

# SECOND QUARTER UPDATE



*The Quarterly Update is produced four times a year to communicate progress on active FVRD projects and strategic initiatives. This new reporting tool will evolve in 2020 to also include useful financial information highlighting the organization's financial position.*

## COVID-19

In March 2020, the FVRD, like many organizations around the world, made a significant shift in its operations when the realities of COVID-19 became more clearly recognized. The FVRD took swift steps to prioritize the health and safety of employees and the public. Facilities were closed, many employees began to work remotely, and programs and events were cancelled. FVRD staff found ways to deliver modified services to allow operations to continue wherever possible. Now, 16 weeks on, the resulting health and economic crisis of COVID-19 continues to impact communities, including those in the Fraser Valley region.

Over the past three months, staff have been developing a phased approach to COVID recovery, in conjunction with the Province of BC's Restart Plan and various organizations including the Public Health Agency of Canada, BC Centre for Disease Control, WorkSafe BC, member municipalities and CUPE Local 458.

- » In May, the FVRD Board approved the COVID-19 Recovery Policy, outlining a plan for a gradual, safe and measured reopening of FVRD facilities and a restart of programs and services. At the forefront of this policy is a commitment to the health and safety of residents and employees.
- » The COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, and it is expected that the effects of this virus will continue in FVRD communities for many months to come.
- » The FVRD's recovery activities are flexible to ensure compliance with public health guidelines and to be able to adapt as conditions around COVID-19 change. The FVRD will reopen its main office in Chilliwack in mid-July.

## FRESHET 2020

In addition to the business continuity challenges of a global pandemic, the FVRD's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) had several activations this spring due to the annual freshet.

- » On May 27, the FVRD activated its EOC in anticipation of flooding due to forecasted temperatures and rising water levels on the Fraser River. This activation resulted in an Evacuation Alert being issued on June 1 for undiked lands in Electoral Areas C & G and included approximately 30 properties. River levels peaked and the alert was rescinded on June 8.
- » On June 23, the EOC was activated once again as water levels were forecasted to rise steadily. On June 25, the FVRD issued an Evacuation Alert for several properties in Electoral Areas C & G. Dewdney Regional Park and portions of Island 22 Regional Park were closed due to flooding. The EOC remained activated into July but no Evacuation Orders were necessary and the EOC rescinded the Evacuation Alerts on July 9.

## ADMINISTRATION

- » In May, the FVRD Board directed staff to work with the Province and local stakeholders to develop a community food garden on the Crown land parcel located at the FVRD's Deroche Office in Electoral Area C.
- » The FVRD's 2019 Audited Financial Statements and Statement of Financial Information were approved in May and June. Staff are now preparing for the 2021 Budget process.

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Highlights from the Planning and Development department include:

- » Zoning Bylaw Consolidation - This bylaw was consolidated and drafted at the beginning of 2020. The draft bylaw underwent legal review in the spring and is currently being revised to reflect legal advice and staff comments. The revised bylaw will again be reviewed by legal council before it is brought forward for consultation and Board consideration. Final adoption of this bylaw is anticipated in 2021.
- » Electoral Area D Official Community Plan (OCP) - This bylaw received 2nd reading in February 2020. A second set of external and internal referrals was sent after 2nd reading and staff have incorporated comments into a revised draft. A public hearing originally scheduled for March 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19, with a future date still to be determined.
- » Cannabis Land Use Policy & Implementation - In February and March, public hearings were held on three zoning amendment bylaws to address cannabis production and sales in several electoral areas. These bylaws were subsequently adopted by the Board in April and May. The next step is to develop regulations to support cannabis production in certain parts of the electoral areas in accordance with the policy adopted by the FVRD Board in October 2019.
- » Hemlock (Area C) OCP Update - A draft OCP was presented to the FVRD Board in December 2019. Referrals were sent to Indigenous governments and communities, numerous stakeholders, and internal FVRD departments for comments. The FVRD hosted two Open House-style engagement sessions at Sasquatch Mountain Resort in early March 2020 to garner feedback on the draft plan from the community and resort users. Staff are currently incorporating feedback received into the draft plan in advance of a public hearing. Due to COVID-19, that public hearing date is yet to be determined. FVRD is currently working to update snow avalanche hazard information for incorporation into the OCP.
- » Housing Needs Reports for Electoral Areas - FVRD received a UBCM grant of \$120,000 to prepare a Housing Needs Report for the Electoral Areas. A procurement process was initiated in June to engage a consultant to prepare the report. A final report is expected to be presented to the FVRD Board in December 2020.

- » Building staff researched BC Building Code implications for the use of modified shipping containers as buildings and structures. Staff reviewed practices in other jurisdictions and developed an approach consistent with the BC Building Code for permitting structures created from shipping containers.

## ENGINEERING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

In addition to seasonal maintenance and construction works, the Engineering and Community Services team has been working on several important FVRD initiatives including:

- » Nicomen Island Diking Project - In 2017, FVRD was awarded \$10.5 million from the Province of BC as part of its investment in emergency preparedness and public safety. The project will address challenges with the 35-kilometre system of dikes at Nicomen Island, including dike widening and pumping system upgrades. Through a public tendering process, FVRD has selected the contractor for construction of the Fraser River shoreline protection. The FVRD continues to work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Province for approvals and mitigation needs.
- » FVRD has recently completed the Electoral Areas Regional Biosolids Management Plan. This report will be presented at the July EASC meeting.
- » Sewer system upgrades - FVRD has completed upgrades to the Morris Valley sewer system. The West Popkum/Cheam sewer system project has progressed significantly and Indigenous Services Canada is working with FVRD and the developer. Staff also initiated a project at Baker Trail Village sewer system to replace blowers.
- » The Deroche water system upgrade and connection to Leq'a:mel First Nation has moved to the detail design phase. This project will significantly benefit both communities with a reliable water system and fire flow.
- » In Hatzic Lake, FVRD has been providing technical and multi-agency support to the Dewdney Area Improvement District for the development of the Hatzic Lake Management Plan. Under a provincial grant which FVRD is administering for the Improvement District, the flowering rush containment boom has been installed and is operational.
- » The Community Wildfire Protection Plan project is nearing completion and expected to be finalized in August.

- » The Area H Evacuation Plan grant has been completed. The Sleepy Hollow Route has had signage installed along the route. Next steps include stakeholder engagement and input.
- » Post Creek has been successfully added to the Chilliwack River Valley Fire Protection area.

## REGIONAL PROGRAMS

### Strategic Planning & Initiatives

- » 2020 Homeless Count - The Homelessness count took place over March 3 and 4, 2020 prior to the COVID-19 emergency response. The final report was presented to the Board at its June 23, 2020 meeting. Currently, staff are reviewing data with community partners to identify steps necessary to move forward on addressing homelessness in the region.
- » Social Housing Inventories - FVRD is updating these inventories which will allow tracking of changes in social housing supply over time. The first inventory was developed in 2009 with updates in 2014 and 2017. Completion of these inventories are expected in the coming months. Information from the Social Housing Inventories used in combination with the 2020 Homelessness Report will provide a broader picture on which to discuss housing challenges in the region.
- » Transit - Staff continue to monitor the status of the FVRD's transit services. Route 66, route 22, and route 11 continue to operate as planned. Fare collection was reinstated on June 1 for all transit services in the region. COVID-19 protocols for social distancing, including capacity limits and strongly encouraging the use of masks on board, are all in place to protect both the public and transit operators.

### Environmental Services

- » Solid Waste - Since 2018, the FVRD has been partnering with Food Mesh to rescue and divert food waste within the region. The online platform connects local food banks, charities, and farmers with grocery stores and food producers so that surplus food is put to better use than ending up in the trash. A new web page was launched (<https://foodmesh.ca/services-regional/fvrd/>) that showcases the program and provides updated statistics about how much food has been diverted so far. As a result of this program and its partners, Food Mesh has recently surpassed the equivalent of 1 million meals of food diverted in the Fraser Valley.
- » Mosquito Control - The prolonged freshet and repeated peaks of the Fraser River, coupled with a

cool and wet spring has created ideal conditions for floodwater, or "nuisance", mosquitoes this year. Mosquito control technicians have been aggressively treating larvae since May, and have already conducted more treatments this year than usual. Further monitoring and treatments for hatching larvae will continue into July. The adult mosquitoes that emerged will begin to die off as the region transitions to warmer and drier weather, but until that happens, residents are encouraged to protect themselves with good window screens, insect repellent, and by wearing light-coloured and loose fitting clothing. Residents may call the FVRD's Mosquito Control Hotline at 1-888-733-2333 or email [mosquitoes@fvrd.ca](mailto:mosquitoes@fvrd.ca) for information.

- » Invasive Weeds - The wet spring has also created ideal growing conditions for wild chervil, tansy ragwort, giant hogweed, and knotweed – four priority invasive weeds within the FVRD. The FVRD has partnered with the Fraser Valley Invasive Species Society to help control the spread of these plants. To report a weed or to request a pickup of invasive weeds from a property for safe disposal, residents may contact the FVISS at 778-548-3847 or [info@fviss.ca](mailto:info@fviss.ca).
- » Air Quality - The FVRD works collaboratively with Metro Vancouver staff on air quality efforts within its shared airshed. Recently, staff have been working together on a review of its mutual air quality monitoring station network to identify gaps, strengthen data quality, and improve services for small and rural communities. Draft results from this study are expected this fall.
- » Staff have also completed this year's corporate greenhouse gas emission inventory report as part of the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP). 2019 saw a decrease in some fuel usage but a slight (2%) increase in overall greenhouse gas emissions. It is believed that this increase is due to extra diesel fuel needed for additional generators and emergency call volumes that occurred during the year.

### Parks & Outdoor Recreation

- » Parks and Trails - The COVID-19 pandemic has further demonstrated that parks and trails are a vital part of communities. In this quarter, the focus was on opening up park amenities which were initially closed, in a way that keeps staff and communities safe and informed. Playgrounds, washrooms, trails, and the dog off-leash park at Island 22 Regional Park were the priority focus.
- » Despite an exceptionally rainy quarter and reduced facilities, usage was up 25% over the same period last year.

- » The operations of the parks department became fully staffed, and the team was able to complete some of the projects on the 2020 workplan including the fencing at Cedar Community Park in Electoral Area D, completion of the parking lot upgrade at Cheam Lake Regional Park, refurbishing of the septic system at Thompson Regional Park, completing the upgrade at Island 22 Bike Park, starting work on the Lakeside Trail connection in Electoral Area H, and planning for upcoming projects.
- » Outdoor Recreation Economic Impact Analysis and Outdoor Recreation Management Plan - The Economic Impact Analysis is now complete and has been reviewed by the working group. It will be presented to the FVRD Board of Directors in July. The vast amount of public input that was collected from the open houses and web-based map and survey for the corresponding Outdoor Recreation Management Plan is now being compiled into a draft plan.
- » Stó:lō S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance - As part of the Stó:lō S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance Collaborative Stewardship Forum (CSF), FVRD staff are participating in a Sumas Mountain recreation impact study. Urban Systems Ltd. is leading this work for the CSF and a need to better understand trail usage has been identified. In June, FVRD assisted with installing six new trail counters which complements the existing three trail counters and two vehicle counters in FVRD parks.

### Hope and Area Recreation

- » Staff have been hard at work putting together all the details to ensure a safe re-opening of recreation facilities that follows the guidelines set out by WorkSafeBC, Fraser Health Authority, and the BC Centre for Disease Control, as well as many other professional associations associated with safe operations of recreation facilities. Re-opening dates will be posted soon. Among the first programs to reopen will be the Almer Carlson Outdoor Pool in North Bend (Electoral Area A) and re-opening the weight room and cardio room at the Hope Recreation Centre.
- » Hope Recreation and Airpark Services staff organized a wonderful virtual Canada Day celebration for Hope and the surrounding areas. Many local activities were offered including a decorating contest with a range of prizes for several categories.

### Vedder River Campground

- » In late May, high water on the Vedder River washed away a portion of a group campsite at the Vedder River campground as well as a portion of the City of Chilliwack's Vedder Rotary Trail. Staff worked throughout June to restore use of Group Site 1 and it has now re-opened.
- » On June 1, the Vedder River Campground opened to self-contained units with campsites spaced apart to maintain physical distancing. The opening included 25 returning seasonal campers. Seasonal campers were offered the ability to extend their reservations through to the end of October due to the delayed opening of the campground.
- » The Vedder River Campground opened on July 1 to all camping types, and washroom facilities will be available. Throughout the 3rd quarter, staff will continue to evaluate opening dates for shower and laundry facilities.

### Animal Control

- » The kennel area of the Community Response & Education (CARE) Centre recently had lighting upgrades throughout the building including occupancy sensors and LED lighting. Not only will the FVRD be receiving a rebate from BC Hydro to help cover upgrade costs, but the upgrades should also result in immediate savings on monthly BC Hydro expenses.
- » Animal Control saw two dates for Applications to the Court for Destruction rescheduled due to COVID-19. One of these cases has since been resolved through the owner relinquishing ownership of the dog to the FVRD. The other has since been rescheduled a second time. This case has a date in October to set a date for a Hearing.
- » The CARE Centre has experienced a reduction in the number of impounded dogs at the facility. Staff believe this reduction can be attributed to quick returns of at-large dogs to owners who have been home due to COVID-19, as well as fewer dogs running at large due to owners being home and attending to their pets. There also has been an increase in adoption interest due to people having the time to put toward welcoming a new dog into their home.