



REGIONAL  
DISTRICT  
OF NANAIMO

# What We Heard Engagement Summary Report

**Project:** Regional Growth Strategy and Official Community Plan Amendment for PL2021-005 – 2935 Trans-Canada Highway, Electoral Area A

**Date:** June 2022

## Overview of the Project/Process and Objective for Engagement

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) received an application from Toby Seward of Seward Developments on behalf of Steel Container Systems Inc. (SCS) to amend the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), the Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan (OCP) and subsequently Zoning Bylaw No. 500, in order to extend the existing, permitted industrial use to the entire property.

The subject property is legally described as Lot 11, Section 4, Range 7, Cranberry District, Plan 2700 (civic address: 2935 Trans Canada Highway), and is 7.8 hectares in area. The property is located in Electoral Area A and is bound by the Trans Canada Highway to the east and the Nanaimo River on the remaining three sides. The current land use designation and zoning is 'split': 'Rural Residential' (6.0 hectares) and 'Industrial' (1.8 hectares).

The purpose of the application is to amend the RGS to remove the 'Rural Residential' designation and replace with the 'Industrial' designation on the entire property, and to amend the OCP to remove the 'Rural' designation and replace with the 'Industrial' designation on the entire property. If this application is successful, the applicant intends to apply to rezone the property to facilitate the future expansion of the existing industrial business.

The *Local Government Act* requires proposed RGS amendments have a consultation plan for the RDN Board's consideration prior to bylaw adoption that, in the opinion of the Board, provides opportunities for early and ongoing consultation. In response, an Engagement Plan was adopted that outlines the scope of work, applicable stakeholders and an approach to public engagement consistent with the RDN's established policies and best practices.

The proposed RGS and OCP amendments received first and second reading at the October 12, 2021 Board Meeting and an Engagement Plan was adopted with the following engagement objectives:

- To provide information to First Nations and affected local governments.
- To make information readily available to interested public and stakeholders.
- To respond to input from public, First Nations, and affected local governments.

## Process Outline

The Engagement Plan outlined the public participation goal for the RGS and OCP amendment to consult on the IAP2 spectrum. The promise to the public was to keep everyone informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and



REGIONAL  
DISTRICT  
OF NANAIMO

# What We Heard Engagement Summary Report

aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

Tools and methods to achieve the public participation goal include:

Information: Information and updates shared through a Get Involved RDN project webpage, social media and print media such as the RDN Monthly Ad and Nanaimo News Bulletin, Parksville Qualicum Beach News and Gabriola Sounder.

Letters: Formal notification to affected local governments, applicable Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) members and First Nations.

Online consultation: Comments and feedback invited online through the Get Involved RDN project webpage.

Event: A Public Hearing was held to solicit feedback from all persons who considered their interest in property to be affected.

Outreach: Public outreach was done through newspaper and online media. Staff were available to meet with affected local governments, First Nations and internal RDN stakeholders as required.

## **Awareness and Engagement Activities Undertaken**

The proposed RGS and OCP amendment underwent a Public Hearing and had an active project Get Involved RDN project webpage to invite comments and feedback online.

Project information and engagement opportunities were shared through several methods:

- Initiation referral letters sent to First Nations, stakeholders and Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) requesting comment (October 18, 2021)
- Formal referral letters sent to First Nations, stakeholders and IAC requesting acceptance (December 9, 2021)
- Get Involved RDN project webpage [getinvolved.rdn.ca/pl2021-005](https://getinvolved.rdn.ca/pl2021-005), using tools that included:
  - Timeline and upcoming events shown on landing page
  - Document library includes staff reports and background information
  - Opportunity to sign up to follow the project
  - Emails to project subscribers
- Public Hearing notice posted on the RDN website [www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca) (under Events Calendar and Service Alerts/Public Notices Pages)
- Public Hearing notice placed in multiple editions of the Nanaimo News Bulletin (November 24 and December 1, 2021)



REGIONAL  
DISTRICT  
OF NANAIMO

# What We Heard Engagement Summary Report

- RDN Monthly Ads in the Nanaimo News Bulletin, PQB News and Gabriola Sounder (November 3 and December 1, 2021)
- Public mail out to owners and occupants within 500 metres of the subject property (November 2021)
- Public Hearing notification sign placed on the subject property

## Engagement Opportunities:

- Public Hearing  
For the RGS and OCP amendment bylaws:
  - Wednesday, December 7, 2021, in-person and online via Zoom and at the RDN Administration Building at 6:00 p.m.

In addition to the specific scheduled events, there were several ways for residents to provide feedback and ask questions throughout the process:

- Question and Answer section on the Get Involved RDN project webpage
- Email and phone to the staff contact listed on the Get Involved RDN project webpage
- Requesting a meeting with staff

## What We Heard

Online: Three questions were posted on the Get Involved RDN project webpage asking property specific questions and clarification on the process.

Government Agency: Submissions were received from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Island Health and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs that expressed no concerns or addressed their areas of interest, including health, environment, access and traffic.

Local Government: Referral responses received from the Cowichan Valley Regional District, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District and District of Lantzville provided resolutions of acceptance for the proposed RGS amendment.

First Nations: Referral response from K'omoks First Nation indicated no comment on the bylaw amendments. Snuneymuxw First Nation requested a formal application and associated fee be submitted by the applicant which subsequently occurred. No further response was received from Snuneymuxw First Nation regarding this application.

## Who We Heard From

Question and Answers online: Three questions were asked online. These questions were answered by RDN staff and were posted on the Get Involved RDN project webpage.



REGIONAL  
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# What We Heard Engagement Summary Report

Information Online: Webpage analytics up to December 7, 2021, (close of Public Hearing and public comment for this application) show 59 aware participants who visited at least one page of the Get Involved RDN project webpage and 16 informed participants who downloaded a document or clicked through to other parts of the page<sup>1</sup>.

First Nations engagement: As part of the RGS and OCP amendment process, additional correspondence in the form of two referrals (October 2021 and December 2021) were sent out to five First Nations. Of these referrals, two responses were received.

Local Government: Referral letters were sent twice (October 2021 and December 2021) to affected local governments; after the proposed RGS amendment was initiated by the Board, and again after the Board gave 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading to the proposed RGS and OCP amendment bylaw. To the first referral, one response from an affected local government was received. To the second referral, three responses from affected local governments were received.

Intergovernmental Advisory Committee: Subject to the *Local Government Act*, an Intergovernmental Advisory Committee was established and request for comment and advice on the proposed RGS amendment bylaw was sent to four local governments and seven provincial agencies. Responses on behalf of three provincial agencies were received.

Public Hearing: Three members of the public attended the December 7, 2021 Public Hearing. There was one oral submission at the Public Hearing.

## Next Steps

Public Hearing submissions and government agency responses to RGS and OCP bylaw referrals will be presented to the Board prior to consideration of third reading and adoption of the proposed RGS and OCP amendments.

The project website at [getinvolved.rdn.ca/pl2021-005](https://getinvolved.rdn.ca/pl2021-005) will continue to be updated.

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<sup>1</sup> The numbers for aware and informed participants give only a general idea, as in some circumstances the same person could be counted more than once for multiple visits depending on their device used or its settings.