



ELECTORAL AREA UPDATE

AREA 'B' | GABRIOLA & SURROUNDING ISLANDS

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Taxi Saver Program

The RDN is looking into the feasibility of providing a Taxi Saver Program for Electoral Area B, as a number of residents are interested in this service. In particular,

there is interest in a system that can accommodate low-income seniors as well as people with disabilities.

Currently, handyDART clients (individuals who have a disability that is sufficiently severe that the person is unable to

use conventional transit service without assistance) are eligible for the RDN Transit Taxi Saver, which provides a 50 per cent subsidy towards the cost of taxi rides. Eligible individuals can purchase a \$60 package of Taxi Saver coupons at a cost of \$30.

Recently, RDN Transit staff discussed with BC Transit whether there is flexibility to expand the Taxi Saver Program to include low-income seniors. BC Transit indicated that, in terms of eligibility, people who would like access to Taxi Saver need to be eligible for handyDART and need to be registered with the system. A Taxi Saver Program can be implemented in Electoral Area B, but would have to be a part of an expansion of the current RDN handyDART service.



Director
Howard Houle



If the current RDN handyDART service expanded to include Electoral Area B, it would not be able to accommodate low-income seniors at this time. In order to have a system that can accommodate low-income seniors as well as people with disabilities, an Electoral Area B-funded Taxi Saver would need to be established and bylaws would need to be developed. Electoral Area B voters would also be required to give their approval for this new service.

The estimated cost to develop a service area establishment bylaw for the creation of a Taxi Saver service for Gabriola Island would cost between \$5,000 and \$15,000 depending upon the method for obtaining voter approval.

Rainwater Harvesting Best Practices Guidebook

This October the RDN published a valuable resource for residents who wish to learn more about the benefits and opportunities of rainwater harvesting. The Rainwater Harvesting Best Practices Guidebook is an information source specific to the RDN's location and climate, and a practical tool for RDN residents interested in building their own rainwater harvesting systems or working with professionals to do so.

Rainwater harvesting (RWH) is the collection and storage of rainwater for potable and nonpotable uses. With proper controls in place, harvested rainwater can be used for irrigation, outdoor cleaning, flushing toilets, washing clothes, and even drinking water. Replacing groundwater with rainwater for these uses takes pressure off of sensitive ecosystems. Stored rainwater provides an ideal source of water, particularly during long dry summers or in locations experiencing declining groundwater levels. Capturing, storing, and using rainwater where it falls can slow down or eliminate storm water runoff and reduce energy consumption compared to wells. >



highlights

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For more information, to receive a copy of the *Rainwater Harvesting Best Practices Guidebook*, or to suggest topics for future green building guidebooks, please call the RDN Energy and Sustainability Department at 250-390-6510 or 250-954-3798, or email sustainability@rdn.bc.ca. The *Guidebook* is also available at rdn.bc.ca under **Services/Energy and Sustainability**.

The 2007 RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Plan and RDN Watershed Snapshot Report 2010 identify increased population, dropping groundwater levels in certain areas, and stressed ecosystems as reasons to promote rainwater harvesting in the region. In response to this need, the *Rainwater Harvesting Best Practices Guidebook* encourages the responsible use of rainwater as a safe, sustainable water source for private residences.

RWH systems are capable of producing clean, high quality water, provided they are correctly designed, constructed, and maintained. **It is important to remember that residents should always consult professionals when planning and constructing their RWH systems, especially for potable RWH systems.**

Presently, no single set of Provincial or Federal regulations addresses the collection, storage, purification and disinfection of rainwater. The *Guidebook* is a best practices resource for those interested in building a RWH system. After reading the *Guidebook*, residents and professional practitioners will better understand how different RWH systems are put together, how they function, and the effort required to maintain them.

The *Guidebook* is intended as the first in a series of annual green building guidebooks. Check the RDN website often to learn more about this and other green building initiatives.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The Regional District of Nanaimo, in partnership with the City of Parksville, the Town of Qualicum Beach and the District of Lantzville has been awarded a provincial planning grant from the Community Charging Infrastructure Fund and the Fraser Basin Council. The funding will be used to identify ideal locations for Level II Electric Vehicle Charging Stations across the region. This allows each of the local government partners to identify appropriate locations for charging infrastructure within their boundaries, to work with prospective charging station hosts to prioritize 12 sites over the fall of 2012, and to install charging stations at each of those sites, ready for use by March 31, 2013. With an appropriate location and willing station host, additional funding will be available to cover up to 75 per cent of the cost to purchase and install an electric vehicle charging station in this Electoral Area.



Level II charging stations are capable of fully charging electric drive vehicles in three to eight hours. The RDN is looking for charging station locations that are accessible to residents and visitors,

and where vehicles are usually parked for three or more hours.

The provincial government funding provided through the Community Charging Infrastructure Fund has enabled the RDN to start planning for a future that includes electric vehicle use by residents and visitors to the Region, and we look forward to continued collaboration with the Province and the Fraser Basin Council on this important initiative. Gabriola Island is a tourism destination, and by providing charging infrastructure, the RDN aims to encourage a more sustainable travel option within our communities.

For more information about this initiative, you may contact the RDN Energy and Sustainability Department at 250-390-6510 or 250-954-3798. In addition, the Province has provided an online Electric Vehicle Toolkit, available here: <http://www.livesmartbc.ca/incentives/transportation/EV-toolkit.html>

707 Community Park Signs

Going for a walk in the park is even more relaxing now that community volunteers, Gabriola Land and Trails Trust members and RDN staff have finished installing signage in the 707 Community Park. In accordance with the 707 Community Park Management Plan, RDN staff and community members collaborated on the park signage to create an accurate, comprehensive trail-way finding system including trail names, markers and maps.

Animal Control

As a result of a significant amount of public feedback regarding animal control, RDN staff have been directed to explore amendments to the animal control bylaw that could include muzzling any animal deemed to be dangerous to the public. Any recommendations made by staff will be presented to the RDN Board for consideration.

