

French Creek Cell Tower Neighbourhood Support Report to the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC)



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Prepared by: French Creek Cell Tower Neighbours

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Introduction

The French Creek Cell Tower Neighbours are a group of concerned citizens who live in the French Creek area. Our group was formed out of a mutual concern over the lack of cell service in the area. The notoriously poor cell coverage presents a number of significant challenges to the French Creek neighbourhood. There are concerns relating to emergency services, public safety, business operations and general convenience.

Our objective is to provide the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC) with the information required to make an informed decision that aligns with the wishes of a significant number of constituents within Area G.

In an effort to seek community input from residents and businesses in the area, our group worked together to gather information to gauge the level of support for the proposed new cell tower. The information provided within this report has been gathered through a number of sources and is summarized as follows:

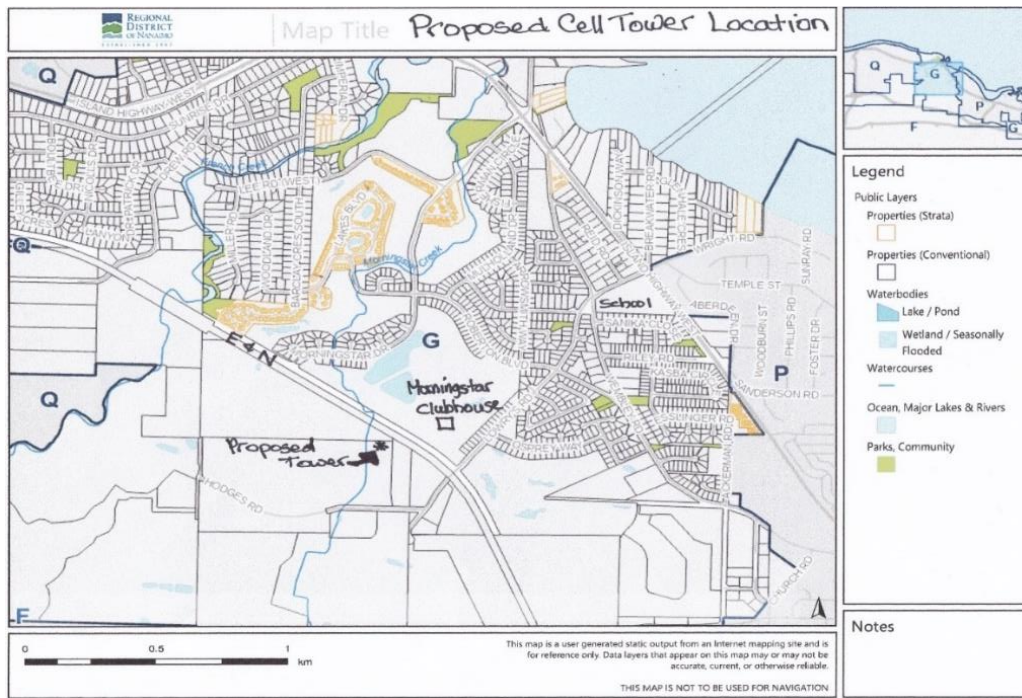
- A neighbourhood petition conducted in early 2022 to assess the level of interest in approaching cell tower providers to improve service for our area
- The perspectives of residents living in an area with a lack of reliable cellular service
- The experiences of local businesses and other service providers, contractors, etc. who live and work in the area
- Door to door canvassing of over 400 area residences conducted in May 2023 to inquire on the level of support

Thank you to the EASC for taking the time to consider the information provided within this report.

Proposed Cell Tower

Location

The French Creek district is located within the RDN's Area G. The proposed cell tower is to be located on farm land and behind trees along the E & N rail line. The signal provided by this tower will be a significant benefit to neighbourhoods surrounding and beyond Morningstar Golf course.



Meeting Health and Safety Standards

As the EASC is aware, jurisdiction for health, safety, licensing and related standards for cellular towers is regulated by the Federal government under *The Radiocommunication Act*. As detailed within the RDN's Board Policy (No B1-23), the proposed cellular tower must satisfy all details and considerations stipulated within the Policy and as required by the federal government. The proposed tower meets the requirements of Safety Code 6.¹

¹ https://www.rdn.bc.ca/dms/documents/rdn-board-policies/planning/b1-23_electoral_area_telecommunication_antenna_system_consultation.pdf

Concerns for the Well Being of the Community

Unreliable cell service is not only an inconvenience, it poses a number of significant health and safety risks. This is a frightening prospect for area residents as the intermittent (at best) cellular service can result in the inability to get help when needed, or to reach 911 for police, fire or ambulance.

Connecting to 9-1-1

The inability to call 9-1-1 is a huge safety concern. If there is an emergency during a power outage many homes have no way to call 9-1-1. Many households no longer have landlines and 9-1-1 cannot be called in dead zones. For those homes that do have landlines, many of those lines do not work during a power outage. As a result, poor cellular connectivity is a threat to the safety and well being of the community. Emergency medical service providers refer to the 'golden hour' for preventing death or serious disability associated with stroke and heart attacks. This has the potential to result in poor outcomes for someone needing emergency help.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Fires and accidents happen with regularity and without consistent cell phone connectivity EMS may not be reached.

EMS personnel rely on their cell phones for on-call emergency situations. If it is not possible for EMS to get connectivity to their dispatch, the attending person is forced to leave the victim and get to a home phone to communicate with dispatch. This is traumatizing for the victim and can be life threatening.

Search and Rescue

Search and rescue services are impeded by not having their volunteers available via cell phone.

Children's Safety

Children with cell phones cannot reach parents if required (e.g. late, playground accident/incident, safety, etc.).

Additional Household Expenses

The requirement to maintain a landline in addition to a cell phone causes unnecessary expenses to households. In addition, oftentimes the landline also requires WiFi and will not work during power outages.

Service providers are frequently working in the area as residents have landscaping or renovations done. These service providers may not have cell service available which impedes their ability to do their jobs, causes delays and increases costs as they are forced to travel down the road, or outside the area to find cell service.

Since the proposed cell tower has a backup generator, cell service would continue to function during power outages.

Concerns of Businesses and Service Providers

In addition to the safety and emergency service concerns of area residents, local service providers (e.g. contractors, plumbers, electricians, food delivery services, taxis and passenger services, maintenance crews) are hindered because of the weak cell service. Many of these companies utilize electronic customer management systems for tracking work orders, and require cell service for automated payment systems (e.g. wireless point of sale terminals). They are unable to access their work orders and customers are unable to make electronic payments for services. In today's environment it is difficult to do business without reliable cellular connectivity.

Many businesses and residential services in the French Creek area are negatively impacted from the lack of cell service. We received comments from a number of local individuals regarding the challenges they experience due to the lack of cell service.

Morningstar Golf Club

Since moving to this area just over 3 years ago, I, like many others, have endured sub-standard cellular coverage. I have always been a Telus subscriber, so my experience is based on that. I can make/receive a call sometimes in my office, and sometimes in my home adjacent to the golf course. Frequently I cannot get a signal, and never in the parking lot at the golf course. I have heard this same complaint from too many others to count.



You will recall that in 2021 when Morningstar Gold Club hosted the BC Junior Golf Championships, the officials managing the tournament could not use their live scoring and communication equipment because it is cellular based.

The fact that a submission has been made for a tower close to the golf course, and the Morningstar community of over 400 residences is in favour is hopeful news.

It is 2023 and many people no longer use land lines and depend on cellular service for general communications and certainly in the case of an emergency. As a business we, and our customers, are hindered by the unacceptable quality of cellular service and need that tower to function.

In July we are hosting BC's premier amateur golf championship the BC Amateur Championship and once again the British Columbia Golf officials are going to be compromised by not having cellular services on the golf course.

*Barrie McWha, PGA
General Manager
Morningstar Golf Course*

French Creek Marina

We spoke to staff in the office of the French Creek Marina. They advised that they have had to invest in WiFi service for the marina office and the docks because cell service is unreliable. They consider it a matter of safety for mariners.



Small Business Owners

We received the following feedback from two small business owners who work from their home offices in the area:

A resident of the area that operates a business in part in his home, said that cell service is very inconsistent. He can receive calls on the second level of his home, but not in other areas of his residence, which is a detriment to his business. For example, when our committee member called to ask him about his experience with cell service in the area, he did not receive the call because he was in his driveway.

Another resident who is a contractor says that his tradespeople are constantly asking to borrow his home phone because they do not have cell service. This creates a constant disruption to business.

Parents

As a full time resident of the French Creek area, poor cell reception has had a significant impact on my family. My husband works from home three days a week and some of his work involves communication via cell phone, we have had to adapt our living space to find the one area of the house where the cell reception is least likely to drop - even still, a call between him and myself dropped recently. My cell phone is constantly dropping calls, and functions slowly with one bar or no connection all together. I am constantly worried that I will miss an important call from a medical professional, or my children. It has added a financial burden to my family as we have had to add a landline phone to ensure that our children can reach us. A cell tower is a much needed commodity in this area for the benefit of folks who work from home and those with children.

The reception in and around the area of Ecole Oceanside Elementary is unacceptable, cell phones barely work if at all, I fear that if a real emergency situation happens that we as parents may not receive the necessary information.

We live in an age where cell phone use is a necessity for parents and children, as technologies take our children into the future, they are how we communicate, check in with each other and keep each other safe. They are a benefit to mental health in keeping people connected with one another. I and my family are in full support of a cell tower, for the mental health and safety of our children and peers, and the ability to work from home as professionals.

Sincerely,

Amanda Wagner, Resident of French Creek



Resident Input

To determine the level of support for the proposed cell tower, a petition was circulated in the area in 2022 and homes and businesses were canvassed door to door during the month of May 2023.

The Petition

In early 2022 a petition was conducted in St. Andrews Estates to gauge the interest in approaching a cell tower provider to improve cell service in the area.

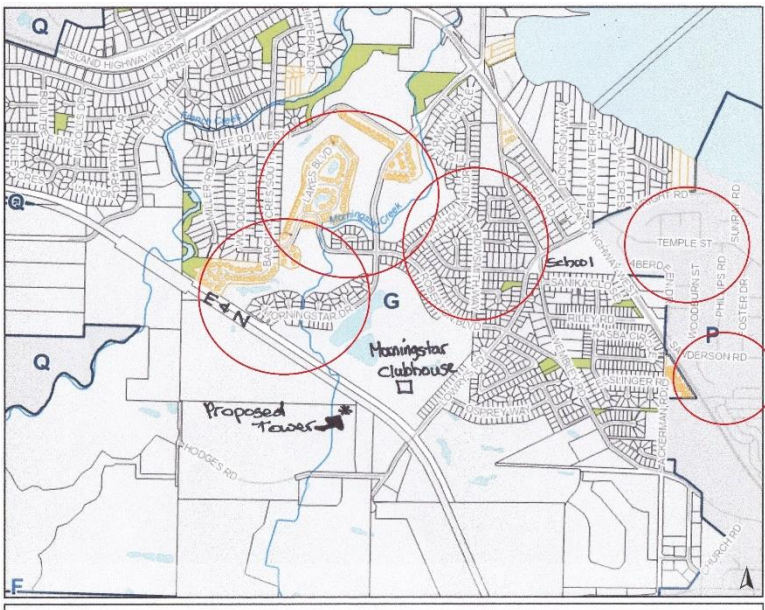
Further Gauging Resident Support

In May 2023 our group went door to door canvassing 446 homes in the area. Residents were asked if they are 'in favour', 'against' or, if they have 'no comment' about the cell tower.

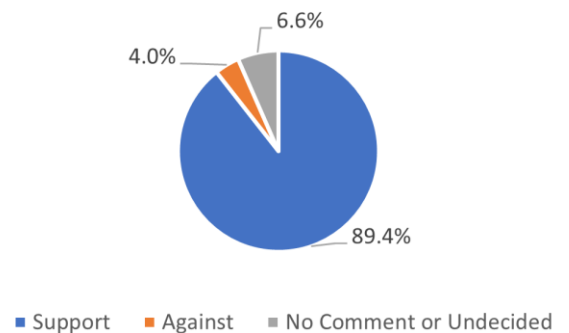
For the purpose of organizing the canvassed area, the addresses were divided into 11 area maps. Ten of the areas were canvassed. Detailed maps of each area are provided in Appendix A.

Of those who responded to the survey **89.4 percent of residents are in favour of the proposed new cell tower**. Only 4 percent indicated they are against the tower and 6.6% either had no comment or were undecided.

Areas Circled in Red were Canvassed:

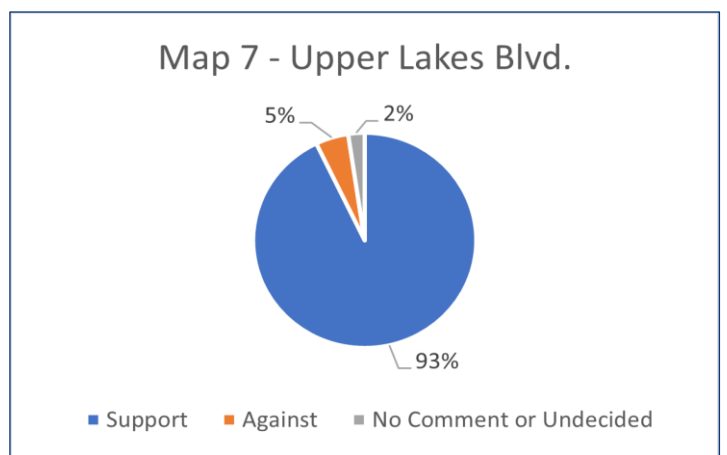
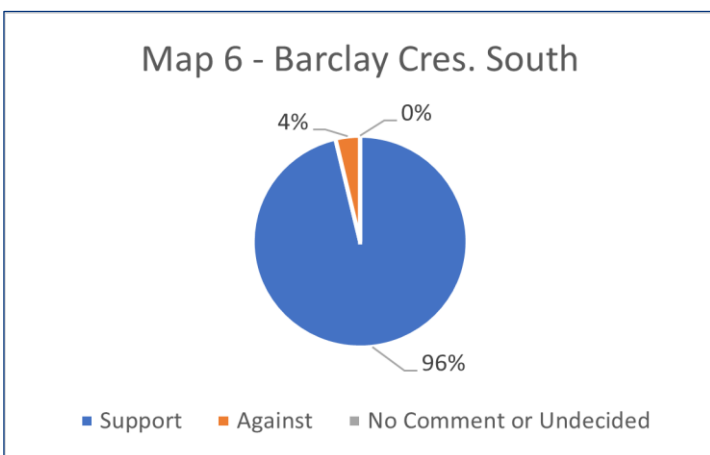
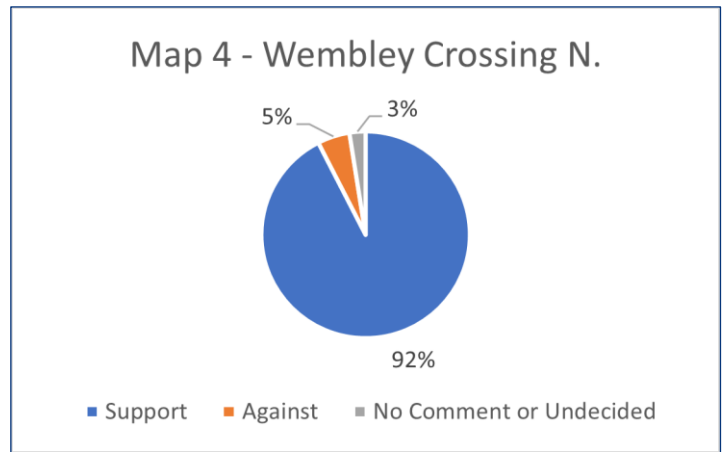
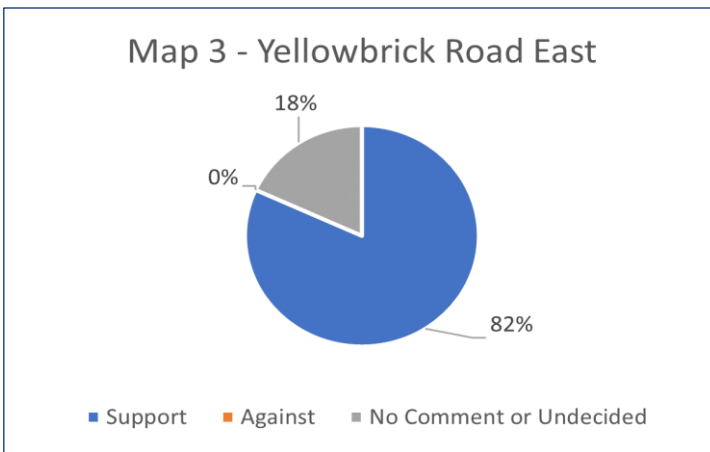
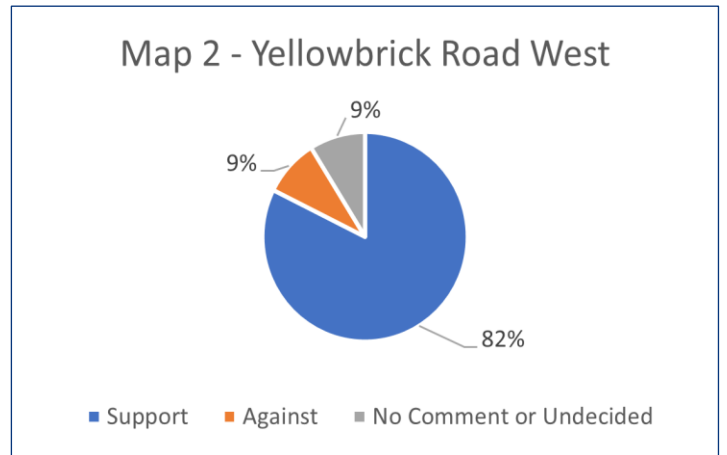
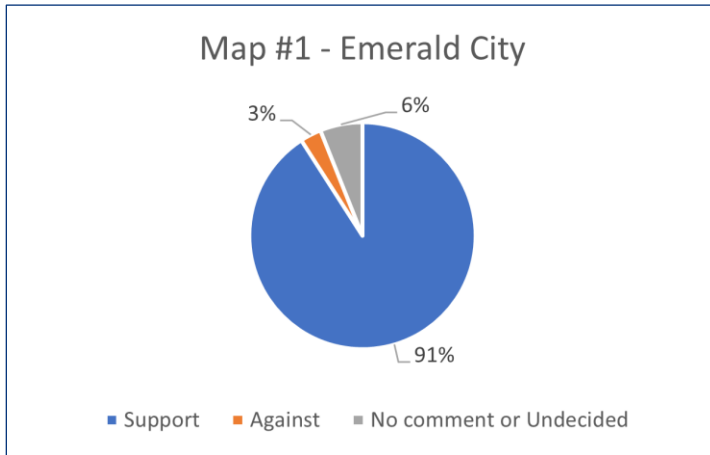


Overall Support - All Areas



Note: Percentages do not include addresses where there was no answer.

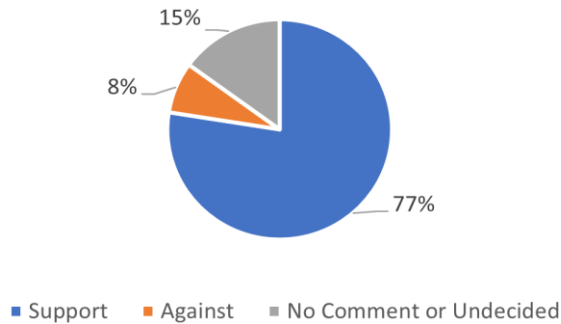
The following charts show the support within each map area canvassed.^{2 3}



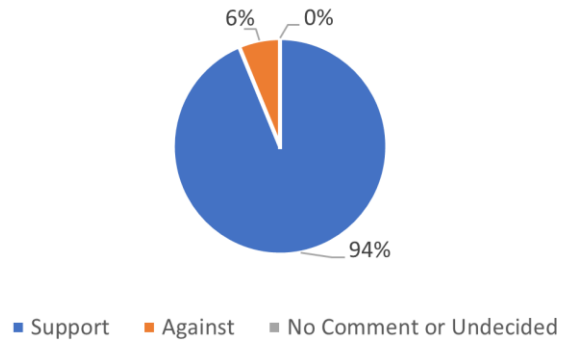
² Map 5 was not surveyed.

³ See Appendix A for specific survey results. See Appendix B for detailed area maps.

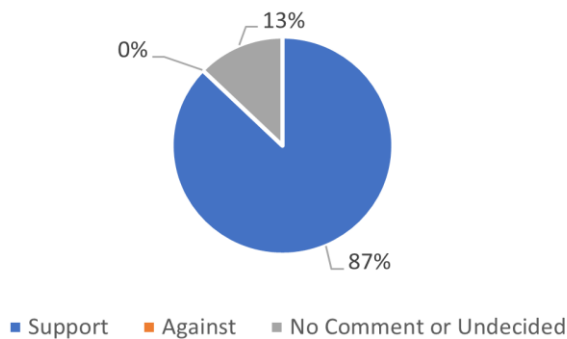
Map 8 - Lower Lakes Blvd.



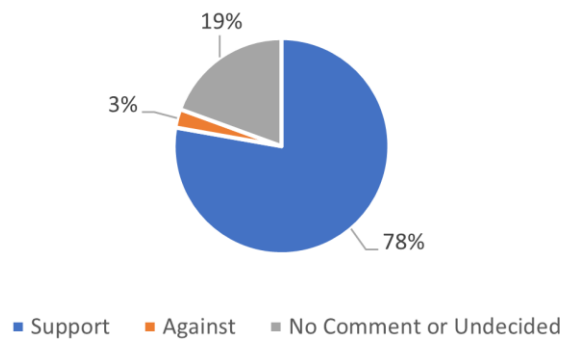
Map 9 - St. Andrews Lane



Map 10 - Morningstar Drive



Map 11 - Field Crescent



A Word About the Science

Much has been said about the adverse effects of cell tower radiation. This comes mostly from web sites that choose specific studies that report adverse effects and ignore other studies that do not find effects.

The effects of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) at various exposures are reviewed regularly by many national and international bodies (e.g., Health Canada, USEPA, the European Health Authority, International Agency for Research on Cancer, American Cancer Society, Cancer Council of Australia). Their evaluations are thorough, balanced and consider all published and peer reviewed data, applying a weight of evidence approach. Health Canada and other national agencies add in safety factors of 10-1000 below the Lowest or No-Observed -Adverse-Effect- Levels (LOAELs or NOAELs).

We can and must trust these evaluations rather than position-based beliefs which are not supported by the full weight of evidence.

Concluding Comments

Based on our data, there is **overwhelming support for the cell tower proposal** in the neighbourhoods surrounding Morningstar Golf Course. The location of the proposed tower will minimize the impact to surrounding residents and will improve the neighbourhood in a number of ways including:

- Enhancing the well being of members of and visitors to the community
- Reducing health and safety risks to residents by improving communication with emergency medical services
- Improving the operations of the area's businesses including the Morningstar Golf Course, the Marina and others who all depend on reliable cell connectivity
- Potentially reducing household and area business expenses by enabling the elimination of landlines in addition to cell phones

The French Creek Cell Tower Neighbours would like to thank area residents who provided their input through the petition and by contributing to the data collected for this report. We would also like to thank the EASC for considering the information we have provided.

Respectfully submitted,

French Creek Cell Tower Neighbours

Members:

Kathy & Greg Bush, [REDACTED]

Beth Clarke-Gilman & Andy Gilman, [REDACTED]

Yvette & Steve Battistolo, [REDACTED]

Christie Drewbrook & Cecil Lee, [REDACTED]

Jean Poitras, [REDACTED]

Kevin Martin & Joanne Metz, [REDACTED]



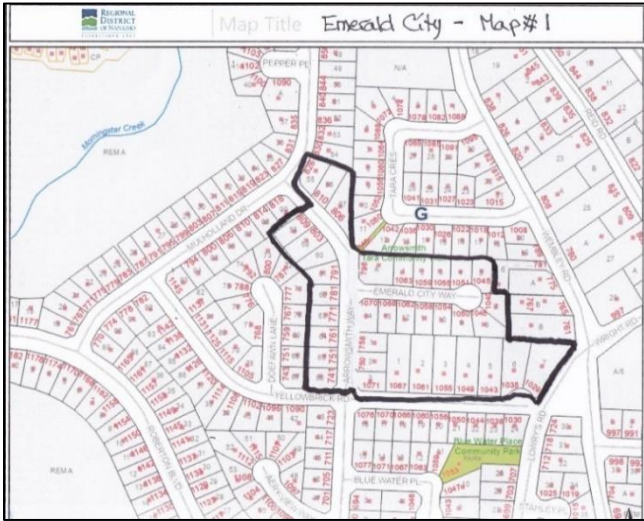
Appendix A: Survey Results

Survey results of map areas. Of the 446 private residences we visited, 312 are in favour of the new cell tower, 14 are against and 24 individuals had no comment or are undecided. 96 were not home and were not surveyed.

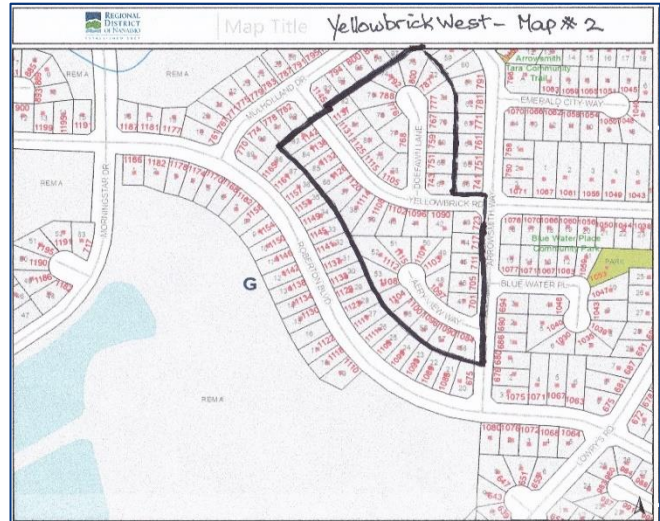
Area	For	Against	No Comment	Not Home	Total Homes
Map 1 - Emerald City	30	1	1	1	33
Map 2 - Yellowbrick Road West	28	3	3	7	41
Map 3 - Yellowbrick Road East	18	0	4	11	33
Map 4 - Wembley Crossing North	37	2	1	19	59
Map 5 – not surveyed	---	---	---	---	---
Map 6 - Barclay Cres., South	52	2	0	0	54
Map 7 - Upper Lakes Blvd.	39	2	1	6	48
Map 8 - Lower Lakes Blvd.	31	3	6	13	53
Map 9 - St. Andrews Lane	15	0	1	12	28
Map 10 - Morningstar Drive	34	0	5	13	52
Map 11 - Field Crescent	28	1	7	9	45

Appendix B: Map Areas

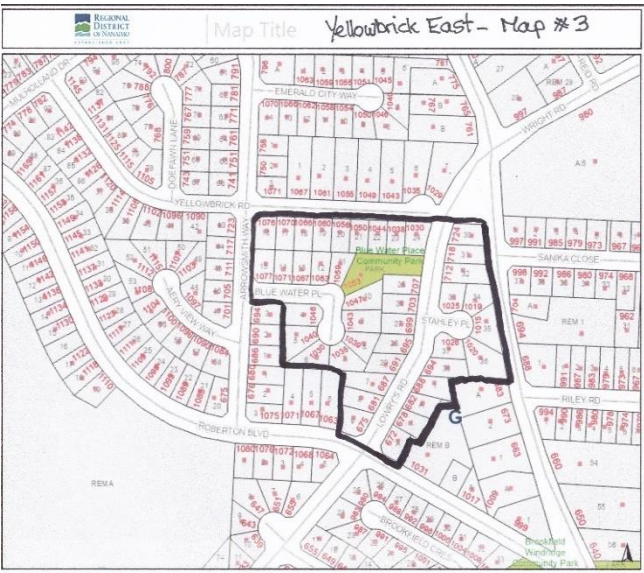
Map 1 - Emerald City



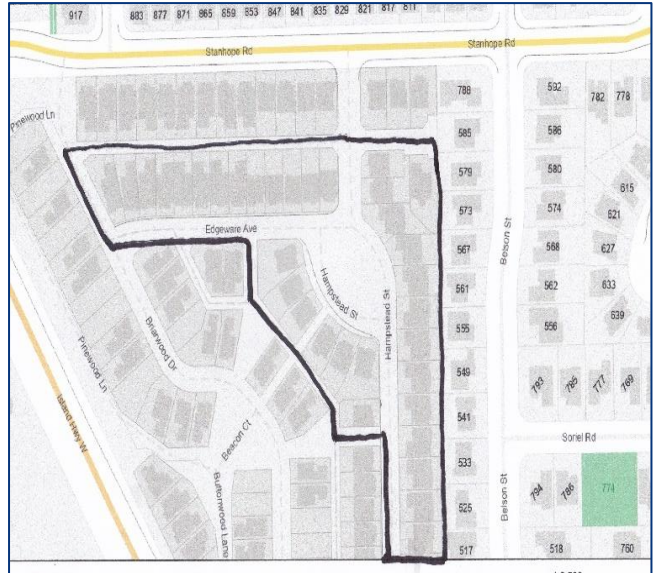
Map 2 - Yellowbrick Road, West



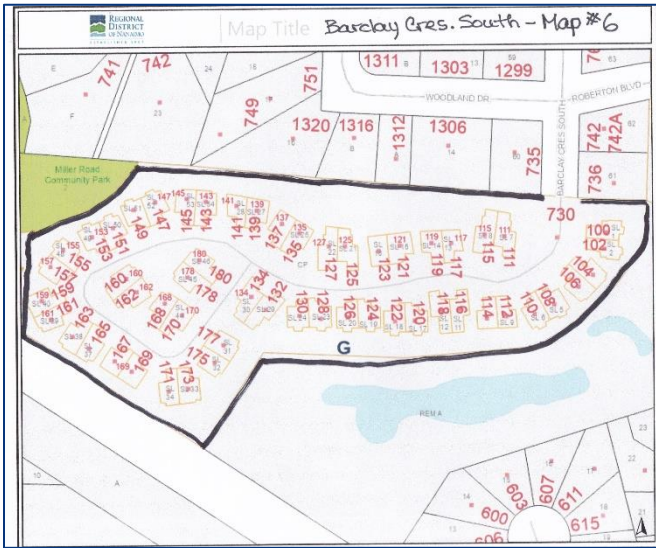
Map 3 - Yellowbrick Road East



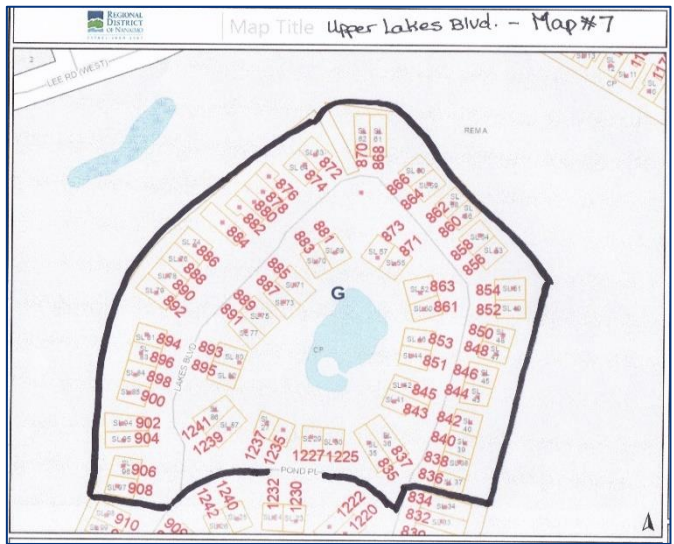
Map 4 - Wembley Crossing North



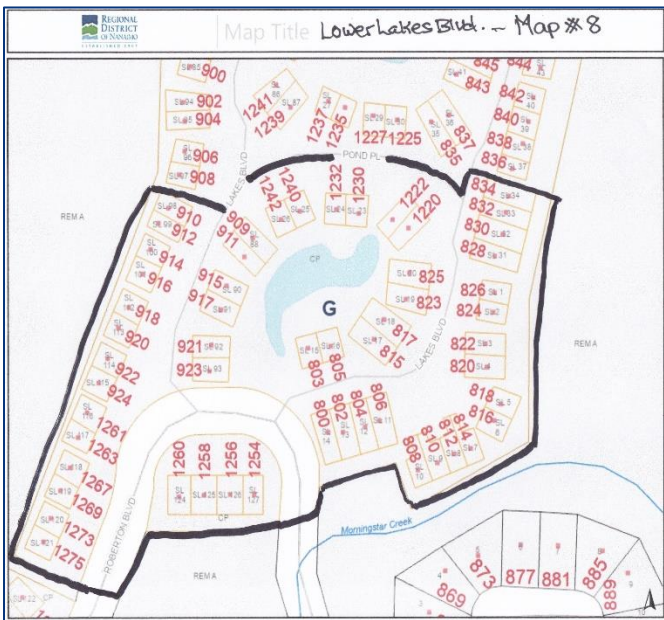
Map 6 – Barclay Crescent South



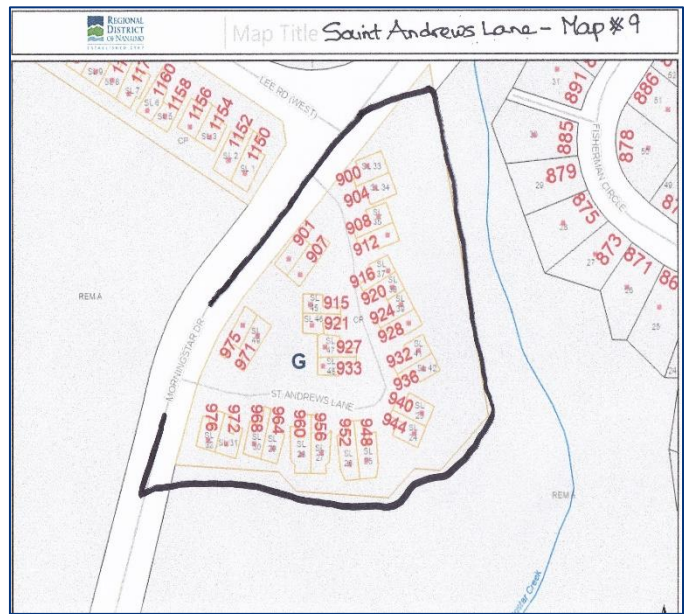
Map 7 – Upper Lakes Blvd.



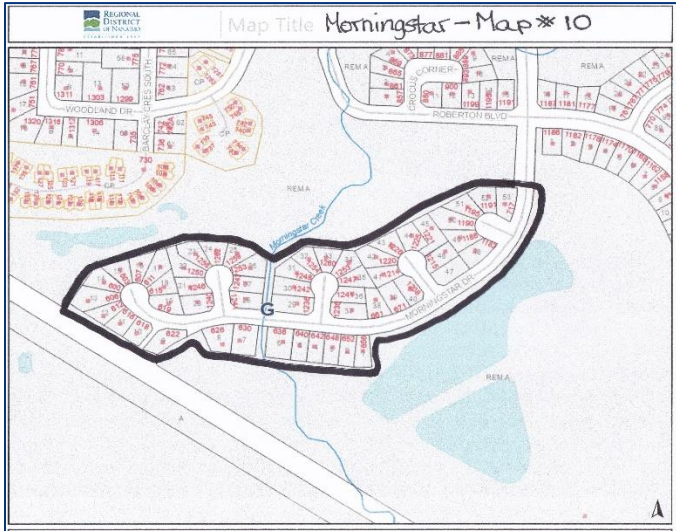
Map 8 – Lower Lakes Blvd.



Map 9 – Saint Andrews Lane



Map 10 – Morningstar Drive



Map 11 - Field Crescent

