

## **RDN Receives Grant to Enhance Development Applications Process**

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce \$457,000 in approved grant funding to upgrade the RDN's development application processing technology through the Local Government Development Approvals Program. The technology upgrade is essential to developing a more robust and efficient application process. It will enable the RDN to better serve residents and businesses seeking building and development approvals, from the pre-application phase to the issuance of the permit, from the planning, building, bylaw and engineering departments.

"We understand the need for individuals and businesses alike to receive a timely response to their applications and inquiries," said Tyler Brown, RDN Chair. "The grant enables the RDN to conduct a strategic needs assessment to find the best technological solution to respond to the hundreds of applications received each year. The assessment phase of the project will ensure priorities identified by the public are addressed while also confirming technical and implementation requirements can be met."

Development varies widely across urban and rural areas, from single-family homes and multi-story residential buildings to industrial sites and commercial developments. As one of the most urbanized regional districts in British Columbia, the RDN processes over 700 building permits, zoning amendments, development permits and subdivision applications annually. The number of complex development applications and inquiries is increasing, further highlighting the need for an improved application and review process.

As part of the technical requirements, the RDN will be seeking a system that can assist the RDN in improving the efficiency of the development approval process and allow the public to submit applications and review the status of their applications online at any time. In addition to these process efficiencies, the move to electronic records will also improve cost efficiencies as the need to store high volumes of paper records will diminish over time.

The project will commence in November 2021 and is anticipated to be completed by early 2023. The Local Government Development Approvals Program is funded by the Province of BC and the Government of Canada under the Safe Restart Agreement. The purpose of the program is to support best practices and innovative approaches to development approvals processes while meeting planning and policy objectives.

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