odd name?” This past year the reason became apparent as plants actually did rocket to the sky – growing five times the height of those grown in topsoil or fish compost mixes.

In the summer we planted three test gardens at the CSRD Compost Education Centre on Headquarters Road in Courtenay, comparing plants grown in topsoil, fish compost and SkyRocket.

The results were unbelievable and the world took note. The Times Colonist newspaper did a feature on SkyRocket and A-Channel news brought their cameras to document the incredible growth. We were invited by the Compost Council of Canada to create a SkyRocket display at the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver and local news media featured photos of 10-foot tall corn and exploding pink double-hollyhocks.



Over the summer more than 4,000 people visited the Compost Education Centre to see the gigantic SkyRocket plants and learn about backyard composting. Our free bag giveaway was a success with line-ups into the parking lot and our “20 bucks a truck” sale in September saw over 600 people arrive at the biosolid facility for a load. We sold out of SkyRocket before the growing season ended and outperformed original sales estimates by 60 percent.

“What’s in this stuff?” became the new question. Test results showed low metal levels and coliform counts on par with normal garden soil levels. SkyRocket is made from clean woodchips out of the landfill mixed with biosolids from the liquid waste sewage stream. It’s a marvel but there is really no magic to this innovative example of waste reduction.



SkyRocket test bed – CSRD Comox Valley
compost education centre

REGIONAL WATER CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Water water everywhere and not a drop to waste. That was one of the key messages as the regional district launched a year long water conservation education program in partnership with BC Hydro and including Campbell River, Comox, Courtenay, Cumberland, and electoral areas A, B, C, and D. Support also came from the Province of BC.

The two pillars of the program focused on encouraging water conservation among residents as well as raising awareness about local watersheds and how to practice responsible recreation in and around them.

The program included on the ground education teams at Comox Lake and McIvor Lake during the summer months, door-to-door sprinkling visits, and informational material.

The local news media assisted by running a series of eight informative water articles on everything from

low-flow toilets to water metering basics and following a “day-in-the-life” of water use for a typical but fictional Comox Valley family of four, the McWaters.

For younger audiences the program offered an in-schools “water pledge” presentation and some very popular interactive watershed models used in the classroom and at outdoor summer events.

Weather-wise, it was a fairly wet summer so lawn watering wasn’t the heavy drain on the water system that it usually is. Looking back, a combination of water conservation efforts and behaviour change among residents—as encouraged by the “Water. Why Waste It?” campaign—and Mother Nature herself helped residents of the region chart a 22 percent decrease in water use compared to water use during the same months of previous years.



L to R: Graeme Faris, CSRD general manager of operations; CSRD chair Starr Winchester; BC Hydro’s community relations manager Stephen Watson

THE LAUNCH OF WIRELESS TRANSIT

Innovation has been the name of the game over the years at the CSRD and 2007 was no exception. On the transit side this meant being the first area in the province of BC to offer free wireless Internet access on the bus.

“Wi-Fi Inside” was launched in November by the CSRD and BC Transit at the Courtenay campus of North Island College. The launch took place on a bus and curious students and professors were invited to give the service a try.

The new service provides bus riders with the ability to connect to the Internet on the bus through their own laptop computer or PDA (phone, PalmPilot or Blackberry) that has been enabled to access wireless networks. Bus passengers in the Comox Valley can now board the bus and check or send e-mail and surf the web.

Wi-Fi Inside is a 12-month pilot project that is the first of its kind in BC. It will be considered a potential model for other transit systems wanting to offer online services to riders.

The goal of the CSRD is to grow public transit from being a service for those who have limited transportation options to becoming a preferred method of travel in the Comox Valley. Adding wireless Internet to the buses represents an innovative way to help make this goal a reality.



Students log in on the bus

PHOTOGRAPHER: Hans Peter Meyer

innovate



Near the Village of Gold River PHOTOGRAPHER Chuck Russell





Neighbourhood Planning

Mt. Geoffrey Nature Park, Hornby Island PHOTOGRAPHER Chuck Russell



Neighbourhood Planning

THE KENSINGTON ISLAND PROPERTIES DEVELOPMENT STORY

The consultation and approval process for the Kensington Island Properties development in Union Bay continued throughout 2007. The application for a 342-hectare (845 acre) master planned community consisting of a village core, a marina, golf course, tourist uses, public amenities, and over 1600 residential units dates back to 2005.

A public hearing, which was held over two days in March of 2006, identified the need for a development agreement between the developer and the regional district. A development agreement was subsequently drafted which outlined a number of conditions that

needed to be addressed before the board could approve the development, including servicing and provision of public amenities. The board adopted the bylaws in September of 2007.

In response to a legal challenge to those bylaws, and in order to more fully capture the density bonusing and affordable housing provisions of the development agreement, new bylaws were developed. They were given third reading by the board in November and -- at the close of 2007 -- were being reviewed by the province to determine if it could give approval to the bylaws for the board to adopt them in February.

develop

NEW LIGHT SHED ON DARK SKIES POLICY

The year 2007 saw the CSRD formally adopt and implement a new dark skies policy. This will mean that all new regional district projects including any developments which take place within areas designated as commercial or industrial development permit areas, will be regulated as to the type, location and impacts of the exterior lighting fixtures used.

The intent of the dark skies policy is to provide for “good lighting” which improves visibility and safety, and provides a sense of security, while minimizing energy use, operating costs, and glare. Traditional exterior lighting or “bad lighting” creates light pollution by glare from inadequate shielding or creates “light trespass” due to misdirected lighting which invades neighbouring properties. In addition, the dark skies policy is intended to reduce “sky glow” caused by the illumination of dust and other air molecules from light that is misdirected upward obscuring the stars in the night sky. The regional district intends to lead by example by bringing its own operations into compliance with the dark skies policy.

QUADRA ISLAND OCP REVIEW

The Quadra Island official community plan (OCP) review, which was begun in 2006, moved successfully towards completion in 2007. Initially, four citizen-run “steering committees” were formed in 2006 to discuss issues specific to the Quathiaski Cove, Heriot Bay, South Heriot Bay and southeast Quadra Island areas. These were followed by approximately 20 additional public meetings in 2007 to bring together all issues and public input. The meetings were well attended and discussed a wide variety of issues facing Quadra Island such as growth management, servicing, social housing and employment opportunities.

Following an October 3, 2007 public meeting held to allow the public to view the completed draft community plan, the bylaw proceeded to public hearing on October 10. Based on the input received at that public hearing, the regional board made some “fine tuning” adjustments to the bylaw that then proceeded to its final public hearing on November 14, 2007. At its November 2007 meeting the regional board gave the draft OCP third reading. The bylaw has since been sent to the province for review prior to receiving final adoption.



adopt

SUPPORTING A PESTICIDE-FREE REGION

In 2004, the regional district established an awareness and education program for the use of pesticides in relation to the control of pollution, nuisances, pests, noxious weeds and unsightly premises in every electoral area plus the Villages of Cumberland and Zeballos. Courtenay and Comox take part as well.

In 2007 this education took on a more important role as each of the three Comox Valley municipalities adopted bylaws that ban the use of pesticides on public and private lands.

Several North American studies have shown that, on its own, education is only partially effective at helping people change behaviour. The same is true for bylaws on their own, without education. It is much more effective when education and awareness efforts are combined with an incentive such as a law or a bylaw.

In 2007 this dynamic was present in the Comox Valley as Courtenay became the third local municipality to adopt a bylaw banning the use of pesticides.

Education in 2007 took the form of bringing noted experts and authors to the CSRD for public speaking events, creating demonstration gardens showing how to put nature—rather than pesticides—to work, and launching a retailer outreach program to help garden and hardware retailers provide useful information cards on pesticide alternatives to interested customers.

Over 127 Canadian cities and towns have bylaws to ban pesticides. By creating a pesticide-free valley through ongoing regional education plus innovative bylaws, the CSRD is helping to set an example for other regions considering this timely topic.

educate

Jessica Dawes, “the bug lady” (in hat), shows pest-managing lady bugs to visitors at the CSRD’s Comox Valley compost education centre



Campbell River Waterfront PHOTOGRAPHER Chuck Russell



BACK COVER PHOTO Cortes (Area 'I')

PHOTOGRAPHER Chuck Russell

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