
Consultation Plan

RGS Amendment

Minor Amendment Process

October 14, 2015

Adopted By RDN Board

October 27, 2015

Prepared by
Long Range Planning,
Strategic & Community
Development



REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO

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ACRONYMS

ALR – Agricultural Land Reserve

COW – Committee of the Whole

GCB – Growth Containment Boundary

IAC – Intergovernmental Advisory Committee

LGA – Local Government Act

OCP – Official Community Plan

RDN – Regional District of Nanaimo

RGS – Regional Growth Strategy

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Consultation Plan is to establish a process that the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) will use to gather input on a proposed amendment to the RGS. This Plan outlines the way in which those who are interested and affected will be provided opportunities to comment on the proposed amendment.

This Plan is intended to meet the RDN Board's responsibilities under Sections 855(2) and 879 of the *Local Government Act*, and also be consistent with Board consultation policies¹ and procedures bylaws.

2 SCOPE

The scope of this Consultation Plan is limited to the proposed amendment to the RGS Minor Amendment Criteria.

3 PROCESS

The chart in Appendix A shows how public consultation fits in with the overall process to amend the RGS. The *Local Government Act* requires that an amendment to amend the process for a minor amendment go through the regular RGS amendment process.

¹ Regional District of Nanaimo, June 2, 2008 Public Consultation/Communication Framework Policy No. A1.23

4 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTATION

Regional Growth Strategy Amendments

This Consultation Plan is intended to meet Sections 855(1) and (2) of the *Local Government Act* that requires the RDN to provide consultation opportunities relating to proposed changes to a Regional Growth Strategy. Section 855 (2) of the *Act* specifically states that:

"...as soon as possible after the initiation of [a process to amend] a Regional Growth Strategy, the board must adopt a Consultation Plan that, in the opinion of the Board, provides opportunities for early and ongoing consultation with, at a minimum,

- (a) its citizens,*
- (b) affected local governments²,*
- (c) First Nations,*
- (d) school district boards, greater boards and improvement district boards, and*
- (e) the Provincial and Federal governments and their agencies."*

Under Section 854 (1) of the *Local Government Act*, the preparation [and amendment] of a Regional Growth Strategy must be initiated by resolution of the board. Following a resolution to initiate a process to consider an amendment, the RDN Board must give written notice to affected local governments and to the Minister (Section 854 (2)). In addition to this notice, opportunities will be provided for 'affected local governments' along with other stakeholders to provide feedback prior to receiving formal referrals as required by the *Local Government Act* (see Appendix A).

The RDN Board is required to consider whether the Consultation Plan should include a public hearing to provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations to make their views known before proposed amendments to the RGS are submitted for acceptance by 'affected local governments' (Section 857 of the *LGA*).

5 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the legislative requirements for consultation for Regional Growth Strategies, there are several key issues and pre-existing decisions that influence the approach outlined in this Consultation Plan. This includes a need to:

² For the RDN an "affected local government" means the council of each municipality all or part of which is covered by the regional growth strategy and the board of each regional district that is adjoining an area to which the regional growth strategy is to apply. See the *Local Government Act* Sections 854 & 857.

1. Consider the high level of local interest from members of the community regarding what qualifies to be considered as a minor amendment.
2. Build understanding of the role of RDN staff in facilitating a fair and open review process that encourages broad participation and input.
3. Encourage and look for opportunities through the consultation process to build a collaborative environment and reach consensus about issues amongst community members with divergent views.
4. Evaluate and determine the need to provide the community and other interested stakeholders with different levels of detail and access to background information in order to allow for opportunities to provide 'informed' input.
5. Use the Inter-Governmental Advisory Committee (IAC) to provide opportunities for discussion and feedback on the proposed changes from staff representing 'affected local governments' and Provincial agencies.
6. Ensure a range of opportunities for community input is provided.

6 APPROACH

As such, it is essential and in keeping with the Guiding Principles of the RDN Public Consultation/Communication Framework that *"Anyone likely to be affected by a decision ...have opportunities for input into that decision"*. This Consultation Plan provides opportunities for those with an interest in the RGS Minor Amendment process to share their views with RDN representatives.

As this amendment involves a change to the RGS with region-wide implications, consultation opportunities must be provided to all residents of the region. Furthermore, the RDN is also required to consult with affected local governments, First Nations, school district boards, improvement district boards, and Provincial and Federal governments and their agencies.

This section describes the different methods that will be used to provide information and opportunities to engage community members.

A. Public Access to Information

For community members to be able to provide “informed input” on whether or not they support the proposed changes to the RGS, they first need to receive information on why this amendment is being proposed at this time. Without this information it will be difficult for community members both locally and regionally to understand the short and long term benefits/challenges of approving changes to the RGS.

The ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ (FAQs) will be developed to provide answers to questions that are anticipated and information that is key to helping community members understand and evaluate the proposed amendment.

The RDN will ensure that information is available, opportunities are provided to ask questions, and receive feedback.

1. Background Information – Hard Copy

Information on the proposed amendments will be available for review at the main RDN office and the offices of the member municipalities.

2. Background Information – Website

A section on the RDN website will be created to provide information on the proposed amendment. Documents related to the proposed amendment will be accessible on the web page, along with staff reports and RDN Board motions. This web page will be a vehicle for providing ongoing information on the amendment including where the amendment process is at, meeting notices and any new information.

3. Media Releases

Media releases will be used as appropriate to provide information about the proposed amendment and opportunities for community consultation.

4. RDN Website Notices/Twitter/Facebook

The RDN website notices page (<http://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms.asp?wpID=852>) will be used as another vehicle to update the community on activities related to the RGS amendment process. Use of Facebook and Twitter will also be used as appropriate.

5. RDN Newsletters

Where possible, RDN Perspectives (<http://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms.asp?wpID=452>) will be used to provide information and updates on the amendment. Electoral Area Directors will also be provided the option of providing this information in their own newsletters (<http://www.rdn.bc.ca/cms.asp?wpID=319>).

6. Advertising

Local newspapers will be used to advertise public meetings and public hearings related to this amendment.

7. RDN Staff Availability

RDN staff will be available to answer enquiries and meet with interested people or groups to discuss the proposed amendment.

Public Engagement & Feedback Opportunities

1. Public Meeting

One public meeting will be held on the amendment. This meeting will provide opportunities for residents and other stakeholders to find out more information on the amendment and provide feedback.

2. Public Hearing

Public hearings are formal meetings that provide opportunities for those who consider themselves impacted to have their views heard and recorded. Unlike a public meeting, a public hearing does not provide opportunities for back and forth dialogue between RDN elected officials, staff and those attending/presenting their views.

Should the RDN Board give First and Second Readings to the bylaws to amend the RGS then the next step in the public consultation process will be to hold a public hearing on the amending bylaw.

The *Local Government Act* allows the RDN Board to choose whether or not it holds a public hearing for RGS amendments. Given the potential implications for this amendment it is recommended that the RDN include a public hearing on the RGS amendment in the consultation process.

3. Ongoing Ways for the RDN to Receive Comments and Feedback

In addition to the opportunity to provide feedback at the public meeting and public hearing, those wishing to provide feedback on this amendment can at any time provide written comments to the RDN by e-mail, mail, or in-person. Community members and other stakeholders may also appear as delegations or submit comments on the amendment to the RDN Board or committees of the Board.

This communication will be documented as part of the public record on this amendment and will be made available for review. It should be noted that the RDN Board will not be able to consider any correspondence / feedback received after the end of a scheduled public hearing.

7 ACTIVITIES AND TIMING

The table below shows the proposed timing of different consultation activities and identifies the roles and responsibilities of the RDN. The timing of consultation activities will depend upon the RDN Board approval of the Consultation Plan during October 2015. The level of community interest on this application will determine whether or not there is a need for more consultation opportunities than those outlined in this Plan.

Consultation Activities Up To Board Approval to Proceed		
Activity	Date	Lead
Meeting with staff from member municipalities to discuss amendment.	April 24, 2015	RDN staff
Develop draft Consultation Plan and staff report.	June, 2015	RDN staff
Present Consultation Plan and staff report to Committee of the Whole (COW).	July 14, 2015	RDN staff
Directors Briefing	October 13, 2015	RDN staff
RDN Board supports amendment proceeding through review process (resolution to initiate process to amend the RGS).	October 27, 2015	RDN Board
RDN Board approve Consultation Plan.	October 27, 2015	RDN Board
Required initiation letters sent to 'Affected Local Governments', First Nations and the Minister.	November, 2015	RDN staff
RDN Website updated with information on process.	November, 2015	RDN staff
Provide updates on the process via web page and other media as appropriate and available.	Ongoing	RDN staff

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Consultation Activities following RDN Board Approval of Consultation Plan			
	Activity	Date/Ongoing	Lead
	IAC meeting to discuss application.	January, 2016	RDN staff
	Sustainability Select Committee	January, 2016	RDN Staff
	Provide updates on the process via e-mail alerts and other media (FB, Twitter, Website, RDN Perspectives, Area Updates) as appropriate and available.	Ongoing	RDN staff
	Public Information Meeting on proposed RGS amendment.	February, 2016	RDN staff
	Compile and analyze results from input received. Prepare staff report on next steps based on consultation results.	February, 2016	
	Consultation results and staff report presented to COW.	March, 2016	RDN staff
	Recommendations from COW on consultation results and First and Second reading of bylaw to amend the RGS go to RDN Board.	March, 2016	COW
	If the RDN Board decides <u>not to proceed</u> with the process at this point (by not giving the bylaw to amend the RGS First and Second reading) then the consultation process stops at this point.	March, 2016	RDN Board
	Provide community with updates on consultation results via web page and other media as appropriate and available.	Ongoing	RDN staff
Board Gives Proposed Bylaw First and Second Reading (decides to continue with bylaw amendment process - public hearings and required referrals)			
	Activity	Completed/ Ongoing	Lead
	Public Hearing on proposed bylaw amendments.	April, 2016	RDN staff
	Prepare report on results of Public Hearing.	April, 2016	RDN staff
	Take proposed bylaws for third reading.	May, 2016	RDN staff
	Referral for acceptance to 'affected local governments' - 60 days to respond.	May – July, 2016	RDN staff
	As per RDN Board direction, adopt bylaw amendments to RGS.	July, 2016	RDN staff
	Update website, prepare insert for RDN Perspectives, Area Updates with information on outcome of Board decision.	August, 2016	RDN staff

8 BUDGET

The staff time, materials and other resources (printing, advertising, hall rentals etc.) needed to implement this Consultation Plan are included in the 2015 and 2016 Long Range Planning Department budget.

9 STAFF RESOURCES

File Manager

The RDN file manager for this application is the Senior Planner reporting to the Manager of Long Range Planning.

Planning Staff Time

The 2015 and 2016 Long Range Planning Budget does account for staff time and resources for this amendment.

Corporate Communications

The RDN's Corporate Communications Coordinator has reviewed and provided comment on this Consultation Plan to ensure it is consistent with the RDN's Communication Policies and that it is coordinated with other communications and consultation initiatives scheduled by the RDN for 2015 and 2016.

APPENDIX A

Legislated Amendment Process for the Regional Growth Strategy – Initiated by RDN

