

# QUARTERLY UPDATE

October - December 2020



The Quarterly Update is produced four times a year to communicate progress on active FVRD projects and initiatives.

## ADMINISTRATION

Keeping our workplaces safe continues to be a priority through compliance with the Orders of the Provincial Health Officer, WorkSafeBC and other public health directives. We are committed to reducing the risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19 as we continue to deliver services to our citizens. Our corporate offices are open to the public by appointment and on a limited walk-in basis.

- » In mid-December new Provincial Health Orders restricting travel in and out of the Fraser Valley were announced. Board and committee meetings were conducted online only via Zoom in December and this arrangement will continue until further notice.
- » Public Hearings are now being conducted virtually rather than in-person due to COVID-19. Visit the [Virtual Public Hearings](#) page at [fvrd.ca](#) to learn more about how you can participate.
- » Local government bylaw officers are now required to assist with the enforcement of public health orders. Read our [FAQ's](#) to find out how we are supporting the enforcement of these health orders to help curb the spread of COVID-19.

## COMMUNITY INITIATIVES & STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

- » Working alongside the Boston Bar/North Bend Enhancement Society, staff continue to support the \$1.9M grant funded initiative to restore the historic 1914 CNR Stationhouse in Boston Bar. The vision is to develop a museum showcasing railway, Indigenous, Chinese and settler history in Electoral Area A and vicinity.
- » Following on a commitment to raise awareness around truth and reconciliation, staff participated in training opportunities including the successful delivery of Indigenous and Settler Relations 101 and other workshops.

## COVID-19

**We are committed to reducing the risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19 as we continue to deliver services to our citizens.**

- » We continue to support the SXTA and Katzie Treaty Tables as a member of the provincial negotiating team.
- » Inter-governmental engagement was conducted with Indigenous leadership on a variety of issues.
- » The Fraser Valley Regional Hospital District and the Fraser Health Authority were supported in their joint efforts to ensure the replacement and renewal of designated long term care facilities in the region.

## CORPORATE SERVICES

### Human Resources

- » A number of recruitments were completed in the fourth quarter, including positions at the Hope & Area Recreation Centre in order to reopen programs closed during the pandemic. We also welcomed a new Manager of Communications.

### Information Technology

- » IT made several operational improvements which included the installation of an antenna at the Island 22 Regional Park shop to provide reliable cell/internet service for park technicians and server expansion at the Hope & Area Recreation Centre to accommodate growing demand for data space. IT also completed security updates to the corporate wifi network and audited firewalls, Scada VPN routers, and applied security patches.

### GIS

- » In the GIS division, a new cadastral update process was completed. This major process changed the source of cadastral information (property lines) to Parcel Map BC. This will allow for faster processing of newly registered plans into the parcel fabric, keeping our GIS mapping up to date.

## Fire Dispatch Management

- » Comprehensive testing of ROIP Chilliwack radio coverage throughout the E911 service area is 80% completed. The goal is to locate areas of bad or degrading signal radio quality and to find technical solutions to remediate or improve signal quality.

## FINANCE

The Finance team is pleased to report four new team members joined this year, working mostly remotely. Amongst continued onboarding and training activities, highlights for the fourth quarter include:

- » We began preparations for year-end financial closing activities. Last year's audit was quite late in the year and impacted operations. This year the auditors were able to schedule us early, so there are a number of time sensitive activities underway.
- » Regional, sub-regional and electoral area-wide budgets have been presented to Committee of the Whole in January and will be brought forward to the Board for first readings at the January 28th FVRD Board meeting.
- » The FVRHD provisional 2021-2025 Financial Plan was brought forward to the Board in December. The Financial Plan will be finalized and brought forward for adoption before the end of March.
- » We recently developed a new [Regional Grant-in-Aid Policy](#). The policy provides a framework for providing financial assistance to non-profit organizations or community groups who provide services or a benefit to the Regional District, whether those services span the entire Regional District or the majority of the Regional District.
- » Service area realignment projects supported by the Finance Team were recently approved by the Board. These were for garbage and parks related service areas impacting Area C, to more appropriately reflect current usage.
- » We undertook a Parcel Tax Roll Review Panel which was held in November as part of legislative processes to ensure FVRD administrative and taxation processes align with Local Government Act requirements.

## LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

- » A BC Hydro grant provided funding for the installation of four dual head Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations at the corporate office. There are now a total of 10 level 2 charging points available to the public.

## HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The public engagement phase of the Housing Needs Assessment Report wrapped in November. Over 500 people responded to the online survey, two focus groups were convened and eight key informant interviews were conducted.

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Some Planning & Development staff continue to work remotely to reduce risks associated with COVID-19. Projects and applications are moving forward and customer service levels are being maintained.

Highlights from the department include:

- » Staff continued to provide excellent customer service via phone, email, as well as in-person at the front counter following physical distancing measures. Services provided included application support, property information, and explaining the many factors that affect development in electoral areas. Over 600 enquiries were handled during the fourth quarter of 2020 and over 3,000 during 2020 as a whole. Development in electoral areas can be challenging and complex, and staff were proud to provide accurate, prompt, and informative customer service.
- » Following direction from the Board, staff conducted three virtual public hearings via Zoom during the fourth quarter (November 5, December 3 and 15). This allowed three zoning and OCP amendments to move forward and several more are planned for early 2021. Virtual hearings were successful thanks to detailed preparation by staff, and the adaptability and understanding of the Electoral Area Directors and the public.
- » A public hearing for Popkum-Bridal Falls (Area D) Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1501 was held on December 15, 2020. Final edits to the plan are being made and will be brought forward for consideration of third reading then adoption in early 2021.
- » In the Hemlock Valley (Area C) the final Avalanche Hazard Assessment Report for the Edelweiss Drive area has been accepted by the Board for use in development approvals. The report reduced the number of properties within the hazard area and enabled a zoning amendment (which received first reading in December) to allow Temporary Tourist Accommodation more broadly in the community. The new study will be further implemented into the Hemlock OCP which will be ready for consideration of first reading in the first quarter of 2021.

- » An amendment to Areas E & H OCP to implement two updates to the Chilliwack River Erosion Setback Line received first reading in December. The amendment will be brought forward for consideration of third reading and adoption in early 2021.
- » The public engagement phase of the Housing Needs Assessment Report wrapped in November. Over 500 people responded to the online survey, two focus groups were convened and eight key informant interviews were conducted. The consultant is analyzing data and input received through consultation. Public input and statistical data will be included in a report that will identify housing needs in the electoral areas. A draft report will be available in the first quarter of 2021.
- » In the Bylaw Enforcement Department, an amendment to the Bylaw Offence Notice Enforcement Bylaw was adopted by the Board in December. The amendment enables tickets to be given for works conducted without first obtaining a development permit. This will provide a new tool for addressing unpermitted works within riparian zones and hazard areas in the electoral areas.

## ENGINEERING & UTILITIES

Throughout the fall, Engineering & Utilities has continued to work on a number of initiatives:

- » Grant applications were submitted for the upgrade of the Canyon Alpine and Deroche water systems under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program – Rural and Northern Communities stream.
- » Construction of the new Hemlock Valley Transfer Station was completed and the facility opened the week before Christmas.
- » An update of the Electoral Area Water Conservation Plan was completed.
- » Annual dike inspections and geotechnical assessment of the Baker Trails slides in Electoral Area E were completed and reports were sent to the Province.
- » Work continues on the Nicomen Island Improvement District Flood Protection Project in Electoral Area G. Efforts in the fourth quarter were focused on the detailed design of the pump station upgrades as well as the habitat offsetting requirements necessary to obtain Fisheries Act approval for the Shoreline Protection project.

## REGIONAL SERVICES

### Animal Control

- » In the fourth quarter, the CARE Centre impounded just over 30 dogs per month, down from the third quarter. While there was a reduction in the number of dogs claimed in the third quarter, the fourth quarter saw an increase in impounded dogs claimed by almost 90%.
- » A partnership with radio station 89.5 The Drive introduced a new adoptable dog to the public twice a month in 2020. All the dogs featured on the program were successfully placed into new homes. In the fourth quarter, the CARE Centre's adoption program successfully placed 19 dogs into new homes.
- » Animal Control has worked through applications to the Provincial Court for humane euthanasia of two dangerous dogs that pose a serious risk to public safety. One application from October 2019 that was rescheduled to October 14, 2020 due to COVID-19, has concluded and the Judge made an Order for destruction. The second case was heard on December 16, 2020 where the Judge reserved a decision and adjourned the Court.

### Environmental Services

- » Public and stakeholder engagement continued on the new draft Air Quality Management Plan. The process has elicited a substantial amount of valuable feedback and suggestions so far, which will go into the final plan in early 2021. We are finalizing details with Metro Vancouver on a renewed 10-year agreement that will ensure the two regional districts continue to work collaboratively in the management of the FVRD's air quality monitoring stations. These stations provide both regions with high quality air quality data from across our shared airshed and we are excited for the commitment of both regional districts to continue working together.
- » The new regional waste sorting requirements came into effect earlier this year. This quarter, Waste Wise educational brochures and letters were sent out to strata buildings and businesses within the region to make them aware of the requirements. Businesses looking to purchase indoor garbage, recycling, and composting bins can find information about promotional discounts currently available at [bewastewise.com/promotions](http://bewastewise.com/promotions).

- » FoodMesh, a regional food recovery network in partnership with the FVRD, delivered its project report for 2019-2020. Over an 18 month period, the program diverted 1.1 million kg of food, created approximately 1.5 million meals across the Fraser Valley and prevented 2.1 million kg of CO2 from entering the atmosphere. More statistics are available at [foodmesh.ca/services-regional/fvrd](http://foodmesh.ca/services-regional/fvrd). We are currently looking to expand this amazing program into other areas within the region including Hope.

### **Parks & Outdoor Recreation Planning**

Late fall and early winter is an ideal time to undertake park and trail improvements. Completed projects this quarter include:

- » The parking lot at Thompson Regional Park was recontoured and the post and rail fencing replaced. In addition, all taps and toilets were replaced in the washroom.
- » New post and rail fencing was installed along a portion of the Lakeside Trail along Columbia Valley Road from Aquadel Crossing to the entrance of the Cottages at the south end of Cultus Lake in Area H.
- » At Eagle Point Community Park in Area C, several trees overhanging private residential property were removed before the arrival of stormy winter weather.
- » The [2019 Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Analysis](#) was released in November and shared broadly with project participants, member municipalities, Indigenous communities, and local outdoor recreation organizations.

### **Hope & Area Recreation Centre**

Hope & Area Recreation Centre had a busy fourth quarter as they adjusted to Public Health orders, conducted staff recruitment and training, and re-opened services to the public.

- » The after school program, cardio and weight rooms were opened for pre-booked times, and in December the pool re-opened for public and lane swimming.
- » The new lift to the mezzanine is expected to be completed by the end of the year making the refurbished space fully accessible in preparation for when the space re-opens to the public.

### **Regional Strategic Planning & Initiatives**

- » The 2020 Draft Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is an update to the FVRD's Choices for our Future plan, adopted in 2004. The 2020 draft RGS includes three new policy areas: Collaboration, Living Well, and Energy & Climate Change.

## **RURAL INTERNET CONNECTIVITY**

**COVID-19 further highlighted the need for reliable high-speed internet as many residents are working from home, taking advantage of online schooling or operating online businesses**

Next steps in updating the RGS will include holding meetings with staff from member municipalities to receive input and updates. In addition, the RGS Consultation Plan will be updated to reflect new legislation and COVID-19 protocols which restrict in-person engagement, engagement with Indigenous communities and agencies, reinstatement of the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, public engagement, and legal review. It is hoped that the Board will adopt the Fraser Valley Future 2050 RGS in 2021.

- » The Rural Internet Connectivity project was initiated to address long-standing concerns about internet and cell phone coverage in the region's electoral areas. It is determining what services are located in the region and how any identified gaps may be addressed by pursuing federal and provincial funding opportunities as they become available.

COVID-19 further highlighted the need for reliable high-speed internet as many residents are working from home, taking advantage of online schooling or operating online businesses. Technical analysis and survey work has been completed, with over 600 survey responses. A final report with recommendations is being prepared and will be presented to the Board in early 2021.

- » We are updating our Affordable and Social Housing Inventories, allowing the region to track change in housing supply over time (the first inventory was in 2009 with updates in 2014 and 2017). The final inventories are being reviewed and will be presented to the Board and shared with the public in early 2021. This information, in combination with the 2020 Homelessness Report, will provide a foundation on which to discuss broader housing challenges in the region.
- » The FVRD is participating in the Province's recently announced Fraser Valley Transportation and Land Use Plan. We are in contact with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Ministry of Municipal Affairs to determine the project's status and terms of reference. More details will be available in early 2021.