

File: 7200-20 Mount Washington

November 24, 2021

PROPERTY OWNER

Dear Resident or Property Owner:

Re: Mt Washington Fire Protection Service Fire Hall Project Update

I am pleased to advise that the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board has given direction to move forward with the borrowing and approval process for the construction of a fire hall building on Mount Washington and secured a grant for \$900,000 towards the project to help reduce the costs. As a resident or property owner within the Mount Washington Resort Community Fire Protection Service Area, this letter is being provided to share the details respecting this project and the planned public approval process.

Project Background

Following a successful referendum in 2016, the CVRD Board established the fire protection service for your area. Since 2017, the Oyster River Fire Rescue (ORFR) department has been providing fire protection responses from the Oyster River Fire Hall.

To provide advice and local perspective on service-related matters, a steering group was established which includes participation from the Pacific Group Resorts, private and strata owners and other stakeholders in the Mount Washington community. The steering group recognizes that the current responding fire hall at Oyster River is located approximately 38 km away which delays a full fire department response. For this reason and others, the steering group supports the development of an operating fire hall on the property donated for this purpose (see enclosed map).

An operating fire hall at Mount Washington will:

- Improve fire department response time, helping to save lives and property and contributing to the overall wellbeing and safety of the community;
- Provide permanent heated storage for the Mount Washington fire apparatus, tools and equipment which is required to be eligible for reduced residential fire insurance rates;
- Provide a training location for volunteer firefighters;
- Become the central location for promoting and encouraging volunteers.

The establishment of a fire hall may eventually lead to reduced fire insurance premium rates for property owners. In order to be eligible for reduced premiums, the Fire Underwriters Survey requires:

- A responding fire hall within eight road kilometres;
- A certified fire engine less than 25 years of age;
- A minimum of 15 volunteer firefighters (currently, there are eight volunteers).

The establishment of a fire hall is key to eventually being eligible for reduced residential fire insurance premiums.

Project Details

The project architect and engineering team have developed a design (see enclosed fire hall design drawing) and cost estimates for the construction of a fire hall along with the purchase of equipment and project management costs. The total cost for the Mount Washington fire hall project is estimated to be \$2.5 million. Table 1 below outlines both the capital funding source and expense projections for the project.

At its October 26, 2021 meeting, the CVRD Board approved a total contribution of \$900,000 in Community Works Funds (CWF) towards the project from the Canada Community-Building Fund (Gas Tax Fund) which provides such grant funding to regional districts. This federal grant funding will be used to lower the borrowing needed which will reduce the tax impact of the project.

Table 1

Capital Funding Sources	Amount
Borrowing Amount	\$1,424,242
Community Works Funds	\$900,000
Transfer from Reserves	\$190,000
Total Funding Sources	\$2,514,242
Capital Expenses	Estimated Costs
Fire Hall Construction (With 20 % Contingency)	\$1,506,000
Other Construction-Related Costs (Escalation Allowance, Project Management, Development Permits, Utilities, Etc.)	\$653,000
Fire Apparatus and Equipment	\$341,000
MFA Debt Expense	\$14,242
Total Estimated Project Costs	\$2,514,242

If the fire hall project proceeds, the annual tax requisition required to maintain service delivery, including debt servicing, is anticipated to be \$250,000. As an example; for a residential property assessed at \$500,000 the tax increase for this project is anticipated to be approximately \$123.40.

Elector Approval Process

Under provincial legislation, elector approval is required for the CVRD to secure long-term borrowing to finance the costs to construct and equip the new fire hall. Such approval may be sought by way of a referendum or through an Alternative Approval Process (AAP). While both processes are legitimate and authorized by provincial legislation, an AAP is much less expensive and quicker to conduct.

The CVRD Board has authorized the use of an AAP based on the above-noted considerations as well as strong community support for the construction of the fire hall, the considerable grant funding secured, and the need for a timely approval process in order to potentially enable construction in the summer of 2022.

An AAP is a public voting method that municipalities and regional districts use to measure public opinion. The process allows a local government to proceed with a proposed action unless at least 10 per cent of the electors state their opposition within a prescribed period. If at least 10 per cent of the electors state their opposition to the proposed action, the matter requires that approval be provided through a referendum if the local government still wishes to proceed. To learn more about AAPs and how they work visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/aap

Prior to the AAP, which will be conducted early next year, you will receive another letter outlining the full details of the process including the timeframe for response forms and elector eligibility. As the CVRD is mindful that some questions or concerns exist about the AAP, we're reaching out directly to every property owner to ensure awareness of the project and the approval process. In this regard, I encourage you to visit our project website at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/mountwashingtonfire to learn more about the fire hall proposal and the AAP.

More Information

The goal of the CVRD is to ensure residents and property owners have all the information they need to make an informed decision. You can remain up to date by signing up for notifications on our project website at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/mountwashingtonfire

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me at 250-334-6044, communityservices@comoxvalleyrd.ca or by mail at 770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC V9N 0G8.

If you have any questions about the AAP process, please contact Jake Martens, General Manager of Corporate Services at 250-334-6029 or CorporateServices@comoxvalleyrd.ca

Sincerely,

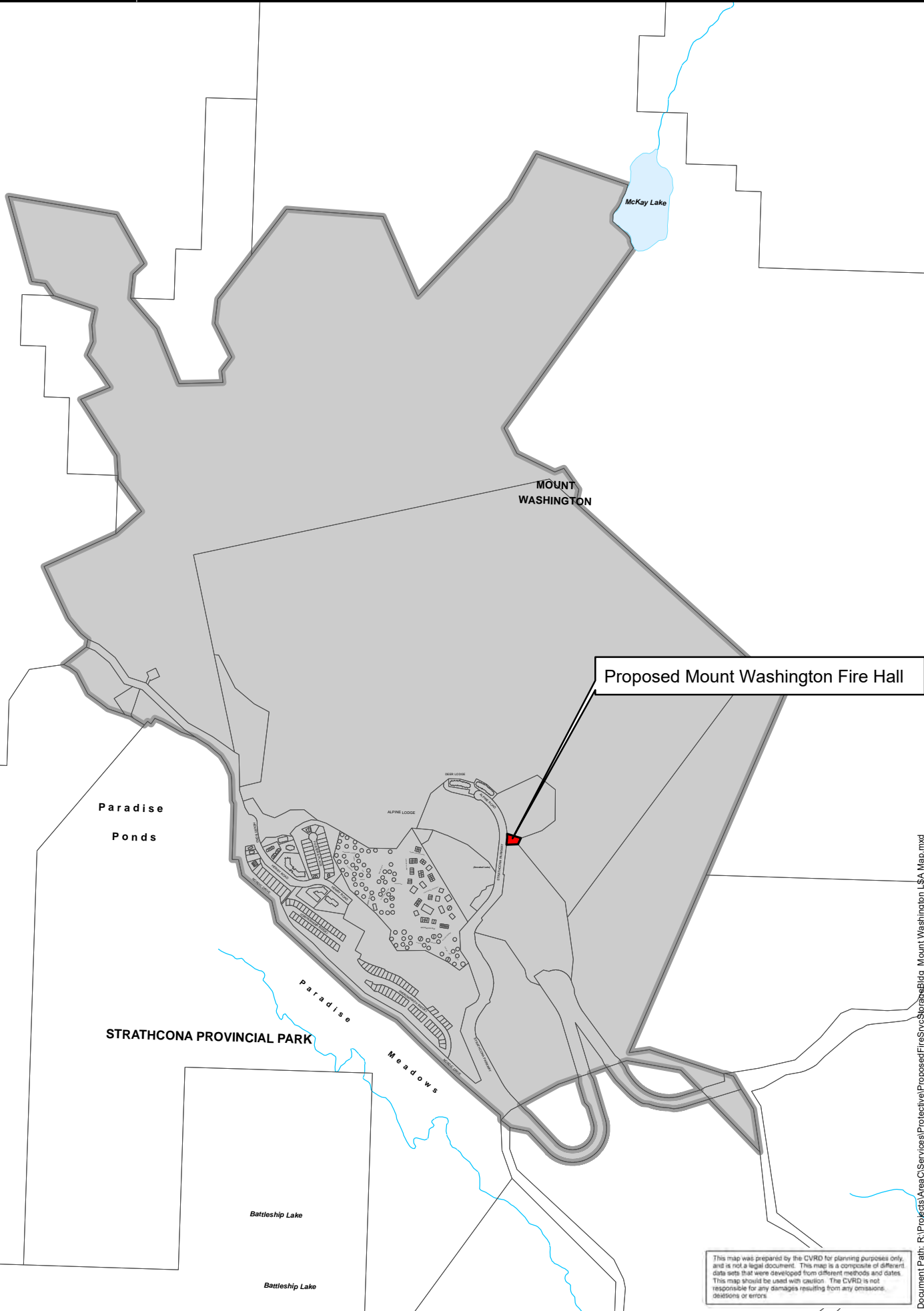
J. Bast

James Bast
Manager of Fire Services
Community Services Branch

Enclosures (2): Mt Washington Fire Service Area map
Fire Hall design drawing

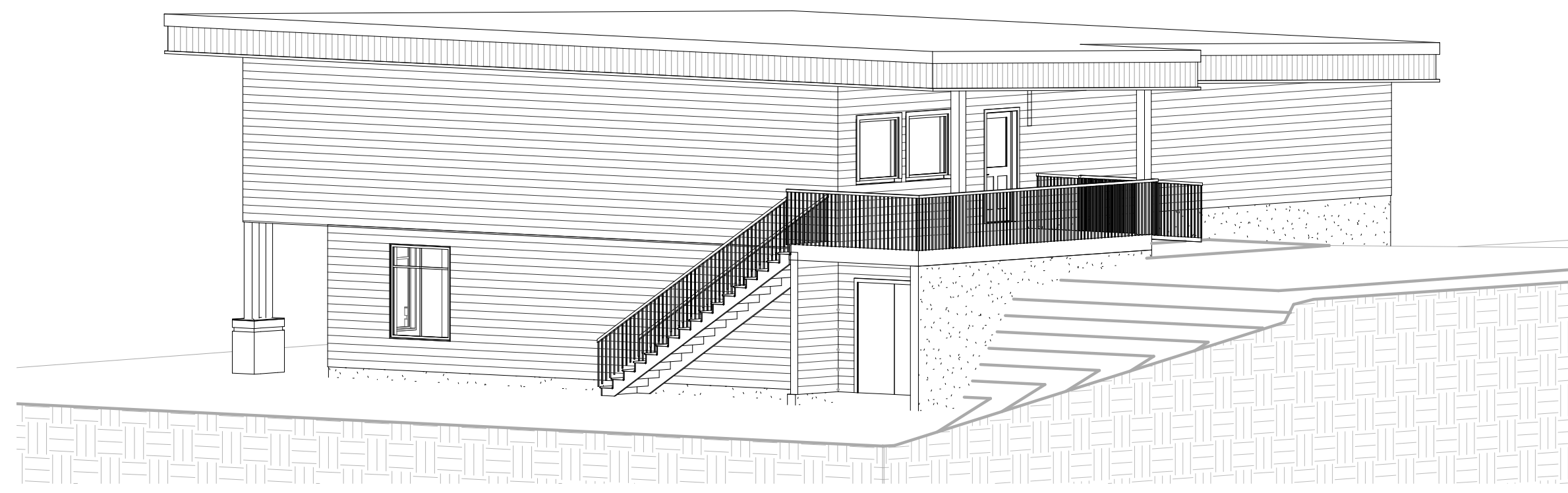
cc: Jake Martens, General Manager of Corporate Services, CVRD
Doug DeMarzo, General Manager of Community Services, CVRD
Bruce Green, Fire Chief, Oyster River Fire Rescue

/jb

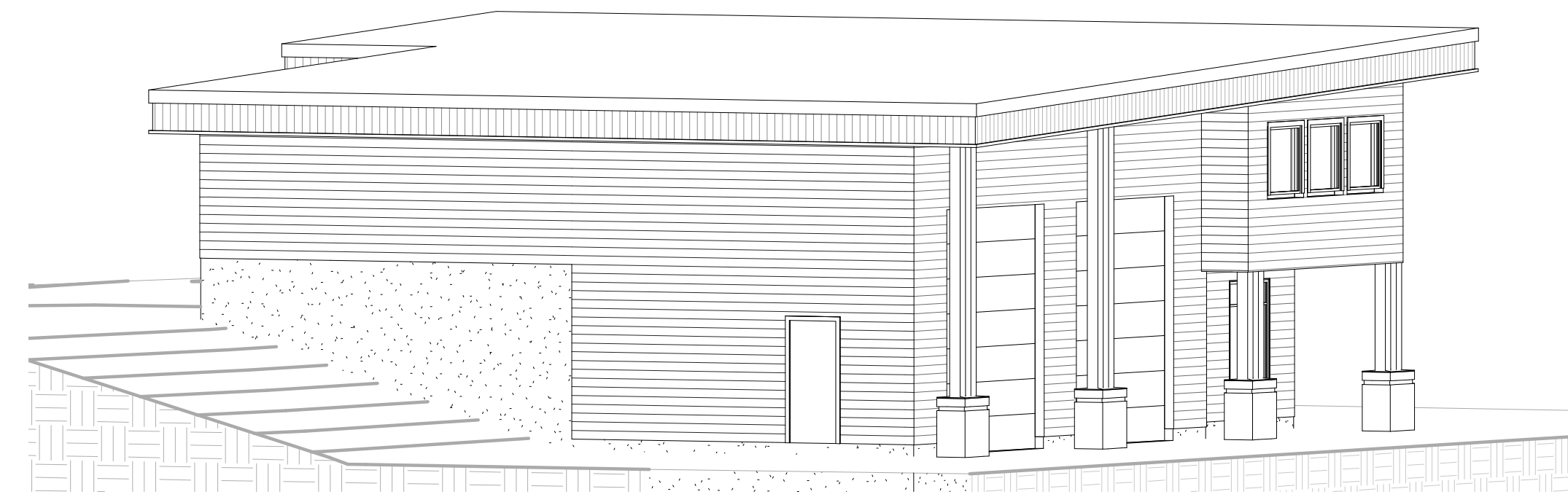


Proposed Mount Washington Fire Hall

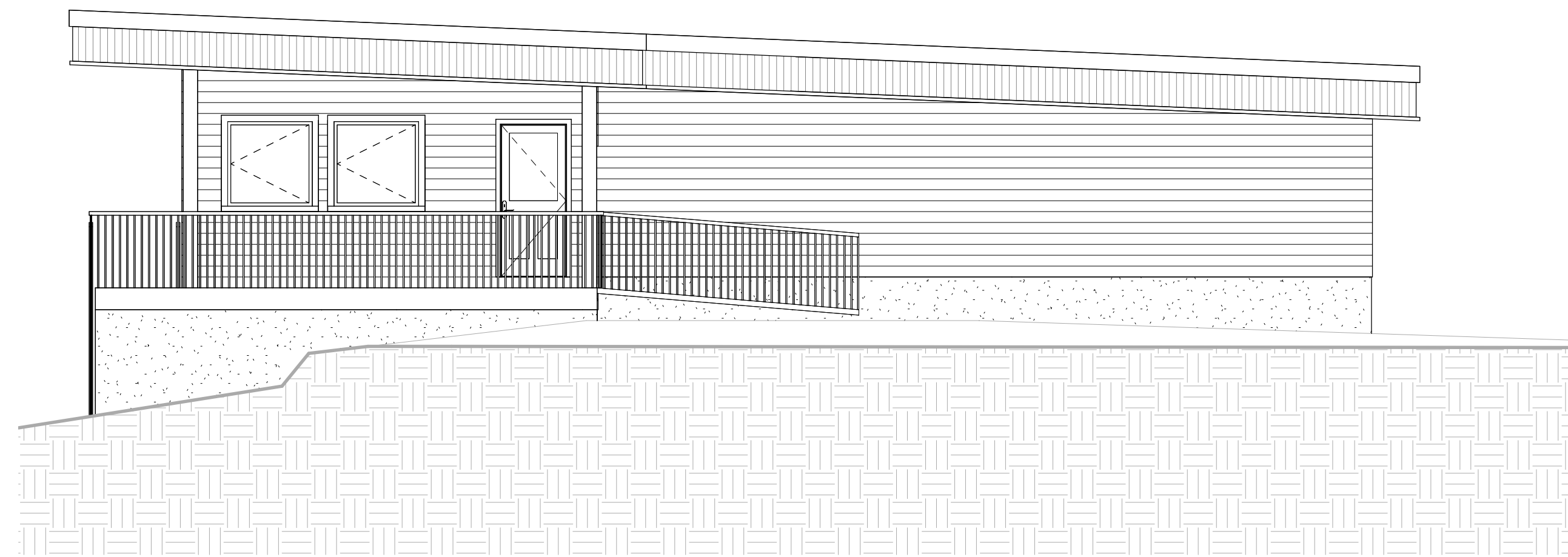
This map was prepared by the CVRD for planning purposes only, and is not a legal document. This map is a composite of different data sets that were developed from different methods and dates. This map should be used with caution. The CVRD is not responsible for any damages resulting from any omissions, deletions or errors.



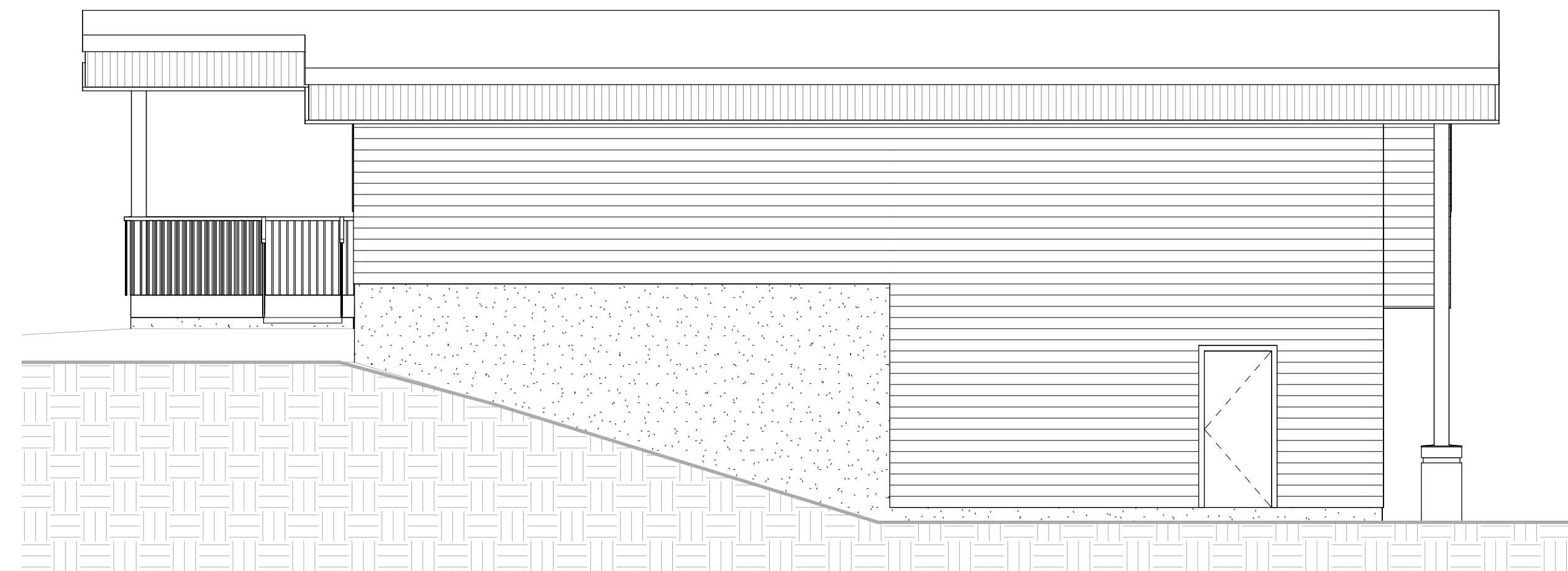
1 Northeast View



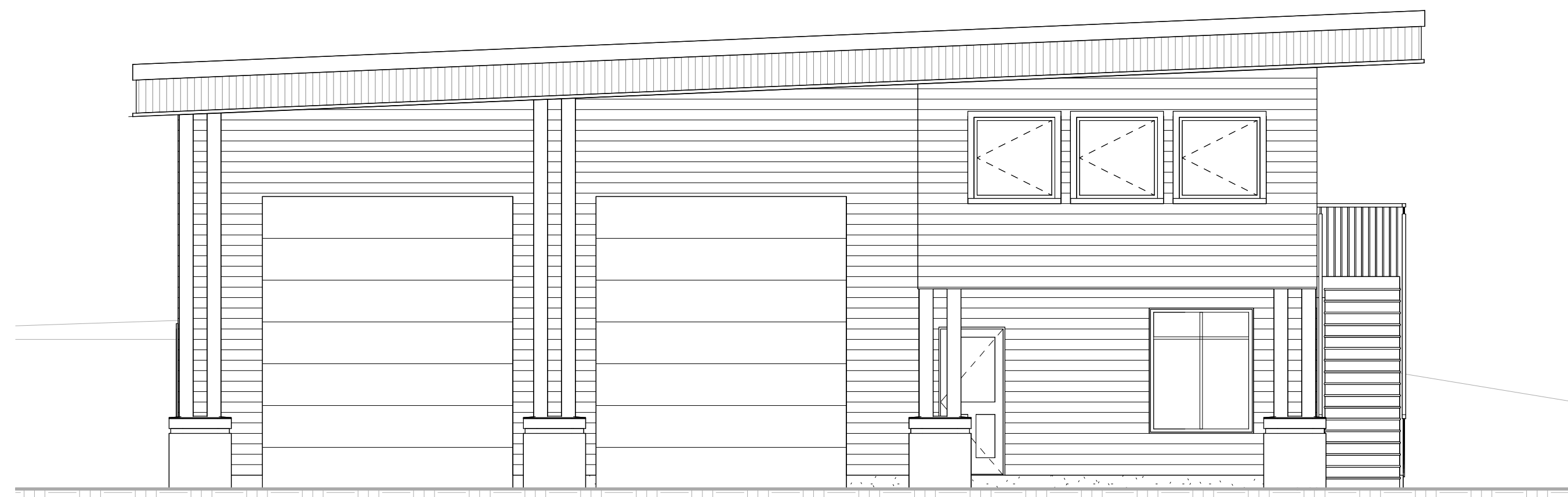
2 Southwest View



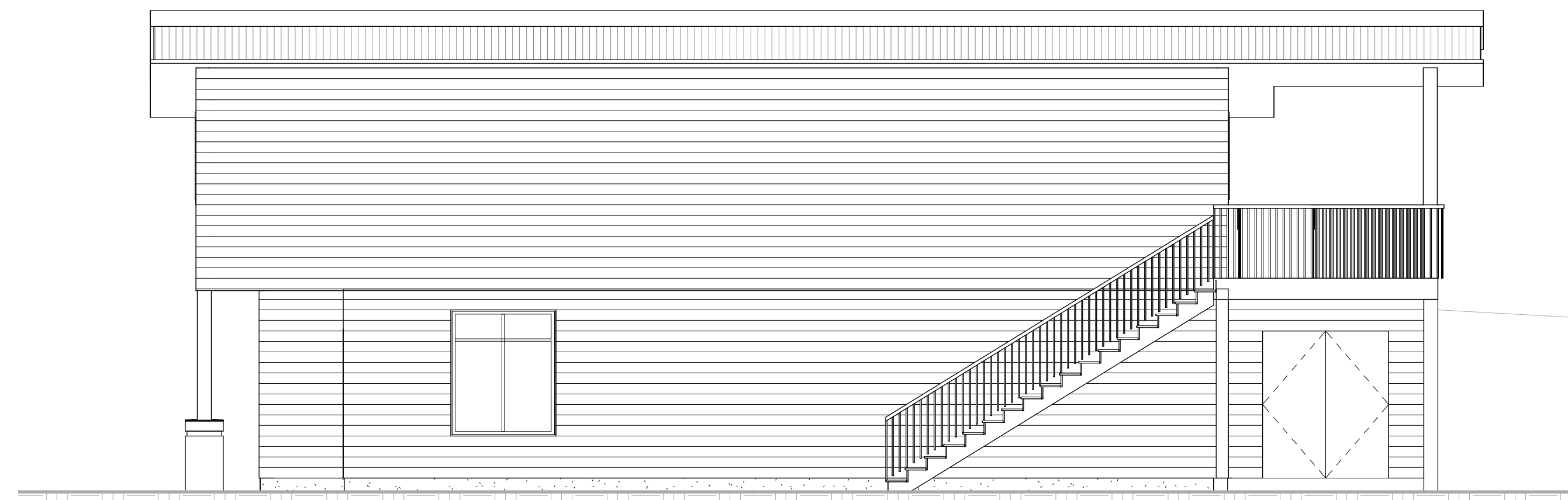
3 North
3/16" = 1'-0"



4 West
3/16" = 1'-0"



5 South
3/16" = 1'-0"



6 East
3/16" = 1'-0"

ISSUES		
No.	DATE	ISSUED FOR

SUB CONSULTANT

Mt. Washington Firehall

ALPINE ROAD
MOUNT WASHINGTON, BC

COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

HEROLD ENGINEERING

3701 Shenton Rd. Nanaimo, BC V9T 2H1
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Exterior Views (Low Slope Roof)

DESIGNED KL	SEAL
DESIGN REVIEW	
DRAFTED KL	
DRAFTING REVIEW	
PROJECT No. 4630-002	CLIENT DRAWING No.
SCALE 3/16" = 1'-0"	PERMIT No.
HEL DRAWING No. A101	REVISION