

## **Important Initiatives Underway in the RDN's Planning Department**

The Regional District of Nanaimo's (RDN) Planning Department has several important initiatives to share with the public. The department provides zoning, development management, and planning administration services in Electoral Areas A, C, E, F, G and H. It is often the first point of contact for property owners, buyers and developers with land use questions.

### **Active Zoning and Official Community Plan Applications are online now**

With the current restrictions on public gatherings and a desire to provide the public with improved access to development-related information, the RDN is now providing early and ongoing opportunities for online engagement. The public can access zoning and Official Community Plan (OCP) application information online and can ask questions, provide feedback, and interact with RDN staff from the comfort of their homes by visiting [getinvolved.rdn.ca/rdn-planning](http://getinvolved.rdn.ca/rdn-planning) and clicking on the applicable application link. Also, keep your eyes open for application-specific links that are now included within our development application notices. These are published in local newspapers and mailed to adjacent property owners and tenants as part of the development review process. Please note: the online engagement tool enhances, but does not replace the traditional public hearing which is typically required as part of a zoning or Official Community Plan amendment.

### **RDN Receives Funding for Social Needs Assessment and Strategy**

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN), in partnership with the City of Nanaimo, Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee, Town of Qualicum Beach and the District of Lantzville, has received funding for a social needs assessment strategy. Beginning in the fall of 2020 and working with community organizations and individuals with lived experience in poverty, the social needs assessment and strategy will identify actions local governments and community partners can take to improve the wellbeing of residents and reduce local poverty.

The RDN Board identified the need for a social needs assessment during the development of the Strategic Plan in 2019. This project builds on the recently completed Regional Housing Capacity Assessment, the Regional Childcare Assessment to be completed later in 2020, and existing inventories of social supports in the region. The project received \$125,000 in funding from BC's Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the program is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities.

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### **2019 Regional Growth Strategy Annual Report**

The 2019 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Annual Report was presented to the RDN Board in June and is now available on the website at [rdn.bc.ca/rgs-annual-reports](http://rdn.bc.ca/rgs-annual-reports). The RGS guides land use planning and servicing by establishing a coordinated approach to foster socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development. Monitoring of 22 indicators determines if targets are being achieved. With fifteen indicators showing either positive progress or remaining stable, the state of growth management in the region is strong and progressing in a positive direction towards achieving the shared vision for a more sustainable region.

Some notable highlights in 2019 include positive gains in the mix of housing types and the number of properties earning income from farming. Longer-term trends show continued positive gains in transit ridership and in the reduction of water usage, despite an increase in the number of residents.

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