

# FIRST QUARTER UPDATE



## ADMINISTRATION

2020 is shaping up to be quite different from what many of us may have imagined. Over the past three months, FVRD staff have been engaged in a number of Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) activations. These activations, including the current global pandemic, has changed the scope of work for most departments. This quarterly update will provide the Board with highlights of projects completed or that are underway.

- » In January, a State of Local Emergency (SOLE) was declared for properties in Electoral Area E after heavy rains caused rockfall and debris flow near Baker Trails. Several properties were evacuated.
- » In February, another rainstorm hit the Fraser Valley and affected many communities with overland flooding caused by an “atmospheric river.” The FVRD’s EOC was activated for several weeks and worked with the Province of BC to enable recovery funding for affected residents in several Electoral Areas.
- » Currently, the FVRD continues to work through its business continuity plan as it responds to the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic. While FVRD offices remain closed to the public, most programs and services continue to operate uninterrupted. It is anticipated that the effects of COVID-19 will continue to be felt by all local governments, businesses, and residents for some time to come.

### Information Technology & GIS

FVRD’s IT & GIS staff have completed several key projects so far in 2020. Ensuring the organization’s digital infrastructure is secure and stable has been a significant factor in the FVRD’s success in navigating a COVID-19 environment, allowing most processes to occur from remote locations. Highlights include:

- » Completed radio towers upgrade to support E-911.
- » Radio channel backup antenna and equipment project is underway with an expected completion date of May 2020.

### Corporate Administration & Corporate Initiatives

The Corporate Administration and Corporate Initiatives divisions have had a number of corporate projects underway in 2020. Key updates include:

- » Working with IT, the organization’s records management system, iManage, will soon be updated to a more user friendly platform supported by Windows 10.
- » EV Charging Stations – Staff are working with BC Hydro on twinning the existing DC charger and installing 4 double-sided Level II charging stations, for a total of 8 charging points.
- » RFP - Highline Houses - Staff prepared and issued a proposal call for the redevelopment of the historic homes known as the “Highline Houses” in North Bend, BC (Electoral Area A).

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

The Planning & Development department includes the planning, building, and bylaw enforcement divisions. Some highlights for the first quarter of 2020 include:

- » Public consultation for the update of two official community plans continued with a presentation to the Popkum Community Association (Area D) and two discussion tables at Sasquatch Mountain Resort (Hemlock Valley, Area C). Public hearings on cannabis regulations were held in three electoral area communities and the related zoning amendments were adopted.
- » Forty seven building permits were issued for new construction amounting to \$9,851,111. This is down from 76 permits issued in the first quarter of 2019.
- » Bylaw enforcement efforts focused on addressing new complaints and reducing the backlog of old files. Two bylaw contravention Notices to Title were removed this quarter because the bylaw issues were resolved.
- » Notices for annual fees payable under Commercial Gravel Operations Bylaw No. 1181 were sent out and payments in the order of \$280,000 received.
- » Support to the Province of BC for bylaw enforcement activities related to COVID-19.

## ENGINEERING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

During this time of global pandemic, Engineering and Community Services staff continue to provide water, wastewater and other essential services to residents throughout the electoral areas. Other project updates include:

- » FVRD has started to complete some maintenance work on the existing Cultus Sewer Collection System. Work on the new wastewater treatment plant remains on pause. This maintenance and construction work will take place over the next several months.

## REGIONAL PROGRAMS

### Strategic Planning & Initiatives

- » 2020 Homeless Count took place over March 3 and 4, 2020 prior to the COVID emergency response. The FVRD's consultant, Dr. Ron van Wyk, is compiling the data for preparation of a final report in the next few months which will be presented to the Board. FVRD has provided preliminary data to its municipal partners in support of COVID response efforts related to vulnerable populations in their respective communities.
- » As a result of the COVID crisis, transit has been designated an essential service by the Province of BC. Several actions have been undertaken to reduce risk to bus operators including rear-door loading and not collecting fares. Staff are monitoring the status of the FVRD transit services. Route 66, 22, and 11 continue to operate as scheduled, however there have been service impacts such as delays or removal of runs due to operational issues. BC Transit and its partners are working to minimize issues, but the nature of the COVID emergency remains fluid. Service expansions slated for the 2020-21 fiscal year will be delayed until 2021-22. An updated time frame for implementation of FVX expansion has not yet been determined. TransLink is also making significant service cuts which could potentially impact FVX services.
- » Strategic Planning & Initiatives assumed responsibility for the Rural Connectivity project in mid-February. This project was initiated to address long standing concerns about internet and cell phone coverage in the region's electoral areas. The

project is focused on determining what services are where and how any identified gaps could be addressed by pursuing federal and provincial funding opportunities as they became available. COVID-19 has added another dimension to this issue as the ability to access high speed internet is essential for enabling residents to work from home, take advantage of on-line schooling, or provide reliable internet access for businesses. The COVID emergency is making such gaps in coverage more evident. The intent is for the FVRD and EAs to be in a position to take advantage of any funding opportunities that arise in the future.

### Environmental Services

- » Waste Wise - The FVRD's new regional source separation bylaw, designed to have recycling and organics separated out from residential and commercial garbage prior to it leaving their property, came into effect on April 1, 2020. The impacts of COVID-19 has required the FVRD to amend plans for public engagement and enforcement and revise messaging to ensure public safety.
- » Mosquito Control and Invasive Weed Control: Contractors for both of these programs have been hired, initial start-up meetings have been held, and monitoring and control activities are now underway. The presence of COVID-19 will require some alterations to typical outreach efforts (i.e., no door-to-door communication or public events), but these challenges will be offset by using additional social media presence and email/telephone accessibility.
- » Air Quality Education Program - This was the second full year for the FVRD's "Love our Air" program offered to schools throughout the year to teach students about our local airshed and air quality science. Due to COVID-19 and the cessation of in-person teaching, the FVRD took the opportunity to revise the "Love our Air" curriculum and have been piloting this curriculum via video conferencing with select Grade 5 classes.

### Hope Recreation & Airpark Services

In January, the FVRD welcomed a new Recreation Programmer to the Hope and Area Recreation Centre and the facility was very active. In mid-March, the Centre was closed to the public due to global pandemic concerns, and all programs, rentals were cancelled including the highly anticipated St. Patrick's Day

tournament, Spring Break camp, and childcare. Safety of staff and the public along with excellent customer service continues to be the focus. The ice sheet in the arena was removed, and work at the Centre has shifted to annual shutdown so that when the facility is able to be open again, annual maintenance is complete. This closure has also allowed staff to start tackling scheduled capital projects and public outreach to help the community stay connected. Future programming is being developed, and plans are being formed for future re-opening when it is safe to do so.

## Regional & Community Parks

Overall usage of parks and trails has been higher than normal as people seek places to safely recreate during this period of physical distancing. The favourable spring weather meant the growing season came a little earlier, focusing efforts on danger tree assessments and removal, annual park inspections, staff recruitment, procurement and contract renewals, general maintenance projects, trail construction projects and planning for this years infrastructure improvements.

First quarter also brought the completion of an ongoing project at Thompson Regional Park. The widened and resurfaced Loop Trail that connects into Chilliwack River Provincial Park was accomplished. Staff have also undertaken trail reconnaissance on the western flank of Sumas Mountain Regional Park to better understand the trail conductivity in this part of the park, and worked with the City of Abbotsford's Planning and Development Services Department to review potential park enhancements for Sumas Mountain Regional Park though proposed subdivisions applications.

The atmospheric river event in February caused several issues for our parks and trails. In particular, a section of the Lakeside Trail in Electoral Area H was obliterated by a creek avulsion near Lindell Beach. This trail segment has since been rebuilt. The Kettle Valley Railway Trail saw significant damage due to multiple landslides from this same weather event. A geotechnical report has been completed which recommends remediation works.

For the past several years an application to the Job Creation Partnership program has been submitted in the first quarter of the year. Unfortunately, the FVRD's program partner Ecoworks Landscape Services Inc. dissolved this year, so no submission was made. COVID-19 has further complicated the potential for a Job Creation Partnership project, and a review of



*Thompson Regional Park*

possible partners or alternate ways forward with this program will be completed before 2021.

## Outdoor Recreation

- » Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Analysis - The data analysis for the economic impact analysis has been completed and the final report is being reviewed.
- » Outdoor recreation management plan - Public input was sought through both a web-based map and survey. In addition, four open houses were hosted throughout the region to collect community knowledge that will inform the plan. Staff presented on both initiatives to the Chilliwack River Valley Residents Association. A University of the Fraser Valley GIS student has a practicum placement with this department for this semester. She has created a digital trails database using ArcGIS for the entire region which will serve as an important resource moving forward.
- » Destination BC has reinvigorated the Fraser Valley Destination Development Strategy's Action Plan and FVRD staff have been involved in this process through participation on the working committee.

## Vedder River Campground

Staff are working in partnership with the City of Chilliwack on the entry area to the campground along Giesbrecht Rd. The City's Vedder Rotary Trail expanded last year and now continues through a portion of the campground. This is a beautiful asset to the campground and to offset any disturbance to operations, the City of Chilliwack has been working with the FVRD to reconfigure some parking availability and traffic flow.

Although the campground is not open due to Covid-19, key activities continue including:

- » Campground washrooms were painted
- » Site delineation project stage one completed offering separation between some of the sites that were unclear and caused confusion and difficulties for campers
- » Grounds and tree maintenance
- » Electrical, sewer and water line repairs
- » Signage development

### **Animal Control**

In early March, thanks to a number of donations and volunteers, phase one of the play yard at the CARE Centre was completed. This vision turned into reality thanks to the generosity of many members of the community. With a network of underground utilities in this area, specialized equipment was required and generously donated by Valley Tank and Container. Riverstone Excavating Ltd. stepped up to the plate, donating funds for the timber needed to create steps and ramps, and sending three employees for one week of work to pull the entire project together. In addition to providing the land, the City of Chilliwack contributed trees, top soil and grass seed to this project, and staff volunteered additional design and coordination services outside of work hours. The Chilliwack Fire Department also donated a fire hydrant and logs from their fire training facility for the dogs to climb up and over.

Staff have been working for the past few months on a review of FVRD Animal Control bylaws to better support community needs and dog owners in a way that brings efficiencies for Animal Control Officers, staff, and dog owners, in terms of aggressive dog management. These proposed changes will be coming to the Board in the coming months. In addition to regular regulatory enforcement and animal care provision, other projects completed this winter/spring include upgrades to the chicken coop and barn and lighting upgrades in office and kennel.



*CARE Centre Play Yard*