

Electoral Areas Community Update

May 2024
Issue 11

Welcome to Spring! Update from Electoral Area Directors

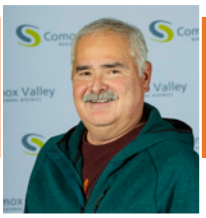
Welcome! We're pleased to share our latest newsletter update with you on behalf of the Electoral Area Directors of the Comox Valley Regional District. These newsletters were started in 2019 to provide updates about important initiatives and services in the CVRD, and to help connect residents with their elected representatives. We hope you learn something new here – and reach out if you have any questions too.

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 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.



New Program Proposed to Regulate Septic Systems

The CVRD is taking steps to introduce a new Septic Regulatory Program within the Electoral Areas. This program would allow the CVRD to oversee septic systems and ensure they are maintained to meet provincial requirements. It would help ensure septic systems in the region, especially those in high-risk areas, are not causing health or environmental hazards.

An info session recording with details about the proposed program is available at **engagecomoxvalley.ca/septicregulations**, along with other information. Watch the session to learn more about the proposed program, including timelines and next steps, as well as proposed requirements for property owners.

Email **communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca** | Phone **250-334-6000**

Comox Valley REGIONAL DISTRICT



New Building Bylaw in Effect

Did you know? The CVRD's building bylaw administers the Provincial Building Code and regulates construction in the regional district. The bylaw was last updated in 2017 and since that time, construction practices and regulations have changed.

To modernize the bylaw and streamline the building permitting process, the CVRD introduced a new Electoral Areas Building Bylaw (No. 681).

The new bylaw has also been updated to reflect recent changes to the 2024 BC Building Code (BCBC) and Provincial legislation, including the BC Energy Step Code.

For more on the new bylaw visit **comoxvalleyrd.ca/buildingbylaw**



Rural Road Maintenance

The CVRD is not responsible for road maintenance in the electoral areas. Mainroad Contracting is the province's contractor and responsible for snow removal, ditching, patching etc. Directors continue to advocate to the province and Mainroad for priority work.

Mainroad's contracting 24-hour hotline for roadway maintenance issues is 1-877-215-7122.

Learn more at: **comoxvalleyrd.ca/roads**



Water and Sewer Projects Progress

Planning work is still underway for two projects that would see water and sewer services extended south. The LWMP Addendum report for the Sewer Extension South project for Royston and Union Bay is now complete and available at **engagecomoxvalley.ca/sewerextension**. Water extension plans are also in the works, though in early design stages. Follow along at **comoxvalleyrd.ca/wsep**

Funds for Royston Road Trail

The Province announced a $500,000 grant from the Active Transportation Infrastructure Program to support the Royston Road path. This path is intended to create a safe access for kids cycling or walking to school and all others who want safe access in the area.

Islands' Support of Regional Services

Hornby and Denman Islands continue to support regional services as part of the CVRD, including contributions that help protect land of significant value in the region and address the housing crisis. Island residents are encouraged to connect in with Director Arbour on initiatives or identify projects on the Islands that could be supported in the future.



If you have a dog over 6-months old and live in electoral areas (excluding Hornby/Denman islands), you need a dog license!

Visit **comoxvalleyrd.ca/doglicence** for more info.



What's On The Go Electoral Area B

Sewer Construction Update

Construction work is now underway for the Sewer Conveyance Project, starting within the Town of Comox, along Beaufort Avenue and Stewart Street. Zone 4 will be located along Lazo Road to the Sewage Treatment Plant on Brent Road from June to December 2024. There will be single-lane alternating traffic and some rolling one-two block closures along Lazo Road. Details of the traffic plan will be shared before work starts.

Follow along for the latest at **engagecomoxvalley.ca/conveyanceproject**

Progress on the Lazo Greenway Multi-Use Path

With detailed design work finalized and grant funding in place, this project is now approaching the construction phase. Once complete, it will provide a safe path of travel for walkers and cyclists along Lazo Road from Butchers Road to Point Holmes.

Next steps include construction tendering this spring, with construction to start in summer 2024.

This project shares a portion of the same route as the Comox Valley Sewer Conveyance Project. To coordinate efforts with this sewer work, work on the path will start first along sections outside of the Conveyance project boundaries. Project completion is planned for end of 2024/early 2025.

Learn more at **comoxvalleyrd.ca/lazotrail**



What's On The Go Electoral Area C

Updating Region's Agriculture Plan

The CVRD is currently modernizing it's Agricultural Plan – the new plan will guide the regional district to help strength the region's agricultural sector.

The planning process work is moving into its final phase this project and a draft plan will be shared on the CVRD website.

For information, background reports and to provide input visit: **comoxvalleyrd.ca/agplan**

Mount Washington Fire Hall Update

CVRD staff continue work identifying a new firehall location at Mount Washington after coming across geotechnical challenges with the original proposed site. Options are being presented to the Electoral Area Directors for consideration this spring.

This year, the goal is to confirm location of the new firehall and begin design and construction process – with a target of having the facility operational by the end of 2025. This project is estimated to cost $2.5 million – with $1.73 million supported by grant funding.

Once complete, the firehall could result in reduced fire insurance premiums for property owners, if requirements of the Fire Underwriters Survey are met.

For more information, visit **comoxvalleyrd.ca/mtwashingtonfireproject**

Join the Conversation

Want the latest on important CVRD projects? Visit Engage Comox Valley, the CVRD's online engagement platform, to follow some of the dynamic projects underway.

The website is a great place to review current information, get updates about next steps, post questions, contribute to surveys and sign up for email notifications.

Follow along with Electoral Area Updates at **engagecomoxvalley.ca/electoralareas**

Short Term Rentals in Electoral Areas

In 2023, the Province released their Homes for People plan intended to increase long-term housing market in BC. It included additional regulations for short-term rentals in specific communities. These new regulations do not apply to the CVRD's Electoral Areas.

That said, **within Electoral Areas, short-term accommodations (ie: vacation rentals) must operate within the home occupation regulations of a bed and breakfast OR make an application for either a zoning amendment or temporary use permit.** There is exception to this within the Mount Washington Integrated Resort Community Plan Area.

For property owners interested in a short term rental use or currently have a rental, visit: **comoxvalleyrd.ca/shorttermrentals** for more information.



What You Need to Know: Property Taxes

Did you know: The CVRD does not collect taxes for the services it provides?

For electoral areas (outside of municipal boundaries) property tax notices are issued from the Province's Surveyor of Taxes office. These notices go out at the end of May, and are due by first business day of July.

Because each electoral area participates in a different mix of services, the tax impact will vary. You can find a breakdown of where the funds are allocated for your area on the website. **comoxvalleyrd.ca/propertytaxes**

Once you receive your notice, you can pay using these options:

- Log in to or enrol in eTaxBC at **gov.bc.ca/etaxbc**
- Electronic Funds Transfer, wire transfer or online banking
- Mail a cheque
- Visit a Service BC location

More details about payment will be available on the back of your tax notice – along with the Home Owner Grant Program, administered by the Province.



Comox Valley neighbourhoods – like this group from Martin Park, are stepping up with programs like FireSmart™.

Working Together to Help One Another

Did you know that embers are the primary cause of fires spreading? The summer season is almost here – and experts are calling for another dry season. This means the potential for more wildfires in our region.

To ensure you're prepared, it's a good idea to follow FireSmart™ tips to protect your home. There are simple steps you can take to increase your home, neighbourhood and community's resilience to a wildfire – and doing them before an emergency, can help prevent an emergency. For example:

- Keep grass and weeds cut below 10 centimetres
- Plant wildfire resistant vegetation
- Clean and maintain gutters and roofs
- Move firewood and lumber 10-30 meters away from home

Reach out to your local fire department today for a free FireSmart home assessment. Or visit **comoxvalleyrd.ca/firesmart** for tips.