



## NANAIMO RIVER FIRE PROTECTION FEASIBILITY STUDY – WHAT WE HEARD ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board receive the Nanaimo River Fire Protection Feasibility Study – What we Heard Engagement Summary Report for information.

### **BACKGROUND**

The following motions were approved at the January 25, 2022, Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board Meeting:

1. *That the Board approve a fire protection feasibility study to be conducted for the Nanaimo River fire protection service area, inclusive of a public engagement process to develop options for the “Nanaimo River Fire Protection Service Capital Reserve Fund” pursuant to the “Nanaimo River Fire Protection Service Reserve Fund Establishment Bylaw No. 1612, 2010”.*
2. *That the transfer to reserves for 2022 of \$15,661 be reduced to \$13,661 and that \$2000 reduction be allocated for the public engagement process.*
3. *That \$20,000 from reserves be allocated for the feasibility study.*

The following motion was endorsed at the June 28, 2022, Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board Meeting:

*That the Board endorse the Engagement Plan for the Nanaimo River Fire Protection Feasibility Study.*

The RDN retained Tim Pley & Associates (TPA) to conduct a feasibility study for options development for the Nanaimo River fire protection service area. The scope of this feasibility study is to develop and analyze options for the funds raised for the construction of a fire hall and will include potential alternate cost-effective fire hall designs, alternatives such as an apparatus storage garage for expedited response to the area, stopping annual reserve fund contributions, returning reserve funds, or rationalizing the reserve fund contributions and/or retention of the collected funds.

A public engagement program with participating property owners/residents is a critical component of the study. The RDN is committed to hearing from impacted homeowners/residents and interested stakeholders to gather input and information, and feedback on how the community wishes to proceed.

The objectives of the public engagement program for this study were to:

1. Raise awareness among the Nanaimo River community that the fire service in that area is being reviewed.
2. Engage on preliminary fire service options for the community.
3. Inform property owners/residents and other interested stakeholders of the opportunities and implications associated with fire service options.
4. Gather input on fire service options.
5. Develop recommendations to be considered by the RDN Electoral Area Services Committee.

The following communication and engagement tools were used throughout the feasibility study:

TOOLS	OBJECTIVES	AUDIENCE
Website – Get Involved RDN <a href="#">Nanaimo River Fire Protection Service Area - Feasibility Study page</a>	To provide a “one stop shop” for general project information, engagement opportunities, communication resource materials and input portal.	Nanaimo River residents Nanaimo River property owners Community Association EVFD Project registrants
Fact Sheet No. 1	To provide information on the project’s scope.  To share the project’s timeline.  To identify opportunities to engage.	Nanaimo River residents Nanaimo River property owners Community Association EVFD Get Involved RDN project registrants and page visitors
FAQ	To address questions and concerns that currently exists.  To include fire protection grading from Fire Underwriters Survey.	Nanaimo River residents Nanaimo River property owners Community Association EVFD Get Involved RDN project registrants and page visitors
Fact Sheet No. 2 - Stage 1	To provide background information on the project (disseminated at the Open House).  To identify options, opportunities, and obstacles (to support display boards).	Open House participants  Get Involved RDN project
Fact Sheet No. 2 – Stage 2 (Canada Post mail-out)	To reach those who did not/could not attend the open house.	Nanaimo River residents Nanaimo River property owners Community Association EVFD Get Involved RDN project registrants and page visitors
Media Release	To promote participation at Open House and input opportunity.	RDN media list
Open House Invitation (Canada Post & online)	To invite participation and promote input opportunity.	Nanaimo River residents Nanaimo River property owners Community Association First Nations Get Involved RDN project registrants and page visitors

Open House	<p>To build an understanding of the issue at hand.</p> <p>To share project details.</p> <p>To provide attendees the opportunity to speak with project staff.</p> <p>To provide attendees the opportunity to provide input.</p>	Open House attendees
Feedback From (Stakeholders will have ample opportunity to submit input in the weeks following the open house)	To gather input for consideration.	<p>Nanaimo River residents</p> <p>Nanaimo River property owners</p> <p>Community Association</p> <p>EVFD</p> <p>Get Involved RDN project registrants and page visitors</p>
Display Panels	<p>To clearly communicate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goals &amp; Objectives</li> <li>- Project Overview</li> <li>- Response Times Mapping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Current</li> <li>o Proposed</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Dwelling Protection Grades</li> <li>- Options &amp; Implications</li> <li>- How to Stay Involved</li> </ul>	<p>Open House Attendees</p> <p>Get Involved RDN project registrants and page visitors</p>
Social Media	<p>To promote Open House.</p> <p>To advertise input opportunity.</p> <p>To promote engagement with RDN's Get Involved project page.</p>	Followers
Newspaper ads	To promote Open House and input opportunity.	Readers

On August 13, 2022, at 1 p.m. RDN staff and the consulting team conducted the Open House at Gogo's Christmas Tree Farm (2625 S. Forks Road) in an outdoor gazebo. This event kicked off the project's formal public input period which was open from August 13 through August 26, 2022.

The What We Heard Engagement Summary Report (Attachment 1) provides a detailed analysis of the formal public responses received to the survey (Attachment 2) which were provided at the Open House and on-line via the *Get Involved RDN* project website. Engagement materials and survey feedback form are available in Attachment 2.

### Highlights of the What We Heard Engagement Summary Report:

- 38 individuals submitted their input to the RDN during the public input period (August 13 – 26, 2022)
- Of the 38 submissions, 33 individuals identified as living in the Nanaimo River community with the remaining five identifying they were from Extension or other areas.
- 25 hard copy feedback forms were received
- 13 submissions were received from the *Get Involved RDN* project page
- A total of 29 of the 33 Nanaimo River respondents own their properties. The remainder either rent or did not respond to the question.
- Just over 50 per cent of respondents living in the Nanaimo River community reported that they have resided at their property for over 20 years.

A key point to note was when asked what community members value most, majority of respondents indicated that both fire protection and low insurance premiums were of value to them (as opposed to only fire protection or low insurance premiums.)

### Next Steps:

In Q1 of 2023, the final consultants report on the Nanaimo River Fire Protection Feasibility Study will be presented to the EASC. The final report will be inclusive of findings, analysis and recommendations from Tim Pley & Associates on how the RDN should proceed with providing fire protection services to the Nanaimo River Community.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The budget for the Nanaimo River Fire Protection Feasibility Study is \$18,400.00 (excluding PST and GST.) The RDN allotted an additional \$2,000 to support the public engagement process. After all expenses, the public engagement costs came in under budget at \$1347.56. The feasibility study final report will be completed and processed in 2022, with presentation of the final report in Q1 of 2023.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT**

Social Wellbeing - Make the Region a safe and vibrant place for all, with a focus on children and families in programs and planning.

### **REVIEWED BY:**

- E. Beauchamp, Manager, Emergency Services
- L. Grant, General Manager, Planning & Development

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. What We Heard Engagement Summary Report - Tim Pley & Associates
2. Appendix - Nanaimo River Feasibility Study - Tim Pley & Associates