

# Electoral Area B Community Update

February 2021  
Issue 4

## WELCOME - LAZO NORTH AREA

A belated Happy New Year to you all! We're glad to share this first 2021 issue of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Electoral Area B Community Update with you. This newsletter was started in 2019 to help keep residents in the rural areas informed about CVRD services and programs. If you have questions about the topics below – or any other CVRD business – please reach out. I would be happy to hear from you.



Area B Director  
Arzeena Hamir

## Merville Fire Hall moves to construction phase

Residents in the Greater Merville Fire Protection Service Area said yes to the new fire hall through an Alternate Approval Process (AAP) at the end of 2020 – and now the project team is moving to the next step of getting it built.



Design for the new Merville fire hall is now complete

The AAP on borrowing for the construction of a fire hall and equipment closed on December 7, showing strong support for proceeding. The CVRD board approved the loan authorization bylaw on December 15 – setting a clear path forward for the project. No tax increase is projected, as funds previously collected for reserves will be redirected towards debt repayment.

The next step is to select the contractor who will build the fire hall (to be located at the Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (MARS) property on Williams Beach Road) and provide the fire rescue vehicles. Those requests for proposals are posted now and are expected to be awarded in March.

Construction will likely begin this spring and continue through the summer.



**Volunteer to serve:** The Merville Fire Protection service is growing its team of dedicated volunteer firefighters. If you're interested in joining, visit [www.oysterriverfire.ca](http://www.oysterriverfire.ca)

## Making it easier to weigh in

A new once-a-year Alternate Approval Process (AAP) for the CVRD has been approved to increase transparency and make it easier for the public to provide input.

An AAP is available to local governments to seek community approval on certain initiatives. It requires those who are opposed to the proposal to submit a form indicating their opposition. In fall 2020, it was proposed that grouping together multiple AAPs once a year could improve efficiencies, reduce costs, and make it easier for the community to keep track of AAPs that are ongoing.

With the proposed approach approved, the directors will move forward with one singular AAP this spring. Expected to be included in the first one is:

- Electoral Areas Community Hall Service Establishment
- Saratoga Pest Management Service Establishment

The AAP will be promoted with advertising as normal. Watch the CVRD's website for more info this spring.

## Protecting groundwater in Area B

Planning continues on the future route for the Comox Valley Sewer Service's pipes and pump stations, as the CVRD looks at the long term plan for the sewer system that services Comox and Courtenay. Some of this infrastructure is located in Area B – and the CVRD is proactively working to involve the community to assess groundwater in the area and ensure that wells are protected.

Want to learn more about groundwater protection in sewer planning? Email [communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca](mailto:communications@comoxvalleyrd.ca) to register for a webinar on March 4.



## Spring updates on roadside garbage/recycling proposal

Residents in rural areas will hear more this spring about the proposed roadside garbage and recycling program that communities showed general support for last year.



In 2020, residents were asked to weigh in on a possible roadside collection program and the CVRD received more than 3,000 submissions from the community indicating support in the majority of areas discussed.

The project team is now working out the details about how the program can be delivered in the 11 communities that expressed interest. Another round of public outreach will happen this spring when residents receive more detailed information about boundaries, service levels and possible exemptions to the service.

Watch for more updates on the Rural Roadside Garbage and Recycling Collection Service's online engagement page at [www.connectcvrld.ca/ruralroadside](http://www.connectcvrld.ca/ruralroadside)

## Planning for improved Seal Bay parking

Creating safer access to parking and trails at Seal Bay Park is a key goal of the Seal Bay Management Plan developed in 2019. After completing significant improvements in 2019/2020 on the park (including construction of a new parking lot at Hardy Road), focus has now turned to upgrading the Bates Road parking lot to improve public safety.



The design strives to minimize environmental impacts wherever possible and is focused on expanding the existing parking area rather than clearing and developing a new site. The CVRD is working with the Province and consultants on a preferred design.

Conceptual design drawings will be shared once a preferred design is finalized. This will likely be in March 2021. Construction is anticipated to begin in late June and run through September, depending on approvals.

## CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

While COVID-19 has prevented us from meeting in person – we're still eager to connect with you directly. Here are two ways to connect with us online this winter:



**ConnectCVRD:** A new page at the CVRD's online engagement hub to keep you updated. To get the latest information and share your questions and comments visit

[www.connectcvrld.ca/electoralareas](http://www.connectcvrld.ca/electoralareas)



**Online Community Open House:** On Feb. 24, from 12-1 pm, we'll host an online community update on Zoom. We will share updates and will be ready for your questions. Link to register is at

[www.connectcvrld.ca/electoralareas](http://www.connectcvrld.ca/electoralareas)

## Other Opportunities for Input:



**Get active with active transportation:** The CVRD is launching its first ever Active Transportation Network Plan. The plan will identify priority areas and routes for investment in infrastructure for active transportation (walking/cycling/rolling) - helping us to MOVE like a Region! The planning team is hosting virtual open houses in February and March. Visit the online project page at [www.connectcvrld.ca/activetransportation](http://www.connectcvrld.ca/activetransportation) to learn more and sign up to join an online session.



**Your two cents on spending:** The CVRD Board is working through their critical, annual budget exercise – assessing each service and considering the five-year plan ahead, with an eye on COVID-19 recovery, outlined in the Rethink Comox Valley plan.

The public has until March 11 to share their feedback on the financial planning process – and the board welcomes presentations, comments, questions and feedback. To learn more, visit [www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/currentbudget](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/currentbudget)

## Did you know?

Roads in the CVRD's electoral areas are managed by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, not the regional district. We know there are often questions/comments about road maintenance – particularly in the winter time.

Questions can be directed to:

- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure: **1-800-550-4997**
- Mainroad North Island: **1-877-215-7122 (24-hour hotline)**



## Questions?

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