



REGIONAL  
DISTRICT  
OF NANAIMO

**ASSIGNING HOUSE NUMBERS TO PROPERTIES IN THE**  
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**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Board retain the current process of civic address assignment and direct staff to update the website to emphasize that property owners can request addresses for vacant properties.

**BACKGROUND**

The Regional District of Nanaimo's Geographic Information Services (GIS) department assigns civic addressing for all Electoral Areas within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). Civic addresses are assigned to dwellings, suites, and places of business. In certain cases, the RDN will assign a civic address to land without improvements, but this is upon request of the property owner and ideally after the final access point is in place, as the location of the access point to the property drives the decision on the civic address assigned to the property.

The purpose of the civic address is to provide an easy, visible reference for emergency service vehicles and aids in reducing response times. It also reduces confusion with mail, utility billing, deliveries, etc. If a parcel of land doesn't have buildings (i.e., improvements as per BC Assessment), a civic address is not assigned. The RDN primarily provides civic addresses through the building permit process, but the property owner can request pre-addressing prior to getting a building permit.

Rural civic addressing is based on access points, so driveway placement is key to the proper assignment of the civic address. The final placement of the driveway, in comparison to the neighbouring, adjacent, and opposing lots impacts the civic address assignment. This is unlike municipal address assignments where the civic address is usually assigned when the subdivision is developed and building envelopes are defined. In a municipal setting, the access points or driveways are pre-determined, which is why municipalities can assign a civic address to all vacant land. Although a regional district could take this approach, such a change would require us to confirm the access point or future driveway location of the vacant property. Often, the owner does not know where they will place the access point until they begin to develop their property, so pre-assigning an address could result in a need for changes to the civic address originally provided. This change could necessitate changes to the neighbouring properties because the grid system used requires a specific series of numbering for each property to ensure it meets a pattern required by the 911 system.

The GIS department uses a civic address grid that encompasses the entire district to ensure civic addresses are assigned consecutively, consistently and are easy to understand. A civic address is a sequential number assigned incorporating the last posted road sign. It should be noted that road construction, road naming and road signs are managed by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) and the RDN uses their names for civic addressing.

The grid system was originally established for RDN Electoral Areas in support of the 911 service. The civic numbering system uses this grid as its point of reference by using two base lines: “east-west” and “north-south”. The RDN combines the grid number as a house number, with the name of the road that provides access to the property. The civic address is assigned based on the position of the access point or driveway, and the overall location of the property within the grid framework. Without knowing the access point or driveway, the RDN is unable to accurately assign permanent civic addressing to rural properties.

This method of civic address assignment used in the RDN is consistent with the other members of the North Island 911 district show in the map below.



This general approach is also consistent with the nine other BC regional districts that had address assignment information posted on their websites. For a list of these references, please see the included attachment titled “Provincial Regional Districts Addressing - Website Information”.

If the RDN Board directs staff to assign civic addresses to all properties, the bullet points listed below would need consideration.

- To have all properties display address signs for the purpose of improved response time for emergency vehicles, enforcement may be required as there are residents that don’t post addresses on properties that are addressed and inhabited. A bylaw would be required to ensure that all RDN properties would have their civic address posted. There are owners who refuse to post their civic address, so if the desire is to ensure that all emergency responders can locate each property, it will be necessary to have a bylaw to be able to enforce a sign requirement. The bylaw may also require parameters on address posting standards. There may be an expectation for the RDN to supply address signs. It could also involve added costs and responsibility for enforcement
- If the RDN assigns civic addresses to all properties including vacant properties, many addresses would have to be changed when the properties are developed or when neighbouring properties are developed.

- Depending on the scope of change to the current process of civic address assignment, there may be public impact requiring community engagement.

The current process of assigning civic addresses is consistent with the regional districts we researched. The process also accommodates property owners wanting to acquire a civic address when it is needed. If there is a need to address specific properties, those properties could be addressed on an individual basis to minimize the impacts to all stakeholders, as property owners of vacant land can request a civic address.

The current process is documented on the RDN website at the location listed below. This information is also included in the attachment titled “RDN Website Information – Addressing”.

<https://www.rdn.bc.ca/addressing>

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None at this time.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

People and Partnerships - Improve the governance and awareness of RDN activities for citizens throughout the Region.

### **REVIEWED BY:**

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### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Provincial Regional Districts Addressing - Website Information
2. RDN Website Information - Addressing