Bowser Village Centre Plan

This year the Bowser Village Centre became the first area in the region with a Village Centre Plan to guide land-use decisions. Nearly two years of consultations between local residents, Regional District staff and Area H Director Bartram shaped the plan, adopted by the RDN Board in June. The finished document updates and becomes part of the original 2003 Electoral Area H Official Community Plan, with 90 new policies to support sustainable development in the Bowser Village Centre.

Many policies in the Plan look toward the future, supporting objectives such as developing environmentally friendly wastewater management systems, reducing household energy demand by 50 per cent by 2020, and providing 40 units of seniors housing in the Village Centre by 2020.

The Plan area covers 92.5 hectares along the Old Island Highway (Highway 19A), including Magnolia Court and Georgia Park, where many people in the area access shops and services. Approximately 50.7 hectares of the Village Centre Area was originally identified in the 2003 Area H OCP; the Village Plan also includes a 41.8 hectare section along Crosley Road, designated as a Future Use Area.

As the first community in the region to get to this advanced stage in community planning, Bowser and Area H have set the standard for other RDN communities in years to come. Residents can obtain a copy of their new Village Centre Plan online at www.rdn.bc.ca, or request a hard copy by contacting the RDN Administration Offices.

Bow Horn Bay Fire Truck

Residents in Area H, served by the Bow Horn Bay Volunteer Fire Department, will have a new fire truck for emergency response in 2011. In August the Regional District Board approved the purchase of a Rosenbauer top mount pumper engine. The new $280,000 vehicle will maintain the fire response fleet of two tankers and one pumper. The department also has specially equipped vehicles for first response to medical calls.

The vehicle will be financed mainly with reserve funds set aside over the years and a small amount included in the 2011 operating budget.

The BHBVFD serves Bowser, Spider Lake and properties along Qualicum Bay. The department is operated under contract by a Society using funding provided by taxpayers within the fire protection boundaries.

Building Inspection Service Expansion

In June the Regional District Board approved the expansion of Building Inspection into parts of Areas A, C, F, and H not previously within the service. Phase one of the expansion took effect October 1 for new construction within the following land use designations: Village Centres; Urban Containment Boundaries; Rural Separation Boundaries (Area F only); Commercial, Industrial, Conservation, Public Management, Forestry, Agriculture, Industrial Mixed Use, Salvage & Wrecking, Institutional/Community, and Water Use lands; Comprehensive Development not specific to single family; and all newly subdivided lands regardless of zoning designation.

The final phase of the service expansion on April 1, 2011 will include new construction on all remaining properties, including land zoned for single family and duplex use.

The primary goal of Building Inspection is to ensure the health, safety, and protection of persons and property by ensuring that new construction and installations generally conform to relevant bylaws, the BC Building Code, and other applicable standards and regulations. Building Inspection also enables current and prospective owners to access records on construction.
history of their property, helps ensure consumer protection through warranty coverage, and confirms that all new construction meets applicable environmental standards and development permit regulations.

More information on Building Inspection services, and when to apply for a Building Permit, is available at www.rdn.bc.ca.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Our Communities

The need to address climate change is now officially recognized in the Electoral Area H Official Community Plan. In May the Regional District fulfilled one of its pledges as a signatory of the 2007 Climate Action Charter by adding targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to the Area H OCP and five other OCPs for rural areas throughout the region. Area H is now committed to a 33 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2007 levels by 2020, and an 80 per cent reduction from 2007 levels by 2050. The RDN is one of 177 local governments throughout BC that have signed the Climate Action Charter, pledging also to achieve carbon neutral operations by 2012.

Our new OCP policies encourage more efficient local transport and building construction, compact communities, urban containment, the protection of forest land, and local food production. The next priority for the RDN is to gather specific data on greenhouse gas emissions in each electoral area, and develop a Community Energy and Emissions Plan. Following the completion of the CEEP rural residents throughout the region will be invited to provide input on more detailed planning policies aimed at reducing the effects of climate change.

More information on greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in OCPs is available at www.rdn.bc.ca.

The Green Bin Program

Local households are starting to send less waste to the landfill with the region-wide Green Bin Program now underway. The Regional District thanks all residents for making the transition to the new program, and your patience as new green bins, collection schedules, and Curbside Collection Guides have been delivered to more than 32,000 single family homes in all seven Electoral Areas, Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Lantzville, and Nanaimo. If your home now has a green bin and weekly food waste collection you may have seen that it can help reduce garbage disposal by about half.

All single family homes in Electoral Areas starting the Green Bin Program have new 15 month curbside collection schedules for food waste collection, garbage, and recycling. Comprehensive information on the Green Bin Program, such as acceptable materials for disposal, and tips for green bin storage, is included in your Curbside Collection Guide. You can also find the latest information on RDN garbage and recycling in the Guide.

More details on curbside collection, as well as recent changes to the recycling program, is also available at www.beyondcomposting.ca and www.rdn.bc.ca, or by calling 250-390-6560, 250-954-3792, or toll free 1-877-607-4111.

Winter Emergency Preparedness

Flooding, snowstorms and power outages can happen during the colder months in our communities, and just a couple hours of preparation will make a big difference during an emergency. The Regional District Emergency Planning Department is ready to provide assistance. In October staff delivered flood preparedness packages to many rural homes. The kits include the RDN’s Personal Emergency Preparedness Guide Book, tips for preparing all aspects of your household for a flood, and general information from Public Safety Canada on Floods and Power Outages. Residents who did not receive a kit can request one anytime for delivery or pickup. Staff also regularly meet with local stakeholders, and is available upon request to provide free emergency preparedness workshops groups with a minimum ten local residents. A grab and go bag is an important item to have ready for any evacuation. The Provincial Emergency Program recommends packing supplies for one week outside your home, with essential items such as (but not limited to) a battery flashlight or radio, personal medication, a basic first aid kit, non-perishable foods, and emergency blankets.

More information and resources are available at rdn.bc.ca> Development> Emergency Planning, or by emailing emergencyplanning@rdn.bc.ca, or calling 250-390-6510, 250-954-3798, or toll free 1-877-607-4111.

Toilet Rebate Program

The Regional District’s Toilet Replacement Rebate Program was very successful this year. The program ended in late August after all 2010 funding was allocated due to high demand. Rebates provided this year for 500 low-flow toilets will reduce water consumption by approximately 12 million litres annually in RDN Electoral Areas.

If you live in an RDN Electoral Area, and are thinking of replacing your toilet with a new water-efficient model, remember to check back next year for more incentive opportunities. Applications for toilet rebates received after August 25, 2010 will be held on a first-come first-serve basis for processing in 2011, pending approval of a new program by the RDN Board.