

AGENDA

MEETING NO. 16

October 24, 2024

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VISION

“A World of Opportunities
Within Our Region”

MISSION

“We Will Foster Social,
Environmental, and
Economic Opportunities
Within Our Diverse Region Through
Effective Leadership”



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

AGENDA

Thursday, October 24, 2024

First Nations Acknowledgement

| <u>PAGE NO.</u> | <u>CALL TO ORDER</u> | <u>ACTION</u> |
|-----------------|--|----------------|
| | <u>AGENDA – October 24, 2024</u> | Approve |
| | <u>SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA</u> | Receive |
| | <u>MINUTES</u> | |
| 6-14 | Board Meeting Minutes – October 10, 2024 | Approve |
| 15-18 | Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes -October 10, 2024 | Receive |
| | <u>ELECTORAL AREA PLANNING</u> | |
| | <u>Bylaws for 3rd Reading</u> | |
| 19-29 | Cameron Kral, Planner Rezoning Application RZ-A-02-24 3 rd Reading Report Bylaw No. 2061 -Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) | Recommendation |
| | <u>Development Variance Permit</u> | |
| 30-39 | Cameron Kral, Planner Development Variance Permit A-03-24 -Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) | Recommendation |
| | <u>Other</u> | |
| 40 | Advisory Planning Commission -Minutes Oct 7, 2024 - Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) | Receive |

| <u>PAGE NO.</u> | <u>ADMINISTRATION REPORTS</u> | <u>ACTION</u> |
|------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 41-77 | Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer -Responsible Conduct Framework for Local Government Elected Officials | Direction |
| 78-79 | Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services – Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in the Nechako Watershed Workshop -November 29, 2024 – Prince George, BC | Recommendation |
| 80 | Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services – Future Fuels Forum -January 13-14, 2025 – Prince George, BC | Recommendation |
| 81 | Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services – BC Natural Resources Forum -January 14-16, 2025 – Prince George, BC | Recommendation |
| 82-125 | Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services – Departmental Quarterly Reports -3rd Quarter | Receive |
| 126-129 | Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Services – Items to be brought forward to the public agenda from Special (In-Camera) Meeting | Receive |
| 130-131 | Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – Ministry of Citizens' Services Application to the CRTC | Receive |
| 132-169 | Jason Blackwell, Regional Fire Chief – <i>Fire Safety Act</i> | Receive |

| <u>PAGE NO.</u> | <u>ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE</u> | <u>ACTION</u> |
|------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 170 | Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club – Thank You Letter | Receive |
| 171-172 | Ministry of Agriculture and Food - Shavings Supply Shortage | Receive |
| 173-174 | Ministry of Housing – 2024 UBCM Follow-up | Receive |
| 175 | Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship – 2024 UBCM Follow-up | Receive |

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

VERBAL REPORTS AND COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

RECEIPT OF VERBAL REPORTS

NEW BUSINESS

IN-CAMERA MOTION

That this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c), 90(1)(l) and 90(2)(b) of the *Community Charter* for the Board to deal with matters relating to the following:

- Labour Relations
- Strategic Plan
- First Nations MOU

ADJOURNMENT

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**MEETING NO. 15****Thursday, October 10, 2024**

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--|
| PRESENT: | Chair | Mark Parker |
| | Directors | Gladys Atrill Shane Brienens – via Zoom - arrived at 10:30 a.m. Leroy Dekens Martin Elphee Judy Greenaway Clint Lambert Linda McGuire Kevin Moutray Chris Newell Michael Riis-Christianson Stoney Stoltenberg Sarrah Storey – arrived at 10:02 a.m. Henry Wiebe |
| | Director Absent | Shirley Moon, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural) |
| | Alternate Director | Alex Kulchar, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural) |
| | Staff | Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services John Illes, Chief Financial Officer Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development -via Zoom – arrived in person at 11:00 a.m., left at 11:22 a.m. Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services |

CALL TO ORDER Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

FIRST NATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

World Mental Health Day Chair Parker recognized October 10th as World Mental Health Day 2024 and acknowledged mental health in the workplace.

AGENDA & SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Atrill

2024-15-1 “That the Board Meeting Agenda of October 10, 2024 be approved; and further, that the Supplementary Agenda be dealt with at this meeting.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Board Meeting Minutes
-September 26, 2024

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Elphee

2024-15-2

"That the Board Meeting Minutes of September 26, 2024 be adopted as amended."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ELECTORAL AREA PLANNING

OCP Amendment and
Rezoning Application C-01-24

Moved by Director Greenaway
Seconded by Director Elphee

2024-15-3

"That the Board receive the Director of Planning's OCP Amendment and Rezoning Application C-01-24 memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

ELECTORAL AREA PLANNING

OCP Amendment and
Rezoning Application C-01-24

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
Seconded by Director Storey

2024-15-4

1. "That the staff report on pages 19 – 36 of the regular agenda regarding RZ C-01-24, and the Nak'azdli Whuten referral response, be received by the Board.

2. That staff send the Nak'azdli Whut'en referral response to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy to address the concerns regarding watercourse disturbance.

3. That staff send the Nak'azdli Whut'en referral response to the Minister of Lands, Water and Resource Stewardship and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure with the request that they investigate the closure of the road through DL 1087 which has been used by the public and First Nations for the last 50 years."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Land Referral

Crown Land Application
Referral No. 6409504
Electoral Area A (Smithers/
Telkwa Rural)

Moved by Director Stoltenberg

Seconded by Director Dekens

2024-15-5

"That the comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application No. 6409504."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Pipeline Referral

Gosnell Creek South Multi-Use
Site Permit Extension

Moved by Director Newell

Seconded by Director Lambert

2024-15-6

"That staff be directed to inform Enbridge that the Board's January 26, 2018 letter remains valid and contains the RDBN's comments in regard to Pacific Trails Pipeline Projects permit extension applications notifications for Pacific Trails Pipeline Project facilities."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding the status of various pipelines in the region. Staff will bring forward a report providing the status of pipelines in the region.

Other

Fraser Lake Foreshore
Integrated Management
Plan (FIMP)

Moved by Director Storey

Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

2024-15-7

"That the Board receive the Director of Planning's Fraser Lake Foreshore Integrated Management Plan (FIMP) memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- Village of Fraser Lake review of the FIMP
- RDBN staff review of the FIMP in relation to the RDBN Official Community Plan
- Currently staff are not making recommendations regarding development permit regulations

Other (Cont'd)

- Potential for FIMP's for salmon bearing lakes in the region
- On-site sewage disposal systems
 - o Enforcement
 - o Staffing implications
 - o Property owner quality reports
 - o Staff are not recommending at this time
 - o Northern Health's jurisdiction
- Importance of lake management and balance of natural habitat
 - o Advocacy
 - o Updating the Guidelines for Responsible Waterfront Development
 - o FIMP is an information sharing tool
- Water samples to provide a baseline
 - o Some lakes currently have water sample testing being conducted by other agencies
 - o Water quality for lake animals vs. humans
- Shoreland Development Strategy – 2009 includes a detailed summary of lakes in the region
- Consider communal boat launches.
- Public education regarding lake health and foreshore management
- Aligning policies and bylaws to ensure the future management of lakes

BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

Bylaw Notice Enforcement
Bylaw and Dispute
Adjudication Registry

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
Seconded by Director Atrill

2024-15-8

1. "That the Board receive the attached draft Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw and Dispute Adjudication Registry Agreement.

2. That the Board direct staff to refer the draft bylaw and agreement to RDBN member municipalities for comment, and report back to the Board with recommendations regarding adoption of the Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw."

Opposed: Director Lambert
Director Newell
Director Stoltenberg

CARRIED

(All/Directors/Majority)

BYLAW ENFORCEMENT (CONT'D)

Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning provided an overview of the Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw and Dispute Adjudication Registry memorandum. Discussion took place regarding:

- Issuing tickets if a joint adjudication system is in place between a municipality and the Regional District
- All other enforcement action remains applicable
- Tickets can be issued more frequently if required
 - o An unpaid ticket by a person may be taken to a collection agency
- Communication with Electoral Area Directors and the Board regarding issues arising such as unsightly premise concerns.

PARKS AND TRAILS

Round Lake Project Update

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
 Seconded by Director Dekens

2024-15-9

"That the Board support the allocation of up to \$50,000 of Growing Communities Funds towards the Archaeological Impact Assessment for the Round Lake Park project, and that the work be directly awarded to WSP Canada Ltd."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding costs of an archaeological assessment and the steps that prompt an archaeological assessment. The Board discussed:

- Advocacy through a resolution to UBCM to address archaeological assessments of lands that have a high level of disturbance
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure right of way archaeological assessment guidelines and policies.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

Director Riis-Christianson removed himself from the meeting at 11:29 a.m. due to a conflict of interest in relation to the Lakes District Legacy Grant because of his employment with the Lakes District Museum Society.

Lakes District Legacy Grant
-Lakes District Museum
Society

Moved by Director McGuire
Seconded by Director Wiebe

2024-15-10

"That the Lakes District Museum Society be given \$13,000 in Lakes District Legacy funding for a permanent art collection."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director Riis-Christianson returned at 11:30 a.m.

Grant in Aid for Areas B
(Burns Lake Rural) and E
(Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)
-Lakes District Family
Enhancement Society

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
Seconded by Director Lambert

2024-15-11

"That the Board approve allocating \$3,544 in Electoral Area B (Burns Lake Rural) and E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural) Grant in Aid monies (split 50/50) to the Lakes District Family Enhancement Society for repairs to the freezer at The Link Food Center."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Ride Burns Mountain Biking
Association – Letter of
Support Request

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Wiebe

2024-15-12

"That the Board provide a letter to the Ride Burns Mountain Biking Association to support its application to the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Smithers Golf and Country
Club – Letter of Support
Request

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Atrill

2024-15-13

"That the Board provide a letter to the Smithers Golf and Country Club to support its funding applications for the Smithers Golf Course Clubhouse Renovation project."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS (CONT'D)

Items to be brought forward to the public agenda from Special (In-Camera) Meeting Moved by Director Lambert
 Seconded by Director Atrill

2024-15-14 "That the Board receive the Deputy Director of Corporate Services Items to be brought forward to the public agenda from Special (In-Camera) Meeting memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE

Ministry of Tourism, Arts Culture and Sport Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
 Seconded by Director Storey

2024-15-15 "That the Board receive the correspondence from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport regarding Name Change of Geographical Features in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and Kitimat-Stikine Deadline Extension."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Director McGuire commented that she will reach out to the Nedut'en Hereditary Chiefs to ensure they are aware of the information regarding the name change of geographical features.

The Board indicated that the following comments be included in its response to the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport:

- That signage contains both the traditional name and current name
- The need for outreach to all First nations in the area of the name change and that the feedback from the First Nations be provided to local governments
- Future correspondence to include a complete distribution list of all stakeholders contacted.

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

ADMINISTRATIVE CORRESPONDENCE

Investment Agriculture
Foundation – Agriculture
Water Infrastructure
-Stream 3 (AWP) Decision Letter

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

2024-15-16

"That the Board receive the Investment Agriculture Foundation – Agriculture Water Infrastructure – Stream 3 (AWP) Decision Letter."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

Canadian Rural & Remote
Broadband Conference
November 3-5, 2024
-Kelowna, B.C.

Moved by Director Lambert
Seconded by Director Newell

2024-15-17

"That the Board authorize Director Riis-Christianson's attendance at the Canadian Rural & Remote Broadband Conference November 3-5, 2024 in Kelowna, B.C."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2024 Mental Health and
Addictions Symposium
-November 13-14, 2024
-Prince George

Director Greenaway noted that North Central Local Government Association, Lheidli T'enneh, City of Prince George and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George are co-hosting a 2024 Mental Health and Addictions Symposium November 13-14, 2024 in Prince George.

2024 Mental Health and
Addictions Symposium
-November 13-14, 2024
-Prince George

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Lambert

2024-5-18

"That the Board authorize Rural Director's attendance at the 2024 Mental Health and Addictions Symposium on November 13-14, 2024 in Prince George."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Granisle Emergency Training

Director McGuire thanked Christopher Walker, Emergency Services Manager and Rowan Nagel, GIS Technician for providing an emergency training exercise in Granisle.

IN-CAMERA MOTION

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Storey

2024-15-19

"That this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c), 90(1)(e), 90(1)(k) and 90(2)(b) of the *Community Charter* for the Board to deal with matters relating to the following:

- Labour Relations
- Land Acquisition
- Future Service Provision
- Connectivity."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Newell

2024-15-20

"That the meeting be adjourned at 11:32 a.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate
Services

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING****Thursday, October 10, 2024**

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--|
| PRESENT: | Chair | Clint Lambert |
| | Directors | Judy Greenaway Chris Newell Mark Parker Stoney Stoltenberg Michael Riis-Christianson |
| | Director Absent | Shirley Moon, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural) |
| | Alternate Director | Alex Kulchar, Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural) |
| | Staff | Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – left at 3:05 p.m. John Illes, Chief Financial Officer – arrived at 2:20 p.m. Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning |
| | Others | Kevin Moutray, District of Vanderhoof – left at 2:48 p.m. Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle – left at 3:10 p.m., returned at 3:15 p.m. Martin Elphee, District of Fort St. James |

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lambert called the meeting to order at 2:15 a.m.

AGENDAMoved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director GreenawayRDC.2024-6-1

“That the Rural/Agriculture Committee Agenda for October 10, 2024 be approved.

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes
-June 6, 2024

Moved by Director Newell
 Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2024-6-2

"That the minutes of the Rural/Agriculture Committee meeting of June 6, 2024 be approved."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORT

Community Works Funds and Regional Grant in Aid

Moved by Director Greenaway
 Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2024-6-3

1) "That the Committee recommend that the Board approve in principle allocating up to a maximum \$724,000 annually from the RDBN's Community Works Fund allocation to the Environmental Services Capital Budget in the 2025-2029 draft financial plans.

2) That the Committee direct staff to develop an amended Grant in Aid Policy and new Community Works Fund Allocation Policy that reflects the changes to the program and recommends alternative actions if the full Grant in Aid balance is not spent annually."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- Flexibility for rural directors to utilize funding with fewer criteria limitations
- Creating greater flexibility to support more areas and projects
- Revisit funding allocation yearly through the budget process
- Staff will bring forward Environmental Services Capital Budget, Community Works Funds and RBA Funding for discussion in November
- Providing consistent tax rates for taxpayers
 - Providing information to the taxpayer and not for profits regarding various grant funding policies and allocations
 - Proactive approach to utilizing funds
- Funding allocation
 - Year over year
 - Administrative reserves
 - Board decision on use of administrative reserves
 - Budget process to allow funding to be allocated to not for profit societies
- Staffing considerations

REPORT (CONT'D)

- Proposed amended Grant in Aid Policy
 - o Increasing CAO approval spending authorization
- Intention that all funding sources will be fully allocated and/or spent with no net decrease in taxation in five years
- Prioritizing support for societies
- Previous Community Works Fund agreement will have to be spent on eligible projects by 2029
 - o Staff will provide a list of committed projects
- Inter government transfer of funds where eligible
- Transferring funds to administrative reserves
 - o Will have the ability to transfer to grant in aid between electoral areas
- Regional District Grant in Aid will replace electoral area grant in aid
- Alcan grant in lieu will not be available under the proposed model for Electoral Areas D and E
- Staff will bring forward information through the 2025 budget process.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Transit Service – Rural Contribution Options: 2025 Budget

Discussion took place regarding the following:

- 2025 Budget contribution options
 - o \$90,000 requisition including all municipalities
 - o \$115,000 maximum requisition including all municipalities except Telkwa
 - o \$115,000 maximum requisition including all municipalities except Telkwa and all electoral areas according to population
 - o \$115,000 maximum requisition including all municipalities except Telkwa and all electoral areas in the amount of \$2,500
- Municipalities, as participants determine the maximum requisition
- Transportation for vulnerable populations
- Telkwa's withdrawal from the service
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Electoral Area C is willing to provide funding of \$2,500
- Electoral Area Directors can consider other options to support the service as they are currently not participants in the service such as grant in aid and RBA funding
- Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) transit service and contributions
- Transit Agreement with the Province expires spring 2025
- Utilizing capital reserves for 2025/2026 to fund transit
- Municipalities are considering the Regional Transit Bylaw at upcoming Council meetings

DISCUSSION ITEM (CONT'D)

Transit Service – Rural Contribution Options: 2025 Budget (Cont'd)

- Electoral Area Directors grant funding consideration:
 - o Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural) - \$4,000
 - o Electoral Area B (Burns Lake Rural) - \$4,000
 - o Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) - \$2,500 or utilize RBA administration funding allocation in the amount of \$2,500 for each Electoral Area totaling \$17,500
 - o Staff will follow up with Rural Directors.

NEW BUSINESS

Illegal Dumping

Alternate Director Kulchar brought forward concerns regarding illegal dumping in the Vanderhoof area. CAO Helgesen noted that staff is working to gather information.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Greenaway
 Seconded by Director Newell

RDC.2024-6-6

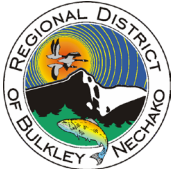
"That the meeting be adjourned at 3:42 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Clint Lambert, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director
 of Corporate Services



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Cameron Kral, Planning Technician
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: **Rezoning Application RZ A-02-24**
Third Reading for Rezoning Bylaw No. 2061, 2024

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

1. That the Board receive the Report of the Public Hearing for "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rezoning Bylaw No. 2061, 2024".
2. That "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rezoning Bylaw No. 2061, 2024" be given third reading.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application proposes to amend the Agricultural Zone (Ag1) in Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020 by adding an Abattoir as a permitted use on the subject property to allow the development of a poultry processing facility that can process more than 25,000 lbs (25 AUs) of live weight annually. The proposal aligns with Smithers Telkwa Rural Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1704, 2014 and the applicant has received conditional Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Non-Farm Use approval to have a poultry processing facility within a 1.8 ha area of the subject property. The proposed facility must meet provincial and/or federal slaughter licensing requirements.

Planning Department staff recommend Bylaw No. 2061, 2024 receive third reading.

Pursuant to Section 52(3)(a) of the *Transportation Act*, the proposed bylaw requires approval from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure after third reading and prior to adoption as the property is within 800 m of an intersection on Highway 16.

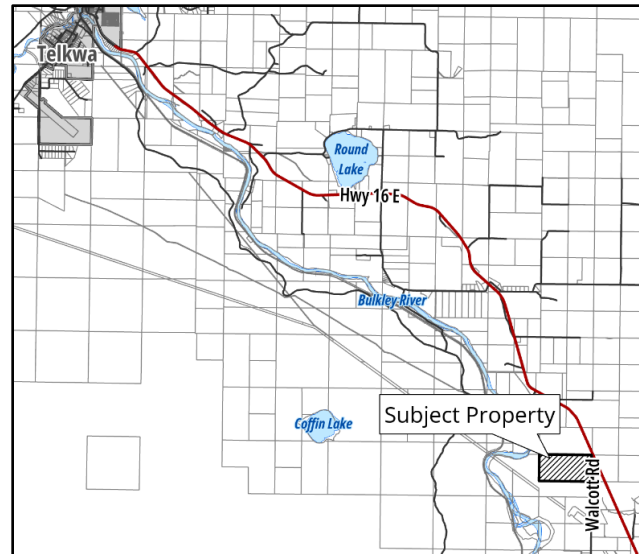
APPLICATION SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Name of Agent/Owner: | Paul Murphy |
| Electoral Area: | Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural) |
| Subject property: | 21641 Walcott Road, legally described as District Lot 1147, Coast District, except Plan 8572 (PID 006-491-251) |
| Property size: | 128.6 ha (318.0 ac) |
| OCP Designation: | Agriculture (AG) in "Smithers Telkwa Rural Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1704, 2014" (the OCP) |
| Zoning: | Agricultural (Ag1) in "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020" (the Zoning Bylaw) |
| Building Inspection: | Within the Building Inspection area |
| Fire Protection: | Not within a Fire Protection area |
| Existing Land Use: | Residential, Agriculture and Restaurant |
| Location: | Walcott Road, off Highway 16, approximately 17 km south of the Village of Telkwa (see Location Map below) |

Location Map:

PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to amend the Agricultural Zone (Ag1) in the Zoning Bylaw by adding an Abattoir as a permitted use on the subject property. The purpose of the proposal is to facilitate the development of a poultry processing facility that can process more than 25 AUs of live weight annually. It is noted the proposed amendment will not limit slaughtering on the property to only poultry.



The applicant anticipates the poultry processing facility will consist of two 12.2 m (40 ft) shipping containers for processing, one 6.1 m (20 ft) shipping container for freezing processed poultry, a building containing staff washrooms and a lunchroom, and an enclosed structure for composting feathers and eviscerated non-edible materials using aspen wood chips. Liquid waste from the processing facility is proposed to be treated in an on-site septic system (see Site Map on next page).

The poultry processing facility is expected to operate under a provincial FarmGate Plus license which would allow the slaughtering of up to 25 AUs of live weight annually.

However, the applicant has indicated they may pursue a provincial Abattoir licence which does not impose a limit on the amount of slaughtering (see Slaughter Licensing on page 5).

The applicant also intends to locate a farm retail store on the property which they indicate would be a permitted farm use in the ALR.

Property Map



Site Map



DISCUSSION

Official Community Plan (OCP) and Zoning

The subject property is designated **Agriculture (AG)** under the OCP which has the following objectives:

- (1) To protect and preserve farm land and soil having agricultural capability.*
- (2) To encourage the expansion and full utilization of land for agricultural purposes.*
- (3) To support the objectives of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission.*
- (4) To encourage a diversity of agricultural uses and opportunities, as well as innovative agricultural practices.*

Section 3.1.2. under the AG designation lists the following policy relevant to the application:

- (1) Agriculture and other compatible uses of land may be permitted.*

In staff's opinion, the proposed rezoning is consistent with the AG designation and an OCP amendment is not required.

The subject property is zoned **Agricultural (Ag1)** pursuant to the Zoning Bylaw. On September 12, 2024 the Board adopted Bylaw No. 2037 which amended the Intensive Agriculture definition in the Zoning Bylaw to permit parcels 2.0 ha (4.94) ac or larger to slaughter up to 25 AUs annually to align with provincial licensing. However, the proposed rezoning is still required to slaughter more than 25 Animal Units under a provincial Abattoir License.

ALC Non-Farm Use Approval

The applicant has received conditional ALC Non-Farm Use (NFU) approval for a poultry processing facility to process poultry beyond the ALC's 50 per cent threshold for processing poultry not raised on the subject property, a kitchen to prepare food products slaughtered on the property for sale, and gravel parking for three to four vehicles. These uses are limited to a 1.8 ha area, the property must retain farm status, and a portion of the animals processed in the slaughter facility must be raised on the subject property (see attached ALC Decision).

Slaughter Licensing

Slaughter establishments in B.C are either federally licensed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations or provincially licensed. Provincially licensed slaughter establishments are only permitted to sell their product within B.C.

Provincial licensing for slaughter establishments is done under the Meat Inspection Regulation of the *BC Food Safety Act* and must comply with The Code of Practice for Licensed Abattoirs. Waste disposal for slaughter establishments is regulated under the Environmental Waste Discharge Regulation of the *Environmental Health Act* and must comply with the Code of Practice for the Slaughter and Poultry Processing Industries.

Table 1. Provincial licensing for slaughter establishments

| B.C License Type | Permitted Activities | Annual Processing Amount | RDBN Zoning Bylaw |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Farmgate License | Slaughter (own animals only) | 1 – 5 AUs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture use (must be reared on same parcel) • Intensive Agriculture use |
| Farmgate Plus License | Slaughter (own animals and custom slaughter for other producers) | 1 – 25 AUs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture use (must be reared on same parcel, up to 10 AUs) • Intensive Agriculture use |
| Abattoir License | Slaughter (own animals and custom slaughter for other producers) | Unlimited | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abattoir use |

Staff Comments

Staff's primary concern is smell from onsite composting. The closest dwelling is across Walcott Road approximately 250 m from the proposed site. Three other dwellings are within 500 m, and one other is within 1 km. A community mailbox is located on Walcott Road approximately 100 m from the proposed slaughterhouse facility.

There is a notable amount of equipment and materials storage on the subject property located southwest of the proposed slaughter facility that the applicant indicates are for farm, personal, and home occupation use. Staff note the applicant also operates a mobile food truck as a restaurant to provide food and beverage service, and as a mobile kitchen to process meat and prepare food products for retail sale. The applicant indicated the food truck has not been operating on the property prior to summer 2024 and they intend to replace it with their future farm retail store.

The ALC stated they have no concern with the use of the food truck to process meat from animals slaughtered on the property; and retail sales are a farm use if either all products are produced on the farm, or the retail sales area does not exceed 300 m² and 50 per cent of that area is exclusively for farm products produced on the property. However, the use of the food truck as a restaurant does not comply with the RDBN Zoning Bylaw or ALR Use Regulation and the ALC has stated they are not amenable to permitting any type of food service through the applicant's ALC NFU application (see attached ALC Decision).

REFERRAL RESPONSES

The **Electoral Area A Advisory Planning Commission** unanimously supported the application at their August 6, 2024 meeting.

Regarding the applicant's ALC NFU application, the **RDBN Agricultural Coordinator** stated *"my only comment is that the proposed non-farm use outlined in the application could potentially help to maintain and grow agriculture production within the regional district"*.

The **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** is prepared to sign the proposed Bylaw after third reading pursuant to section 52(3)(a) of the *Transportation Act*.

The **Ministry of Environment and Climate Change** provided the attached response regarding provincial authorization requirements for poultry slaughterhouses in B.C.

The **Ministry of Agriculture and Food** provided the attached letter supportive of the proposal.

Northern Health Authority stated they do not have the capacity to review and respond to referral requests of this nature. If the applicant intends to open a store or do cut and wrap services, they must apply for a food operating permit per Section 8 of the *Food Premises Regulation*.

Wet'suwet'en First Nation provided the attached letter stating *"With respect to the above project, although our review has been constrained by time and insufficient technical resources, the Wet'suwet'en First Nation has not identified any unacceptable impacts that the development as presented would have on our Indigenous rights and title"*.

No referral response was received by the **Village of Telkwa**, the **District of Houston**, **Witset First Nation**, and the **Office of Wet'suwet'en** at the time of writing this report.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing for proposed Bylaw No. 2061, 2024 was held on Thursday, October 3, 2024. The report of the Public Hearing is attached.

ATTACHMENTS

- Bylaw No. 2061, 2024
- Reason for Application
- Report of the Public Hearing for Bylaw No. 2061, 2024
- [Public Hearing Documents \(Link\)](#)
- [Site Visit Photos \(Link\)](#)
- [Referral Responses \(Link\)](#)
- [Reasons for Decision – ALC Application 100666, August 21, 2024 \(Link\)](#)



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
BYLAW NO. 2061, 2024

A Bylaw to Amend "Regional District of
Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020"

The Board of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako in open meeting enacts as follows:

That "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020" be amended such that the following be added to the list of Permitted Uses for the Agricultural Zone (Ag1) in Section 16.0.1(1) Principal Uses:

"Abattoir only on the parcel legally described as District Lot 1147, Range 5, Coast District, Except Plan 8572."

This bylaw may be cited as "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rezoning Bylaw No. 2061, 2024".

READ A FIRST TIME this 12th day of September 2024.

READ A SECOND TIME this 12th day of September 2024.

PUBLIC HEARING HELD this 3rd day of October 2024.

READ A THIRD TIME this _____ day of _____, 2024.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rezoning Bylaw No. 2061, 2024".

DATED AT BURNS LAKE this _____ day of _____, 2024.

Corporate Administrator

Approved pursuant to section 52(3)(a) of the *Transportation Act*
this _____ day of _____, 20____

for Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2024.

Chairperson

Corporate Administrator

4. REQUESTED AMENDMENT

Proposed
Amendment to
Zoning Bylaw:

ESTABLISH A POULTRY PROCESSING FACILITY ON OUR A61 D/L 1147 PROPERTY
WHICH REQUIRES A ZONING CHANGE TO HAAGEN

Proposed
Amendment to
OCP:

Reason for Application:

(Describe the reason for the application. If the application is to allow a proposed new land use or development, describe that use and / or development. Also discuss why you consider the proposed use and / or development to be appropriate for the land under application. Attach separate pages to the application, or a letter as necessary.

WE ARE SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION TO BE ABLE TO OPERATE A POULTRY SLAUGHTER FACILITY ON OUR FARM PROPERTY. AS THIS IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERED A 'NON FARM USE', WE WILL REQUIRE PERMISSION FROM THE ALC AS WELL AS RE-ZONING FROM THE A61. THE TELKWA RED MEAT AND POULTRY SLAUGHTER-HOUSE RECENTLY CLOSED PUTTING EXTREME PRESSURE ON US AND OTHER PRODUCERS. WHILE THE OLD PLANT IS RUMORBA TO BE RE-OPENING, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE POULTRY PORTION WILL RE-START WITHOUT MAJOR INVESTMENT. THE OLD PLANT WAS CLEARLY NOT MEETING LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEMAND FOR POULTRY PROCESSING EVIDENCED BY THE NECESSITY TO BOOK OVER SIX MONTHS IN ADVANCE, SHORT NOTICE CANCELLATIONS OR DATE CHANGES. WE ALSO WANT TO OBTAIN ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FOR THE FACILITY SO WE CAN FINALLY MARKET OUR BIRDS AS 'ORGANIC' RATHER THAN 'ORGANICALLY RAISED'. THIS FACILITY WILL PROVIDE POULTRY PRODUCERS WITH A NEW, EFFICIENT, AND COST EFFECTIVE OPTION FOR THEIR POULTRY PROCESSING NEEDS.

5. APPLICATION FEES

An application fee as set out in Schedule A to the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Development Procedures Bylaw No. 1898, 2020 must accompany this application. An application is not considered complete and cannot be processed until the required application fee and information has been received by the Regional District.

Fees can be paid by cheque, interact debit card, or cash.

- Cheques should be made to the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and delivered to the attention of the Planning Department by mail to Box 820, Burns Lake, BC, V0J 1E0; or at the RDBN office, 37-3rd Ave, Burns Lake, BC.
- Interact debit card or cash payments can be made at the RDBN office, 37 3rd Avenue, Burns Lake, BC.

The following fees are required: Check the box that applies to your application

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment | \$1,000 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zoning Bylaw Amendment | \$1,000 + 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Combined OCP and Zoning Bylaw Amendment | \$1,500 |

*Please note that the fee for an application to legalize an existing bylaw contravention is increased by an additional 50%.

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
REPORT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR BYLAW NO. 2061**

Report of the Public Hearing held at 7:00 pm, Thursday, October 3, 2024 by Zoom video/conference call regarding "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rezoning Bylaw No. 2061, 2024".

ATTENDANCE:

Members of the Public:

Paul Murphy, 21641 Walcott Rd Road (Applicant)

Public Hearing Chair:

Stoney Stoltenberg, Director, Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

RDBN Staff:

Cameron Kral, Planning Technician (Recording Secretary)

CORRESPONDENCE: No written submissions to this Public Hearing were received.

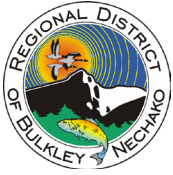
CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chair Stoltenberg at 7:00.

BUSINESS:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Chair Stoltenberg | Chair Stoltenberg provided an overview of Bylaw No. 2061 and the Public Hearing process. Chair Stoltenberg stated that the Public Hearing package is available on the Regional District's website and the chat section in Zoom. |
| Chair Stoltenberg | Asked the applicant Paul Murphy if they had any comments. |
| Paul Murphy | Stated they do not have any comments. |
| Chair Stoltenberg | Asked if anyone else would like to provide comments. No comment received. |
| Chair Stoltenberg | Asked for any additional comments a first time. No comment received. |
| Chair Stoltenberg | Asked for any additional comments a second time. No comment received. |
| Chair Stoltenberg | Asked for any additional comments a third and final time. No comment received. |
| Chair Stoltenberg | Adjourned the Public Hearing at 7:05 PM |


Stoney Stoltenberg, Chairperson


Cameron Kral, Recording Secretary



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Cameron Kral, Planner
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: **Development Variance Permit Application No. A-03-24**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board approve Development Variance Permit (DVP) A-03-24 for the subject properties located on Old Babine Lake Road, to vary Section 16.0.3.1 of "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020" by reducing the minimum Parcel area that may be created by subdivision from 16 ha to 8 ha for Proposed Lot 1 to permit the proposed boundary adjustment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application is for a Development Variance Permit (DVP) to reduce the minimum parcel area that may be created by subdivision in the Agricultural Zone (Ag1) from 16 ha (39.5 ac) to 8 ha (19.7 ac) to facilitate a boundary adjustment between two existing parcels and accommodate some flexibility in the final subdivision design.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Approving Officer has the authority to approve a boundary adjustment in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) without the Agricultural Land Commission's (ALC) approval if the proposed plan in the opinion of the Approving Officer, "will allow for the enhancement of farming on the owner's agricultural land or for the better use of structures used for farming".

Staff have no objections to the reduced minimum parcel area and recommend the permit be approved. The proposal does not increase the maximum density of the subject properties and staff anticipate the provincial Approving Officer will ensure the proposed boundary adjustment will enhance the agricultural use of the lands.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Name of Agent/Owner: Russell Buri

Electoral Area: A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

Subject Properties: **Property 1**, legally described as the West ½ of District Lot 1195, Range 5, Coast District, Except Parcel A (see J10999), Plans 6801, BCP24965, BCP32740 and EPP1500 (PID 015-104-362)

Property 2, legally described as Lot B, Sections 4 and 5, Township 2A, Range 5, Coast District, Plan EPP3487 (PID 027-979-610)

Property Sizes: **Property 1:** 16.2 ha (40.0 ac)
Property 2: 23 ha (56.8 ac)

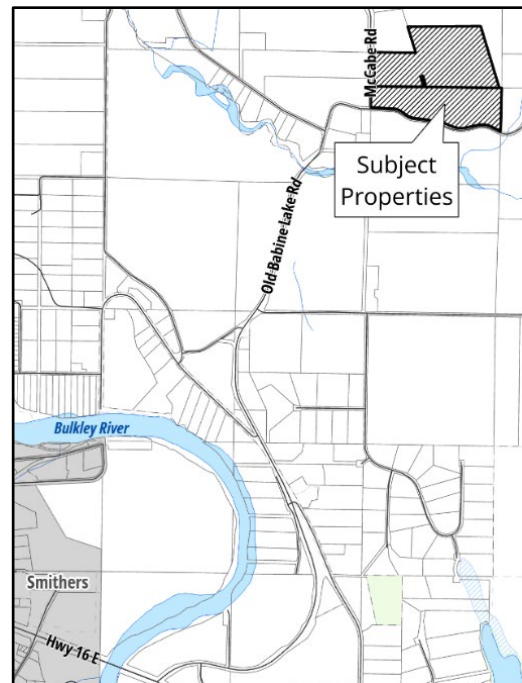
Proposed Parcel Sizes: **Proposed Lot 1:** ≈8.47 ha (20.9 ac)
Proposed Lot 2: ≈29.1 ha (71.6 ac)

OCP Designation: Agriculture (AG) in “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Smithers Telkwa Rural Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1704, 2014” (the OCP)

Zoning: Agriculture (Ag1) in “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020” (the Zoning Bylaw)

ALR Status: Within the ALR

Location: Unaddressed West ½ of District Lot 1195 and 6440 Old Babine Lake Road, approximately 2.6 km northeast of the Town of Smithers



PROPOSAL

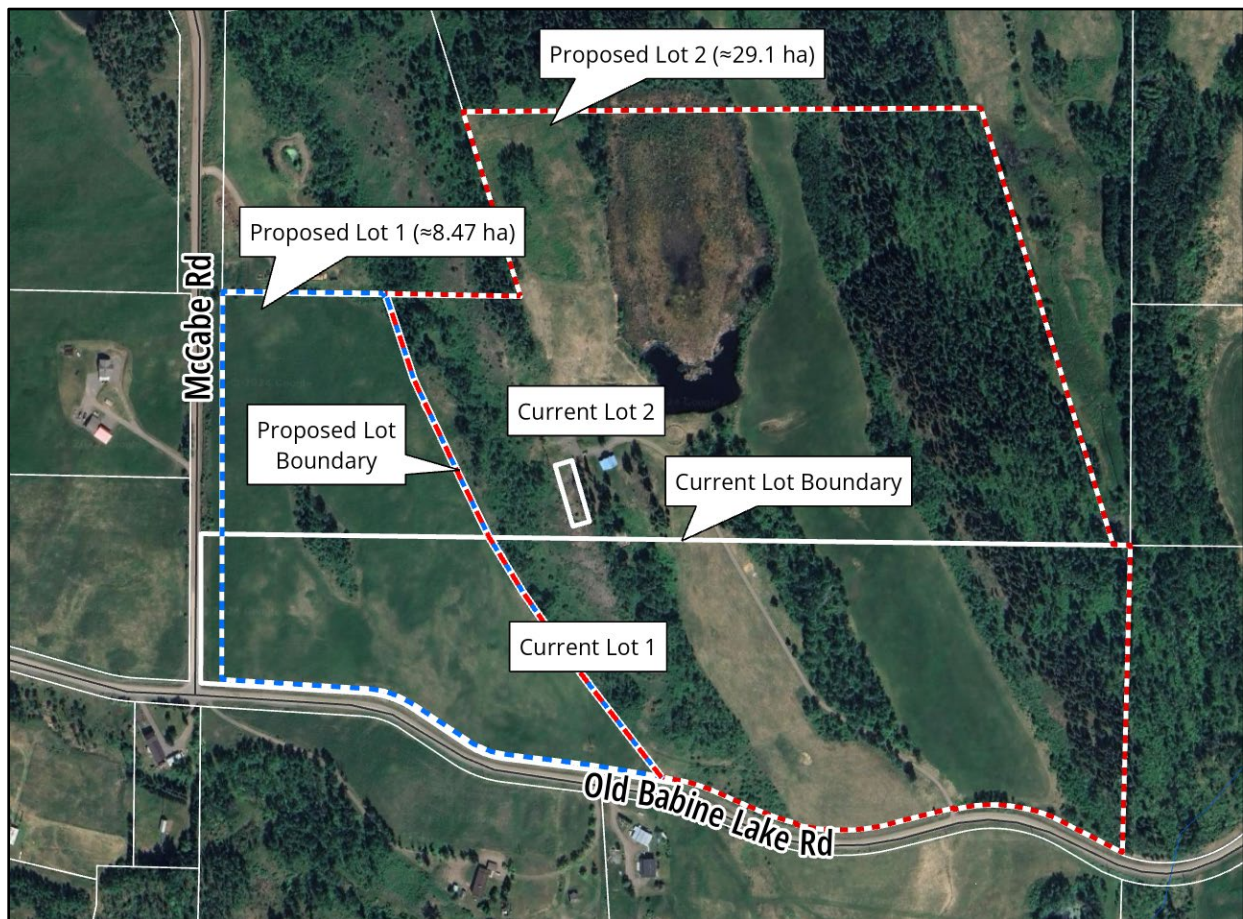
This application proposes varying section 16.0.3.1 of “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw 1800, 2020” by reducing the minimum parcel area that may be created by subdivision from 16 ha (39.5 ac) to 8 ha (19.7 ac) for Proposed Lot 1. The purpose of the application is to facilitate a boundary adjustment between the subject properties by realigning the current east-west boundary to north-south as divided by a natural ridge line (see Site Plan on next page).

The applicant anticipates a parcel size of approximately 8.47 ha (20.9 ac) for Proposed Lot 1 and approximately 29.1 ha (71.6 ac) for Proposed Lot 2. However, the applicant has requested a minimum parcel area of 8 ha (19.76 ac) for Proposed Lot 1 to accommodate some flexibility in the final subdivision design.

The applicant provided the following reasons for the proposed variance and boundary adjustment:

- To preserve the agricultural integrity of the three fields on the properties by ensuring the fields are no longer divided in half by the current parcel boundary (see Site Map below).
- To resolve potential future boundary and access issues between the subject properties by placing the existing septic lagoon and driveway entirely on the same parcel as the existing residence on Property 2.
- The proposed boundary adjustment follows a natural ridge line separating the lower field on Proposed Lot 1 from the middle and upper fields on Proposed Lot 2.

Site Map



DISCUSSION

Land Use

The subject properties share three farm fields that are divided in half by the current parcel boundary. The applicant owns both properties and rents the fields for agricultural use. Property 1 contains the lower half of the three field and is otherwise vacant. Property 2 contains a residence, workshop, barn and the upper half of the three fields. The septic lagoon and driveway for the residence are located on both sides of the parcel boundary between the subject properties (see attached Applicant Submission).

A parcel of Crown Land (Lot 1, Section 4, Township 2A, Range 5, Coast District, Plan 4085) approximately 0.08 ha (0.21 ac) in size is located adjacent to the existing residence. The applicant indicates this parcel was for a communications tower which has been abandoned since the late 1960s. This 0.08 ha parcel is not part of the application.

Zoning

Both parcels are zoned Agriculture Zone (Ag1) pursuant to the Zoning Bylaw. The minimum parcel size in the Ag1 Zone is 16 ha (39.5 ac). The proposed boundary adjustment is anticipated to result in Proposed Lot 1 being approximately 8.47 ha (20.9 ac). Therefore, a Development Variance Permit is required for Proposed Lot 1.

Official Community Plan

Both parcels are designated Agriculture (AG) under the OCP. It is the intent of this designation to protect and preserve farm land and soil having agricultural capacity, and facilitate the appropriate utilization of that land for agricultural purposes. The following AG policies are relevant to the proposal:

- 3.1.2(3) *A minimum parcel size of 16 hectares (39.5 acres) is supported. Applications to permit smaller parcels may be considered where the requirements of Section 3.4.2(9) are met [Staff note 3.4.2(9) only applies to rezoning applications to allow parcels smaller than 1.6 ha (4 ac) to a minimum size of 0.4 ha (1 ac)], and the proposed subdivision will not have a net negative impact on the agricultural use of the lands being subdivided, or surrounding agricultural lands.*
- 3.1.2(8) *The voluntary consolidation of legal parcels which form part of the same farm unit will be encouraged. Boundary adjustments and consolidations which permit more efficient use of arable land for agricultural purposes will also be supported.*
- 3.1.2(9) *The subdivision of lands that form viable farm units is discouraged unless there is a clear benefit to agriculture.*

Staff intend to present to the Board an amendment proposal to the OCP in the future to clarify that the intent of Section 3.1.2(3) is for applications to allow parcels smaller than 16 ha (39.5 ac) to be considered under Section 3.4.2(8), while applications to allow parcels smaller than 1.6 ha (4 ac) to a minimum size of 0.4 ha (1 ac) continue to be considered under Section 3.4.2(9).

Previous ALC Subdivision Application

The previous property owner applied for a three-lot subdivision with the ALC in 2018. The RDBN Board of Directors denied authorizing the application be forwarded to the ALC because the properties are zoned and designated for agriculture. The application was not supported by the Planning Department, Area A APC and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MoAF) because it would have increased the maximum residential density of the lands.

MoTI Application

The applicant has applied to MoTI for subdivision under Section 3 of the Agricultural Land Reserve General Regulation. The RDBN and MoAF recommended MoTI consider requiring a restrictive covenant on Proposed Lot 1 to only allow residential infrastructure in an area not used for agricultural purposes. The Provincial Approving Officer stated they will not require the recommended covenant as the proposed boundary adjustment would not increase residential density and neither the RDBN or the ALC would act as the covenant Transferee.

Staff Comments

The proposal does not increase the maximum residential density of the subject properties and staff anticipate the provincial Approving Officer will ensure the proposed boundary adjustment will enhance the agricultural use of the lands. Staff have no objections to the reduced minimum parcel size and recommend the permit be approved.

REFERRAL RESPONSES

The **Electoral Area A APC** unanimously supported the application at their October 7, 2024 meeting.

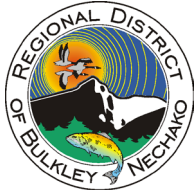
Responses from the **Ministry of Agriculture and Food** and the **RDBN Agricultural Coordinator** were not yet received at the time of writing this report. Any responses received will be included on the supplemental agenda.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

All property owners within 100 m of the subject properties were provided written notice of this application and given an opportunity to comment on this application in writing. Any written submissions will be made available at the Board meeting on October 24, 2024

ATTACHMENTS:

- Development Variance Permit A-03-24
- Applicant Submission
- [Site Visit Photos \(Link\)](#)



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

DEVELOPMENT VARIANCE PERMIT NO. A-03-24

ISSUED TO: Russell Buri
 PO Box 2373
 Smithers BC, V0J 2N0

WITH RESPECT TO THE FOLLOWING LANDS:

The West ½ of District Lot 1195, Range 5, Coast District, Except Parcel A (See J10999), Plans 6801, BCP24965, BCP32740 and EPP1500 (PID 015-104-362) and Lot B, Sections 4 and 5, Township 2A, Range 5, Coast District, Plan EPP3487 (PID 027-979-610) (the "Lands")

1. This Development Variance Permit varies Section 16.0.3.1 of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020 by reducing the minimum Parcel area that may be created by subdivision from 16 hectares to 8 hectares for Proposed Lot 1.
2. This variance applies only to the subdivision of the subject properties in general accordance with the plan shown on Schedule A, which forms part of this permit.
3. In accordance with Section 503 of the *Local Government Act*, notice of this Development Variance Permit shall be filed in the Land Title Office. Once filed, the terms of this Development Variance Permit shall be binding upon all persons who acquire an interest in the lands affected by this permit.
4. If the subject properties have not been subdivided within 4 years from the date of this permit's authorizing resolution, this permit shall lapse.
5. This permit does not relieve the owner or occupier from compliance with all other bylaws of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako applicable thereto, except as specifically varied or supplemented by this permit.

AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION passed by the Regional District Board

this ____ day of _____, 2024.

PERMIT ISSUED on this ____ day of _____, 2024.

 Corporate Administrator

37

Proposed Lot 2

Proposed Lot 1

Proposed Lot 1 minimum
parcel size varied to 8 ha

McCabe Rd

Old Babine Lake Rd



DVP A-03-24: Schedule A

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

Produced: 10/9/2024

Proposed Lot 1: 8 ha

0 25 50 100 150 200



Meters

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

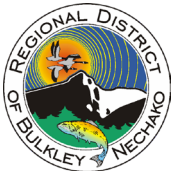


BUILDINGS & USES



**Advisory Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes**

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Electoral Area A | Meeting Date: Monday Oct 7, 2024 | Meeting Location: Virtually via Zoom | | |
| Attendance | | | | |
| <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <u>APC Members</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natalie Trueit-MacDonald <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Posthuma <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sandra Hinchliffe <input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Watson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alan Koopman </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <u>Electoral Area Director</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director Stoney Stoltenberg <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate Trevor Krisher <u>Other Attendees</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cameron Kral, Planner, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Danielle Patterson, Senior Planner, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Russell Buri <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leigh Norton </td> </tr> </table> | | | <u>APC Members</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natalie Trueit-MacDonald <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Posthuma <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sandra Hinchliffe <input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Watson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alan Koopman | <u>Electoral Area Director</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director Stoney Stoltenberg <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate Trevor Krisher <u>Other Attendees</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cameron Kral, Planner, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Danielle Patterson, Senior Planner, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Russell Buri <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leigh Norton |
| <u>APC Members</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natalie Trueit-MacDonald <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Posthuma <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sandra Hinchliffe <input type="checkbox"/> Andrew Watson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alan Koopman | <u>Electoral Area Director</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director Stoney Stoltenberg <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate Trevor Krisher <u>Other Attendees</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cameron Kral, Planner, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Danielle Patterson, Senior Planner, RDBN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Russell Buri <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leigh Norton | | | |
| Chairperson: Sandra Hinchliffe | | Secretary: Natalie Trueit-MacDonald | | |
| Call to Order: 7pm | | | | |
| <u>Agenda</u> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 15%;">7:00 pm</div> <div style="width: 85%;">DVP A-03-24</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 15%;">7:15 pm</div> <div style="width: 85%;">TUP A-01-23</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 15%;">7:30 pm</div> <div style="width: 85%;">ALR 1273</div> </div> | | | | |
| Applications (Include application number, comments, and resolution) 7-7:18pm – DVP A-03-24 – Russell Buri – APC recommends approval 7:18pm – 7:30pm – TUP A-01-23 – Leigh Norton – West Fraser – APC recommends approval 7:30pm – 7:50pm – ALR 1273 – Jason Llewellyn - Round Lake Hall – APC recommends approval | | | | |
| Meeting Adjourned: 7:55pm | | Secretary Signature: <i>NT-Mac</i> | | |



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Curtis Helgesen, CAO
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: **Responsible Conduct Framework for Local Government Elected Officials**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Direction.

BACKGROUND

At the September 2024 Union of BC Municipalities Convention, UBCM and the Local Government Management Association (LGMA) released a discussion paper titled 'Potential for Change – Responsible Conduct Framework for Local Government Elected Officials'.

UBCM and LGMA are inviting local governments to provide comments on the following questions:

- **Should the province be requested to develop legislation mandating codes of conduct modelled on established best practices for all local governments in BC?**
- **Are legislated changes needed to support code of conduct administration and enforcement?**
- **And, if so, what factors do you think are most important to the success of a new approach to code administration and enforcement?**

The deadline for providing comments is November 1, 2024.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Potential for Change – Responsible Conduct Framework for Local Government Elected Officials'
2. RDBN Code of Conduct

DISCUSSION PAPER

POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

Responsible Conduct Framework for Local Government Elected Officials

SEPTEMBER 2024



A joint Initiative of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities
and the Local Government Management Association of British Columbia



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INTRODUCTION

This *Discussion Paper* is a joint initiative of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and the Local Government Management Association of British Columbia (LGMA).

The *Paper* explores two specific, inter-related topics in recent discussions on potential changes to British Columbia's responsible conduct framework for local government elected officials:

- The idea of mandatory codes of conduct, in place of voluntary codes, for local governments, and
- The models that exist, or that could be developed, to support the administration and enforcement of responsible conduct standards set out in local government codes of conduct.

Resolutions to UBCM over the past seven years have consistently called for additional tools to promote responsible conduct and enforce responsible conduct standards. Included in the resolutions has been a request for a province-wide integrity or ethics commissioner office for local government. This paper explores the underlying issues that have prompted these calls for action, and identifies key considerations for determining how to best address the issues. The paper aims to broaden and inform discussion; it does not recommend policy.

Consultation for the *Paper* included separate discussions with two focus groups, one of which featured local elected officials, the other a mix of chief administrative officers, corporate officers and other senior staff. Interviews with past and present Integrity Commissioners, local government staff, a Municipal Advisor appointed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and others were also conducted. Research was undertaken to understand responsible conduct frameworks in other provinces, and to assess the range of approaches taken to promote responsible conduct, investigate alleged breaches of codes of conduct, resolve conduct issues, and enforce codes through the application of sanctions.

WORKING GROUP ON RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

The *Discussion Paper* builds on the efforts to date of the staff-level Working Group on Responsible Conduct for

Local Government Officials in British Columbia. The Group, which includes representatives of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, UBCM and LGMA, was established in 2016 in response to a UBCM resolution that called on the provincial government to enable local governments to appoint integrity commissioners. In 2017, the Group delivered a policy paper at the UBCM Convention on the key components of an effective framework to support responsible conduct. In subsequent years, resources and tools to strengthen the framework were developed, including a set of foundational principles, a model code of conduct for local government elected officials, a scenario-based online training course, and guidance for local governments on how to prevent conduct issues from arising, and deal with issues that do arise.

DISCUSSION PAPER FORMAT

The *Discussion Paper* is divided into three sections. Section one provides an overview of British Columbia's current responsible conduct framework. Section two outlines a set of resolutions endorsed by the UBCM membership in recent years. This section includes a discussion on the desire for further change to address perceived gaps in the framework that remain. Section three explores the case for mandatory codes of conduct, and considers three different models for code of conduct administration and enforcement. Each of the models is designed to enable the provision of advice and education on responsible conduct, to assist in resolving responsible conduct concerns, to investigate alleged breaches of responsible conduct, and to support the enforcement of codes of conduct in cases of actual breaches.

The full text of the UBCM resolutions noted in section two are provided in *Appendix I*. A preliminary discussion of mandatory education is provided in *Appendix II*. The resources created in recent years by the Working Group are presented in *Appendix III*.

CURRENT FRAMEWORK

This section profiles British Columbia's current responsible conduct framework for local government elected officials. In general, the framework recognizes the autonomy of local governments in British Columbia to select and design tools that local governments themselves feel are important to have in place.

The Province provides the legislative authority that municipalities and regional districts need to take action, and encourages local governing bodies to embrace certain tools, such as codes of conduct. Guidance is also provided (including through the Working Group on Responsible Conduct) to assist local government officials in their efforts to learn about the framework and the expectations inherent in it. This table provides an overview of the existing framework. Individual elements identified in the box are outlined separately in this section.

| ELEMENTS OF THE CURRENT FRAMEWORK | |
|---|---|
| Foundational Principles | Four principles to guide behaviour |
| Oath or Affirmation of Office | Required under Community Charter, Local Government Act, Vancouver Charter Elected officials who do not take the oath are disqualified from taking office |
| Codes of Conduct | Cornerstone of framework, but optional Guidance provided by Working Group on best practice codes |
| Independent Investigators | Ability to retain independent investigators, and to appoint autonomous integrity commissioners |
| Education | Widely recognized as essential to promotion of responsible conduct Identified in many existing codes as sanctions to correct poor conduct |
| Broader Legislative Context | Responsible conduct part of a broader legislative framework to address related concerns |
| Resources on Responsible Conduct | Various resources exist to guide local governments in efforts to promote responsible conduct, and to resolve instances of poor conduct |

Foundational Principles

The foundational principles are intended to guide the conduct of individual elected officials and the collective behaviour of the governing body (i.e., the municipal council or regional district board). Four principles underlie the current framework in British Columbia:

- **Integrity** — Elected officials with integrity conduct themselves honestly and ethically. They are open and truthful in their dealings, protective of confidentiality, and work to avoid conflicts of interest and perceived conflicts.
- **Accountability** — Accountable officials accept responsibility for their own behaviour and for decisions they make as individuals. They accept the collective

responsibility of the governing body for decisions made.

- **Respect** — Respect means valuing the perspectives, wishes and rights of others, including other elected officials, staff members and the public.
- **Leadership and Collaboration** — Elected officials need to demonstrate an ability to lead, listen to, and positively influence others. They need to come together to create or achieve collective goals.

These principles are integrated with and reflected in other parts of the framework, including the oath of office, the legislated requirement to consider the adoption or updating of a code of conduct, and the model code of conduct.

Oath of Office

The *Community Charter* (s. 120), *Local Government Act* (s. 210) and *Vancouver Charter* (s. 140), require that every local government elected official in British Columbia take an oath or make an affirmation of office within 45 days following election. Each local government may, by bylaw, establish its own oath. Where no bylaw has been created, officials must use the oath prescribed in BC Reg. 137/2022 (*Local Government Oath of Office Regulation*). The prescribed oath — adjusted in response to a 2021 UBCM resolution

— requires officials to swear that they are qualified to hold office, will abide by the rules set out in legislation on conflicts of interest, will act in accordance with the four foundational principles, and will perform the duties of their office in accordance with the law.

Any elected official who does not take the oath within the prescribed time is disqualified from holding office.

Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct are documents that set out shared expectations for elected official behaviour. The *Community Charter* (s. 113.1 and 113.2)¹ and *Vancouver Charter* (s. 145.93 and 145.94) require each local governing body to decide, within six months after its first council or board meeting post-election, whether to establish a code of conduct for elected officials, or review an existing code. In making its decision, the council or board must consider the prescribed principles for codes of conduct that are set out in BC Reg. 136/2022 (*Principles for Codes of Conduct Regulation*).²

If a council or board chooses to not establish a code of

conduct, the council or board must make available to the public the reasons for its decision. The council or board must also reconsider its decision before January 1 of the year of the next general election. If the governing body, upon reconsideration, affirms that it will not establish a code of conduct, the body must again make its reasons available to the public.

The Working Group on Responsible Conduct created a Model Code of Conduct and a Companion Guide, along with advice to support informal and formal resolutions on matters of conduct.

Investigators and Commissioners

Local governments have the ability in the current framework to retain independent investigators, and to appoint autonomous integrity commissioners, to receive and investigate complaints, facilitate the informal resolution of conflicts, manage formal resolution processes, and make recommendations to governing bodies on sanctions to apply. In British Columbia, integrity commissioners have been created by the Cities of Surrey (2020), Vancouver (2022), Maple Ridge (2024) and New Westminster (2024).³ Many municipal councils and regional district boards, however, provide for the hiring of independent third-party investigators.

The Working Group has developed guidance materials for local governments on best-practice approaches to the enforcement of codes. These materials identify the hallmarks of sound enforcement, which include the development of a thorough process for vetting and handling complaints on conduct, the identification of a range of sanctions to consider applying in the event of a breach, safeguards to ensure procedural fairness for all parties, and the use of independent third parties to conduct investigations, make determinations and recommend sanctions.

Education

Education is widely recognized as essential to the promotion of responsible conduct, and as a key part of the responsible conduct framework. The Working Group provides an online scenario-based course of the principles that guide responsible conduct. The Local Government

Leadership Academy provides training to elected officials on the factors, including responsible conduct, that enhance a local government's ability to provide good governance to its community. UBCM and LGMA also provide training, for elected officials and staff respectively, on topics related to

¹ These sections of the *Community Charter* apply to regional district boards.

² The requirements for consideration and reconsideration were introduced by the province in 2022 in response to a 2021 UBCM resolution.

³ In late July 2024, during the writing of this Discussion Paper, Vancouver City Council entertained a motion to suspend the work of the Integrity Commissioner pending an independent review of the Commissioner's scope of duties. On August 6, 2024, however, Council resolved to postpone a vote on the motion until September.

responsible conduct.

Most local governments provide orientation to their governing bodies in the months following the inaugural meeting. Governance principles and responsible conduct are typically included in orientation programs. Some local governments go further and provide regular or periodic

refresher sessions. Education is also identified in many existing codes of conduct as a form of sanction that governing bodies may impose to remedy instances of less-than-responsible conduct. A recommendation that the council or board member attend a specified training course, for example, is a feature of some codes.

Broader Legislative Context

British Columbia's current responsible conduct framework is situated within a broader legislative context that includes provincial and federal statutes designed, among other purposes, to govern elements of elected official conduct. The context includes the *Local Government Act*, *Community Charter* and *Vancouver Charter*, each of which speaks to conflict of interest matters. The context also includes the:

- *Criminal Code of Canada*
- *Ombudsperson Act*

- *Workers Compensation Act*
- *British Columbia Human Rights Code*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

Independent parties with authority under these statutes — the Office of the Ombudsperson and WorkSafe BC are examples — have spheres of jurisdiction that may compel them to act in response to issues that arise, either in place of or in advance of locally-appointed third-party investigators and integrity commissioners.

Resources on Responsible Conduct

Experienced third-party consultants and municipal lawyers are available to assist local governments with drafting codes of conduct bylaws or policies, with orientation and education efforts aimed at explaining the codes and their implications for behaviour, with investigations into complaints, and with enforcement measures. In exceptional circumstances, supported by a request (resolution) from the council or

board, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has assisted local governments by contracting Municipal Advisors to examine and provide advice address the most egregious incidences of questionable conduct. The Local Government Management Association also maintains an online database of consultants that is available to local governments.

Additional Comments

It is useful to remember that the Framework for Responsible Conduct applies specifically to local government elected officials, not to local government staff. Unlike staff who are accountable to the organizations that employ them, elected officials are accountable to the electors in the communities they serve. The Framework provides tools and resources to promote proper conduct by elected officials, and to

address incidents of poor conduct by officials, between elections. The ability of electors to judge elected officials and remove them from office at the time of election, however, will in some cases be the most effective tool for managing elected official conduct.

DESIRE FOR CHANGE

From 2016 to 2023 the UBCM membership voted on six resolutions related to British Columbia's responsible conduct framework for elected officials. All of the resolutions underscored the growing sense on the part of local governments across the province that incidents of less than responsible conduct among elected officials were becoming more prevalent and intractable. All of the resolutions spoke to a desire for change in the existing framework, and put forward specific ideas to either introduce new tools or strengthen existing ones.

This section summarizes the proposed UBCM resolutions⁴ between 2016 and 2023, along with a proposed 2024 resolution that at the time of writing has not yet been presented to or voted on by the membership. The section ends with commentary on the potential need for further change.

UBCM Resolutions

As noted, the UBCM membership voted on six responsible conduct resolutions between 2016 and 2023. The first resolution, presented in 2016, sought authority for local governments to appoint local integrity commissioners who would provide advice and education to local elected officials on conduct and codes of conduct, investigate alleged breaches to codes of conduct, and enforce codes in cases of actual breaches. This resolution, which was referred to the UBCM Executive, resulted in the creation of the Working Group on Responsible Conduct.

Three resolutions in 2021, 2022 and 2023 called on the Province to establish through legislation one or more integrity commissioner offices to advise local governments and enforce codes of conduct. All three resolutions were endorsed by the membership. A separate resolution in 2022 sought the development of a standard code of conduct that would apply to all local governments in the province. This resolution was not endorsed.

A 2021 special resolution (SR3: *Strengthening Responsible Conduct*) sponsored by the UBCM Executive asked the provincial government to:

- Require all local governments to consider the adoption or updating of a code of conduct at least once in each new term of office,
- Work with UBCM and others to develop a mandatory education model that would support responsible conduct by local elected officials,
- Update the oath of office that is prescribed by provincial regulation to embed the foundational principles of the responsible conduct framework, and
- Provide guidance to assist local governments with their own oath of office bylaws in incorporating the foundational principles into the bylaws.

An additional resolution has been endorsed by UBCM's Resolutions Committee for presentation to the membership in 2024. The resolution calls on the provincial government to establish an Office of the Municipal Government Ethics Commissioner to provide "fair and unbiased guidance" to local governments on responsible conduct matters, code of conduct violations, conflict of interest and bullying. The resolution also calls on the Province to require all new local elected officials to participate in mandatory ethics training.

⁴ The resolutions are presented in full in Appendix I.

Desire for Further Change

Local governments recognize that most elected officials endorse and seek to demonstrate appropriate behaviour. The continuing calls for additional responsible conduct tools, however, underscore the general belief that resources in the current framework are not sufficient for dealing with individuals who show little interest in understanding roles and expectations, who demonstrate little respect for their peers or for local government staff, and who appear to reject the very local government institutions that enable good governance and that they, as elected officials, are responsible for protecting.

There is a concern with the trend towards problematic elected official conduct and its impact on the ability councils and boards to function. Local governments that become mired in internal conflict may experience a loss of legitimacy in their own communities, and may see a related decline at elections in voter turnout, and in the number and diversity of candidates for election. The same local governments may also experience a decline in morale among staff and may observe a reluctance on the part of current managers to seek higher positions in their organizations. Departures of top-performing employees, and significant recruitment challenges, are additional consequences.

Local governments dealing with cases of poor conduct are increasingly calling on the provincial government to introduce new legislative requirements, and/or to provide additional tools to manage conduct matters, including tools that can be applied province-wide by a centralized body. This appeal reflects:

- A sense of frustration with the perceived lack of tools, and the resulting inability of local governing bodies to effectively address egregious examples of poor conduct;
- An awareness that the current reliance on local governments to determine their own approaches to managing conduct issues leads to significant inconsistencies among councils and boards in both the design and administration of codes of conduct;
- The concern that existing approaches to managing elected official conduct too often involve a role for local government staff, and that a reliance on staff to intervene or resolve conflict is both unfair and inappropriate;
- A concern expressed by elected officials and staff — particularly officials and staff from smaller jurisdictions — that local governments lack the resources to properly administer and enforce a responsible conduct framework; and

- A fear that codes of conduct, complete with sanctions that publicly censure elected officials for issues of conduct, can be easily weaponized when administered locally against individuals with minority perspectives.

Not all local governments, it should be emphasized, share these concerns, or believe that there is a strong case for provincial government intervention, either in the form of stronger legislation or additional tools. Some local governments take the view that the existing legislation and tools are sufficient to address matters of conduct, that local governments themselves are responsible for managing conduct issues in their governing bodies, and that cost-sharing

CALL FOR LEGISLATION

Local governments dealing with cases of poor conduct are increasingly calling on the provincial government to introduce new legislative requirements, and/or to provide additional tools to manage conduct matters, including tools that can be applied province-wide by a centralized body.

and other collaborative approaches exist to enable local governments to effectively meet their responsibilities.

The UBCM resolutions and the input provided to this *Discussion Paper* by elected officials and senior staff, however, speak to the growing perception that the current responsible conduct framework has shortcomings that prevent local governments from being able to effectively address cases of poor conduct. These shortcomings constitute gaps that UBCM and LGMA seek to understand through the exploration of mandatory codes of conduct and the consideration of different models that may be used for code administration and enforcement.

Across British Columbia and beyond, local governments are seeking effective tools to support responsible conduct. Ideas that are being advanced by some, including ideas that feature a province-wide integrity commissioner, need to be assessed carefully.

CHANGES TO CONSIDER

This section responds to concerns raised by local government elected officials and staff on the existing responsible conduct framework for local government elected officials. The text explores two specific, inter-related topics:

- The idea of mandatory codes of conduct in place of voluntary codes for local governments, and
- The models that exist, or that could be developed, to support the administration and enforcement of responsible conduct standards set out in local government codes of conduct.

The two topics are addressed separately in the section but are dependent on one another. The models for administration and enforcement focus on the standards in the codes of conduct, and therefore require codes of conduct to be in place.

An additional topic concerns responsible conduct education for elected officials. Education on principles and standards of conduct is encouraged in the current responsible conduct framework, but is not required. A change in favour of mandatory education is a point of discussion among elected officials and staff, and is a topic in need of further study. Appendix II introduces and provides an overview of the topic.

Mandatory Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct are tools created by local governments to help local government officials understand the standards of behaviour and conduct that are expected of them. Codes also exist to set out fair processes for receiving complaints about elected official conduct, investigating alleged breaches of code standards, and reporting on findings. Finally, codes are developed to hold elected officials accountable who, based on investigations, are found guilty of code breaches.

It should be emphasized that codes are not intended to prevent or impede in any way the robust exchange of views that is critical to good local governance. Codes are also not created to eliminate or stifle minority perspectives that need to be heard and taken into consideration in decision making.

When designed and administered properly, codes of

conduct help to promote a positive working environment for local elected officials to collaborate, through their collective governing bodies, in setting priorities and making decisions that benefit their communities. Council and board discussions on the creation of codes allow elected officials to explore values and relationships, roles and responsibilities, and the principles of good governance. Such discussions also help elected officials understand the potential impacts of their actions on the communities they serve. In clearly laying out standards of acceptable behaviour and conduct, codes protect councils and boards from unnecessary conflict and stress. In so doing, codes help to build public confidence in local governments and the broader local government system.

Current Approach

Codes of conduct are a cornerstone of the responsible conduct framework for elected officials in British Columbia. They are widely recognized to be both important and necessary as tools to guide the behaviour of decision-makers and, where required, hold decision-makers accountable between elections for problematic conduct that occurs.

Local governments in British Columbia are strongly encouraged to create codes, and are required to consider creating

them. The requirement for consideration takes the form of legislative amendments (2022) introduced by the Province in response to the UBCM's 2021 special resolution (*Strengthening Responsible Conduct*). These amendments require all councils and boards to consider establishing a code of conduct, or reviewing an existing code, within the first six months after their inaugural meetings. Most local governments in the province have codes of conduct in

place today.⁵

Strong encouragement and the requirement for consideration notwithstanding, codes of conduct are not mandatory for local governments in British Columbia. This approach reflects the long-standing legislative framework for local government in British Columbia which is based, to a

significant degree, on principles of local government autonomy, empowerment and accountability. Ultimately, it is the decision of each municipal council and regional district board to determine whether or not to put a code in place to guide the conduct of its members.

Approaches Elsewhere

Responsible conduct frameworks for local government elected officials in all provinces include and emphasize the importance of codes of conduct. British Columbia's framework is no different in this respect. British Columbia's framework is entirely unique in its treatment of codes as voluntary and at the discretion of individual local governments. In all other provinces, codes of conduct for local government elected officials are mandatory.

Requirements for codes of conduct in other provinces differ in their degree of prescriptiveness. In Alberta, the rules concerning codes of conduct are outlined in the province's *Code of Conduct for Elected Officials Regulation*, created in 2017 pursuant to section 146.1 of the *Municipal Government Act*. The regulation prescribes topics that must

The regulation also requires each council to review and update its code of conduct, along with any bylaws that have been incorporated by reference into the code, at least once every four years.

Saskatchewan's legislation prescribes a set of standards for codes that includes honesty, respect and confidentiality. A complaints process that must be based on principles of fairness, accessibility, responsiveness and efficiency is required. Manitoba is quite prescriptive in its approach to codes. The province prescribes, through its *Council Members' Codes of Conduct Regulation* (2020), the values on which codes must be based, the requirement to review codes every year, the list of specific sanctions to include in codes, and the specific factors that councils must consider when imposing a sanction.

Ontario's local government legislation requires every council to establish a code of conduct for its members, but does not list to any significant degree the topics to include or procedures to follow in administering the codes.⁶ Under section 223.4 (5) of Ontario's *Municipal Act*, however, the Province does prescribe and limit the range of sanctions that may be imposed. This section states that a council may impose one of two sanctions, based on a report by the integrity commissioner that the member has contravened the code of conduct:

- A reprimand, or
- A suspension of remuneration for up to 90 days.

New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have introduced requirements for local governments to implement codes of conduct with some standardized elements. By contrast, the highly prescriptive approach taken by Quebec sets out contents for local government codes, including complaint procedures and sanctions.⁷

VOLUNTARY CODES

British Columbia's framework is entirely unique in its treatment of codes as voluntary and at the discretion of individual local governments. In all other provinces, codes of conduct for local government elected officials are mandatory.

be included — others may be included at the discretion of council — along with a set of sanctions from which councils may choose to impose in cases where a council member fails to adhere to the code. The regulation requires the inclusion of a complaint system to identify who may make a complaint, and how complaints are to be investigated.

⁵ At the time of writing, 70% of local governments have codes of conducts in place. Most of these codes have been established and/or reviewed under the 2022 legislative amendments.

⁶ Ontario does have in place a short regulation titled *Codes of Conduct: Prescribed Subject Matters*. The regulation identifies four prescribed subject matters that local governments must include in their codes of conduct for local elected officials — gifts, benefits and hospitality; respectful conduct; confidential information; use of local government property.

⁷ Quebec's approach has its origins in the findings of the Commission of Inquiry on the Awarding and Management of Public Contracts in the Construction Industry (Charbonneau Commission). This Commission, which ran from 2011 to 2015, exposed significant corruption in municipal government.

EVOLVING FRAMEWORKS

One takeaway from the research conducted for this Discussion Paper is that responsible conduct frameworks in all provinces are evolving. Reviews are underway in many jurisdictions to clarify objectives and incorporate new or amended tools.

Factors to Consider

Over 70% of local governments in British Columbia have established codes of conduct despite the lack of any statutory requirement on the matter. The UBCM's 2021 special resolution (*Strengthening Responsible Conduct*) addressed the need for codes of conduct, and requested the Province to amend local government legislation to require the consideration of codes. UBCM stopped short of calling for change to make codes mandatory.

Focus group participants and individuals interviewed for this *Discussion Paper* expressed support for a change in favour of mandatory codes. The introduction of such a requirement, it was suggested, would send a strong and positive message throughout the local government community and the broader public on the importance of responsible conduct.

When determining how to proceed on the matter of required codes of conduct, implications for local government autonomy, empowerment and accountability may be important to consider. It may be argued that a change in favour of mandatory codes would conflict with the principles of autonomy, empowerment and accountability that underpin British Columbia's local government legislative framework. These principles hold that each local government, irrespective of size, should have the ability to determine for itself whether a code of conduct is needed, and if so, how it should be structured and administered.

In a spirit of collaboration, local governments routinely collaborate with one another directly and through their associations (e.g., UBCM and Area Associations) to share ideas and develop similar approaches to address key matters. Local governments also seek advice and guidance from central bodies, including UBCM, LGMA and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Collaboration and guidance aside, however, local governments retain the autonomy to determine whether and how to act in several key areas, including responsible conduct.

A ceding of autonomy over codes of conduct may be perceived as beneficial to some local governments, particularly those in which elected officials may demonstrate less than full support for codes, or even strong resistance to codes. Some local governments may feel the authority to mandate codes of conduct should rest with the Province given the Province's ultimate responsibility for the structure, integrity and proper functioning of the local government system. Decision-makers who take this position may point to the Province's requirement for elected officials to take an oath of office as a parallel situation. Finally, some local governments may highlight the mandatory nature of codes in all

provinces other than British Columbia as suggestive, if not compelling, of the need for change.

If codes were made mandatory, either in response to calls from local governments or at the initiative of the Province, factors related to the structure, content, process for developing, and use of codes would be important to explore.

CONTENT OF CODES

The Working Group has developed a model code of conduct and an accompanying guide to assist local governments in establishing a code.⁸ Several municipalities and regional districts in British Columbia have made use of this resource. Others have relied on municipal lawyers, consultants and senior staff with strong experience in responsible conduct matters to design bespoke codes that speak to local circumstances and needs.

It is possible to identify a set of contents that may be considered "best practice", and that should be considered for inclusion in all codes of conduct whether mandatory or not. The text box on the following page presents these contents. They were identified based on a review of the Working Group materials; well-crafted codes created by local governments that have been forced to combat less than responsible conduct head on; and the requirements in place in other provinces.

STANDARDIZATION OF CODES

In 2021 a municipal council in the Metro Vancouver area sponsored a resolution to UBCM in support of a "Provincial Code of Conduct for Local Government Officials". The resolution advocated the development and application of one single code for all local governments in British Columbia. The resolution was not endorsed by the UBCM membership, but did serve to highlight the attractiveness among some in local government for a common set of rules and processes to deal with responsible conduct matters.

The preference for standardization is shared by some provincial governments in other parts of Canada — and, possibly by some of the local governments in these provinces — that have adopted prescriptive approaches to codes.

There are certain topics that may be considered important for all codes of conduct as best practices. Some of these topics address expectations of behaviour and highlight specific values to guide interactions; others concern the administration of codes, stress the importance of fair process, and identify reasonable sanctions. These best practice contents suggest that there may be topics that should be included in all codes.⁹ There will be other topics, however,

⁸ Companion Guide: Getting Started on a Code of Conduct for Your Council/Board, October 2022.

⁹ The inclusion of key, best practice contents could address the current inconsistency in the quality and completeness of local government codes of conduct in British Columbia. The result of this inconsistency is a patchwork of standards of conduct — a patchwork that makes it difficult to create and enforce a common set of behavioural expectations.

that may hold special importance in only some communities, or that will speak to specific local circumstances or needs.

The process of developing a code provides the opportunity for councils and boards to consider what is most important to their own situations. The process provides the forum in which elected officials can reflect on the value of responsible conduct as an enabler of good governance, the collective responsibility of governing bodies to promote responsible conduct, and the need for governing bodies to both prevent and, where necessary, take action against instances of less than responsible conduct. The process of developing a code is important for local governing bodies to experience. A requirement in favour of mandatory codes of conduct would compel all councils and boards to experience the process and reflect on their own environments and needs. A move towards total standardization of codes, however, would impose prescribed codes on local governments that may be less reflective of local conditions.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOL

Some local governments in British Columbia that present and apply codes of conduct in the form of a policy. Most councils and boards, however, use bylaws. Bylaws, as a type of legislation, give codes of conduct and their contents greater significance and authority.

It may be argued that policies, as non-legislative tools, may be best suited to promote and enable efforts to resolve responsible conduct situations using informal, restorative means. In some local governments with strong cultures of responsible conduct, and with a strong sense within local governing bodies of collective responsibility, policies may indeed promote informal resolution as the answer and make bylaws unnecessary. Best practice codes that are created and applied as bylaws, however, also stress the importance of informal resolution as the first course of action. These bylaws recognize that informal resolution, as important as it is, may not always be enough.

APPLICABILITY

All codes of conduct are designed to apply to the local elected officials who sit on the governing body. Some codes, both in British Columbia and in other parts of Canada, go further to apply to non-elected persons who are appointed to local boards, committees, task forces, commissions and other bodies established by the local government. The value of this broader application is that it spreads the local government's expectations for proper conduct beyond the council or board table to all advisory and delegated decision-making bodies that represent and reflect on the local government. The broader application may also suggest that the standards of conduct expected of elected officials should be the same as, and no higher than, those expected of

non-elected individuals appointed by governing bodies to assist in decision-making.

The roles, powers and sources of legitimacy for elected officials are different from those which apply to non-elected committee and task force members. Non-elected officials are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governing body. Elected officials are elected and cannot, except under the most serious of circumstances, be removed from office. Codes of conduct that are exclusive to elected officials help to impress upon such officials and their communities the importance and power of elected officials, and the heightened obligation of individuals who hold office

CODES OF CONDUCT: CONTENTS TO CONSIDER

A review of Working Group resources, existing codes of conduct, and requirements in place in other provinces points to a list of contents that should be considered for inclusion in all codes of conduct. Best practice codes include sections on:

- The foundational principles of responsible conduct
- General conduct, including the need to treat others with respect and dignity
- Interactions with staff and the public
- The collection and handling of information, including information considered confidential
- The use of social media
- Conflict of interest matters
- Gifts and benefits
- Complaint procedures, including the appointment of an independent investigator to receive and/or review complaints
- The informal resolution of complaints
- Formal resolution procedures, including those related to investigation and adjudication
- Reporting on findings and recommendations
- The application of sanctions

to act responsibly in their interactions with others, handling of information, use of resources, and performance of all of their duties.

ACCESSIBILITY

Some codes of conduct in British Columbia are designed to allow complaints concerning elected official conduct to be submitted only by other local elected officials. Other codes allow complaints from staff and volunteers, as well. A few go further to allow complaints from any person, which in practice includes members of the public.

Making the codes broadly accessible may help to emphasize the importance of responsible conduct on the part of elected officials not only in their interactions with other elected officials, but also in their treatment of local government staff and in their dealings with members of the public. Allowing complaints from all of these sources, however, may risk making the process of administering codes unwieldy, or even expose the process to misuse. It should be acknowledged, as well, that the public is served by codes of conduct, even in the absence of an ability to directly submit complaints, that establish and enforce expected standards of conduct.

SCOPE OF SANCTIONS

Best practice codes of conduct emphasize the importance of informal resolution methods, such as discussions, facilitated exchanges and mediation in addressing concerns related to responsible conduct. Informal resolution efforts have the potential to help elected officials understand the impacts of certain behaviours, strengthen relationships, and foster a culture of responsible conduct that can build confidence in the governing body and, by extension, the local government system. Best practice codes also, however, contain sanctions that governing bodies may need to apply to address cases of poor conduct.

In British Columbia and some other provinces, local governments have the ability to select their own sanctions within the limits of their authority as set out in legislation.¹⁰ Most governments select a variety of measures, ranging from less severe penalties — reprimands, and requests or requirements to make apologies, are examples — to more serious remedies. Examples of more serious sanctions include removal from committees, withdrawal of access to civic offices and facilities, and reductions to remuneration. None of the current sanctions available to local governments in British Columbia are established through legislation. As a result, the range of sanctions varies considerably from one local government to the next. In many cases,

councils and boards have struggled with applying the full range of sanctions available.

Sanctions that target elected official remuneration are becoming increasingly popular in local governments across Canada, including in British Columbia. In some cases, the remuneration for elected officials who have been found by an independent investigator to have breached the code of conduct is automatically reduced for a specified period of time. Subsequent breaches trigger further reductions which may be cumulative. Such reductions may also be applied automatically to elected officials who have attempted to “weaponize” the code of conduct by submitting vexatious, frivolous, or bad faith complaints.¹¹ In other cases, suspensions of pay are not automatically triggered but may be applied as separate penalties.

The growing interest in remuneration as a target of sanctions is based on the assumption that elected officials’ pay is meaningful enough to influence behaviour. This assumption may be valid in some cases; it will not, however, be valid in all cases. CAOs and COs who participated in the staff-level focus group commented that in most local governments elected official remuneration levels are simply not high enough to serve as effective levers in establishing deterrents.

All sanctions, including ones that target remuneration, represent a form of public censure. The choice of sanction in any particular case will be based on a variety of factors, such as:¹²

- The nature of the code breach,
- Whether the elected official knowingly breached the code,
- Steps taken by the official to mitigate or remedy the contravention, and
- Whether the breach was the official’s first contravention or a repeat event.

The threat of public censure, irrespective of the exact sanction chosen, will at times serve as an effective disincentive to less than responsible conduct. In cases involving officials who have no interest in protecting local government institutions or the broader system, however, the threat of public censure may not hold great weight in and of itself. Indeed, in some of these cases, officials may use public censure as a weapon to rally supporters who feel unrepresented by the sitting governing body, or shut out of the broader system of democratic government. These same officials may, however, be impacted by sanctions that limited their ability to participate on committees, access local government offices,

¹⁰ The legislation in British Columbia and in other provinces does not give local governments the ability to eject an elected official from office, or disqualify the individual from holding office.

¹¹ The District of Squamish’s responsible conduct framework provides a useful example. The District’s Code of Conduct Bylaw references the Remuneration and Expenses Bylaw, which sets out automatic, successive and cumulative reductions in remuneration of 10%, 15% and 25% for breaches to the Code of Conduct. Each reduction applies for 12 months.

¹² In some responsible conduct frameworks, such as that in place in Manitoba, local governing bodies are required to consider specific factors when determining the appropriate sanctions to impose.

APPROACHES TO SANCTIONS IN SELECT JURISDICTIONS ACROSS CANADA

The range of permitted sanctions that may be imposed by a governing body against one of its members varies by province. British Columbia and Alberta have the broadest ranges — in both provinces, local governments have broad scope to create their own sanctions (other than removal from office). Ontario and Manitoba are examples of provinces with prescribed lists of sanctions, beyond which local governments may not venture.

British Columbia

- Request letter of apology
- Mandatory education, training, coaching, counselling
- Suspension or removal from some or all committees or other bodies
- Letter of reprimand or warning
- Publication (public censure) of reprimand or request for apology, and member's response
- Suspension or removal as deputy/acting mayor or chair
- Restrictions on representing the local government or attending events and conferences
- Limiting travel or expenses
- Limiting access to local government facilities
- Restrictions on provision of information to the member
- Reductions in remuneration (in accordance with bylaw)
- Other sanctions determined by the local government

Alberta

- Letter of reprimand
- Request letter of apology
- Publication of letter and member's response
- Mandatory training
- Suspension or removal as deputy/acting mayor or chair
- Suspension or removal from some or all committees
- Reduction or suspension of remuneration
- Other sanctions determined by the local government

Ontario

- A reprimand
- Suspension of remuneration for up to 90 days

Manitoba

- Censuring the member
- Reprimanding the member
- Requiring a letter of apology
- Mandatory training
- Suspension or removal from specific duties
- Suspension or removal from deputy mayor
- Suspension or removal from committees
- Suspension from carrying out a power, duty or function for 90 days
- Reductions in remuneration
- Imposing a fine of up to \$1,000

connect with staff, and attend events as a local government representative. These types of sanctions, which place limits on officials' ability to act, may serve as more effective deterrents to poor behaviour than the threat of public censure.

The courts have recognized the authority of local governing bodies to impose the range of sanctions featured in most codes, including sanctions that affect remuneration, on elected officials who have been found in violation of the codes. Courts do not support sanctions that aim to disqualify elected officials from office for code of conduct violations. Therefore, codes of conduct and the responsible conduct frameworks in which they rest do not include disqualification from office as a possible sanction. Even Quebec, with its highly prescriptive approach born out of concerns of corruption at the local government level, violators of codes of conduct can be suspended from holding office for a small period of time, but not disqualified. Disqualification across Canada is reserved primarily for criminal matters.¹³

THE COURTS ON SANCTIONS

The courts have recognized the authority of local governing bodies to impose the range of sanctions featured in most codes, including sanctions that affect remuneration, on elected officials who have been found in violation of the codes. Courts do not support sanctions that aim to disqualify elected officials from office for code of conduct violations.

MISUSE OF CODES

Codes are explicitly not intended to prevent or impede the robust exchange of views that is critical for good local governance. Codes are also not created to eliminate or stifle minority perspectives that need to be heard and taken into consideration in decision making. However, codes may be misused or weaponized by individuals who seek to harass or intimidate elected officials with whom they disagree.

The forums in which local governing bodies operate are inherently political. Local governments need to anticipate that attempts will be made in some situations to weaponize codes. Such attempts can be thwarted, or at least frustrated, through the use of independent third parties or integrity commissioners to carefully scrutinize complaints, and to prevent vexatious or frivolous complaints from proceeding to investigations. Provisions in codes that allow appointed third parties or commissioners to recommend sanctions against complainants, and/or to exclude such individuals from the complaints process, are important.

¹³ Conflicts of interest and other concerns are reasons for disqualification in some provinces.

Code Administration and Enforcement

Codes of conduct are a cornerstone of British Columbia's responsible conduct framework for local government elected officials. They are tools created by local governments to help local government officials understand the standards of behaviour and conduct that are expected of them. Their structure and contents are important. So too are the processes outlined within them for receiving complaints about elected official conduct, investigating alleged breaches of code standards, and reporting on findings. Sanctions, applied in cases of actual code contraventions, are in place to hold elected officials accountable between elections for less than responsible conduct.

The approaches taken to administer codes and enforce their provisions are as important to the success of codes as their content and structure.

CURRENT APPROACH

British Columbia's current system of responsible conduct empowers local governments themselves to determine how to administer and enforce their elected official codes of conduct. Across the province, local governments have chosen to use one of three approaches; in some cases, elements of different approaches are combined.

Internal Administration and Enforcement

Some local governments view the oversight of elected official conduct, and the administration of the local government's code of conduct, as responsibilities of the governing body. The council or board in these places is responsible for ensuring that elected officials receive education on and understand the standards of behaviour set out in codes, receive advice as needed on matters of conduct and code interpretation, receive and deal with complaints that may be brought against elected officials through codes, and take corrective action authorized in codes to address more serious cases. The governing body in these places may delegate these responsibilities to a committee of council or the board, and/or may rely on the CAO or CO to assist with administration.

Third-Party Investigators

Many local governments in British Columbia make use of independent, third parties to investigate allegations of code breaches, to assist in resolving conduct concerns through informal, restorative process, and to recommend the application of sanctions to deal with more serious code breaches. Most third parties are lawyers with experience in responsible conduct cases, a strong understanding of the need for fair process in conducting and reporting on investigations and in recommending sanctions for governing bodies to consider. Several local governments require the

use of third-party investigators; others determine the need for investigators on a case-by-case basis, often in response to requests by elected officials or staff.

In some cases, the same third parties who investigate complaints will provide advice to the local governments on the development or amendment of codes. The parties may also provide education or advice to elected officials on conduct matters through orientation programs or in other forums. However, investigators are primarily involved in addressing complaints that are made pursuant to the complaints process set out in codes.

Integrity Commissioners

Integrity commissioners are independent officers appointed by local governing bodies for a fixed period of time. They report and make recommendations to the governing bodies, but are empowered with a considerable degree of autonomy during their time in office. An important part of the integrity commissioner role involves the provision of regular education and ongoing advice to the local government's elected officials on responsible conduct matters and broader principles of good governance. This reliance on commissioners for education and advice is one of the factors that distinguishes integrity commissioners from third-party investigators. Similar to third-party investigators, however, commissioners also receive and investigate complaints of alleged code violations, and work to resolve code breaches through informal processes (preferred) or the recommendation of sanctions to address more serious code breaches.

All local governments in British Columbia have the ability to appoint integrity commissioners. To date, only three municipalities in the province — the City of Surrey, the City of Vancouver and the City of Maple Ridge — have endorsed the model.¹⁴ As noted earlier in the *Paper*, there have been several calls for a province-wide integrity commissioner to deliver the services that are provided today by the locally-appointed commissioners.

APPROACHES ELSEWHERE

There is considerable alignment among provinces in the options permitted and used to administer and enforce codes of conduct. In most provinces, local governments are encouraged or required to make use of independent, third-party resources to receive and investigate complaints and alleged code violations, and to recommend to governing bodies sanctions they may wish to apply in cases of code breaches. Local governments in these provinces are encouraged or required to have specific procedures in place to ensure that complaints are received and investigated with strong regard for fair process. The degree to

¹⁴ As noted earlier, Vancouver City Council entertained in late July 2024 a motion to suspend the work of the Integrity Commissioner pending an independent review of the Commissioner's scope of duties. On August 6, 2024, Council resolved to postpone a vote on the motion until September.

which such procedures are prescribed by provinces varies by jurisdiction.

All local governments outside of Quebec have the ability to appoint their own independent integrity commissioners.¹⁵ In Ontario, this ability was replaced in 2018 by the requirement to appoint. All local governments in Ontario today, therefore, are served by an integrity commissioner who is appointed for a set term (e.g., two years) by the governing body. Most large municipalities in Ontario have their own appointed commissioner. Smaller municipalities take advantage of a provision in the *Ontario Municipal Act* [s. 223.3(1.1)] which allows them to share the services of an integrity commissioner with one or more other municipality.

In Western Canada, integrity commissioners are in place in most large cities and in a number of mid-size local governments, including the Cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Wood Buffalo, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg. Other cities make use of third-party resources, as needed, to assist with the administration and enforcement of codes.

Manitoba's approach, compared to that of several other provinces, is highly prescriptive.¹⁶ Values on which to base codes are spelled out in full. Required processes for receiving complaints, examining complaints, referring complaints to mediation, investigating complaints, and reporting on

investigations are identified. Steps that local governing bodies must take in receiving investigation reports from third-party investigators are listed. Sanctions from which governing bodies must choose are also listed, as are the specific factors that must be considered when imposing a sanction. The Province appoints a Code of Conduct Intake Reviewer for the province as a whole to receive and determine the validity of complaints. If the Province deems that a complaint is valid, local governments must appoint independent third-party investigators to investigate the complaint and take responsibility for the remainder of the investigative process.

It is useful to note that only Quebec has in place a provincial body — the Commission municipale du Québec — to oversee the administration and to undertake the enforcement of local government codes of conduct. Following the conclusion of the *Commission of Inquiry on the Awarding and Management of Public Contracts in the Construction Industry* (Charbonneau Commission) in 2015, and based on the Commission's findings related to corruption and unethical behaviour in local government, the Commission municipale was given strong powers over code administration and enforcement.

¹⁵ In some provinces this ability is provided as an explicit authority granted to local government. In other places, the choice to appoint an integrity commissioner is implied under permissive legislation and is not prohibited.

¹⁶ Manitoba's approach applies to municipalities outside of the City of Winnipeg. Winnipeg has its own Integrity Commissioner with processes and authorities outlined in City bylaws.

MODELS TO CONSIDER IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The remainder of the *Paper* sets out three models for discussion purposes to allow local governments and stakeholders to compare and contrast core concepts. Within each model, there is a range of potential policy choices, the full assessment of which is beyond the scope of this *Paper*. Frameworks that support responsible conduct are in a state of evolution throughout Canada. Further consultation and policy work would be required to enact changes contemplated under any of the models.

The Working Group on Responsible Conduct supports approaches to the administration of codes of conduct that make use of independent bodies to investigate complaints and recommend sanctions. The Working Group does not support an internal administration and enforcement approach, which relies on local elected officials and — in several cases — local government staff to perform these functions.¹⁷

The internal approach is problematic for a number of reasons, the most important of which concerns administrative fairness. Fair process and the perception of fairness are difficult to achieve when individuals who are not independent of the governing body or the local government are receiving and adjudicating complaints against individual members of the governing body. The internal administration and enforcement approach is not put forward as a model for further consideration.

The *Paper* focuses instead on models that feature bodies which are independent of the local government to investigate complaints and recommend sanctions. One such model can be developed and implemented at the local level by local governments themselves, using the tools and the natural person power authority in the current responsible conduct framework. This model is similar to that which is used today by councils and boards in British Columbia that make use of third-party investigators or local integrity commissioners.

A second model features a province-wide office, established by provincial legislation, to receive and adjudicate complaints, investigate alleged code violations, and deliver

findings and recommendations to local governments for implementation. This model, or a version of it, has been advanced by some in local government as the preferred solution to address shortcomings in the current framework.

INDEPENDENT BODIES

The Working Group on Responsible Conduct supports approaches to the administration of codes of conduct that make use of independent bodies to investigate complaints and recommend sanctions. The Working Group does not support the internal administration and enforcement approach, which relies on local elected officials and — in several cases — local government staff to perform these functions.

A third model represents a new way for administering and enforcing codes of conduct in British Columbia. This model departs from the permissive approach under Model 1, while at the same time placing responsibility for administration and enforcement with local governments at a local level. The model relies on the Province to introduce new legislation that would require local governments to adopt codes of conduct, and to appoint independent third parties at a local level to handle code of conduct complaints.

¹⁷ The Working Group on Responsible Conduct, in *Forging the Path to Responsible Conduct*, advises against relying on internal resources to receive and adjudicate complaints, and to enforce codes of conduct. The approach does not allow for the necessary high degree of fair process.

Model I: Local Determination

This model relies on local governments to determine for themselves whether to create and implement a code of conduct to help local government officials understand the standards of behaviour and conduct that are expected of them. Local governments take this decision in accordance with the current legislative provisions which both enable councils and boards to establish codes, and require councils and boards to consider establishing a code of conduct, or reviewing an existing code, within the first six months after their inaugural meetings.

A council or board that establishes a code under this model is responsible for determining the content and the code. The Working Group's model code of conduct and an accompanying guide are available to guide the local governments in this effort; municipal lawyers and consultants with experience in code development are also available. Codes developed under this model reflect best practices brought forward in the reference materials or by experienced advisors. The codes also, however, respond to needs and circumstances that may be specific to the local government and the environment in which it operates.

In keeping with the Working Group's recommended approach outlined in *Forging the Path to Responsible Conduct*, a local government under this model appoints an independent body to:

- Vet all complaints of alleged code violations that are submitted to the local government, pursuant to the complaints process outlined in the code,
- Investigate complaints as deemed necessary,
- Attempt, whenever possible, to resolve complaints through informal, restorative means (e.g., facilitated or mediated discussion involving the parties), and
- Present findings from investigations to the council or board, along with recommendations on sanctions the council or board may consider imposing in an effort to correct behaviour, and/or deter elected officials from demonstrating future similar behaviour.

The independent body may be an integrity commissioner, appointed by the local government to serve a specified period of time. Alternatively, the body may be a third party, experienced municipal lawyer or consultant.

Education and advice to elected officials under the model may be provided through a combination of local government associations (e.g., UBCM), independent consultants, and local government elected official peers. Where appointed, integrity commissioners would play a significant role as a resource for ongoing advice and education.

An additional important point to address with the model — indeed, with all models — concerns cost. All costs required to establish a code of conduct under the model, to administer and enforce the code using an independent third party, and to give local elected officials access to education and advice on matters of conduct, would be the responsibility of the local government. Local governments could collaborate with one another, including through their regional districts, to implement the model at a sub-regional or regional

HIGH LEVEL OF VARIABILITY

Model I aligns most closely with the current context in British Columbia. The model features tools that are available to local governments, and that, if utilized to their full extent, are powerful. It is clear in practice, however, that there is a high level of variability in applying these tools across the sector.

level, in an effort to reduce an individual government's cost.

Model I aligns most closely with the current context in British Columbia. The model features tools that are available to local governments, and that, if utilized to their full extent, are powerful. It is clear in practice, however, that there is a high level of variability in applying these tools across the sector. This variability has resulted in some cases in some local governments choosing to not adopt a code of conduct. In other cases, codes that are created vary considerably in their extent of thoroughness, the effectiveness of the sanctions adopted, and the degree to which their implementation is resourced and supported. Based on current application, it is not clear that this model would address the existing framework's shortcomings.

Model II: Provincial Requirements for Centralized Administration and Enforcement

Model II responds to call for a province-wide office, created by provincial legislation, to centrally administer and enforce local government codes of conduct for elected officials. Currently in Canada there is no model for such an office.

Such a province-wide office would:

- Receive and vet all complaints submitted to local governments through processes set out in their mandatory, standardized codes of conduct,
- Appoint experienced investigators to investigate alleged code violations as necessary,
- Offer advice aimed at resolving conduct concerns through informal means, and
- Deliver findings from investigations to councils and boards, along with recommendations on sanctions to impose

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Model II, with its province-wide centralized office, represents an unprecedented approach to the administration and enforcement of codes of conduct, relative to those in place in British Columbia and across Canada today. Given the novelty of such an office, there is a significant potential for unintended consequences, including those related to scope creep in mandate, challenges of cost containment, and the ability to address concerns in a timely matter.

Such an office would also provide advice and resources to local governments on the development of codes, and offer education and advice on responsible conduct and code matters.

Codes of conduct under the model would be mandatory, constructed with a high degree of standardized content to allow for centralized administration and enforcement. Each council and board would be required by provincial legislation to establish a code, and to incorporate into the

code a series of prescribed provisions on standards of behaviour, interactions with staff and the public, fair processes to govern the submission and review of complaints, fair processes for the investigation and adjudication of alleged code violations, a robust set of sanctions, and other elements.

Municipal councils and regional district boards, as under all models, would receive and determine whether to act on findings from investigations and recommended sanctions. Local governments themselves would fund the model entirely. Costs incurred by the province-wide body would be allocated across local governments through an equitable cost-recovery model that took into account factors such as population and assessment base, but also number of complaints and number of investigations (i.e., usage).

One consideration under *Model II* that is not applicable to the other models is that of governance. A province-wide office, established by provincial legislation but operated by and for local governments, would require a governing body to set policy and oversee operations. It is assumed for the purpose of this *Discussion Paper* that the office would be governed by a board of directors, comprised primarily (if not entirely) by local elected officials. The most appropriate method of election or appointment to the Board would be a matter for further consideration.

Model II, with its province-wide centralized office, represents an unprecedented approach to the administration and enforcement of codes of conduct, relative to those in place in British Columbia and across Canada today.¹⁸ Given the novelty of such an office, there is a significant potential for unintended consequences, including those related to scope creep in mandate, challenges of cost containment, and the ability to address concerns in a timely matter. Consideration needs to be given to the scale of this approach relative to that of the current challenge facing local governments. It should also be acknowledged that a decision to establish a province-wide office would not introduce powers that are not already available under *Model I*.

¹⁸ The closest comparison is the current approach in Quebec, which features the Commission municipale du Québec. The Quebec approach, however, removes local governments from code administration and enforcement entirely. Model II, profiled here, assumes that local councils and regional district boards would continue to make final decisions on the application of sanctions. Responsibility for the application of sanctions is standard in all jurisdictions except Quebec.

Model III: Provincial Requirements for Local Administration and Enforcement

This model relies on the Province to introduce prescriptive legislation to address matters of responsible conduct.

Specifically, under this model the Province would introduce legislation to:

- Require all councils and boards to establish and adopt codes of conduct.
- Prescribe elements to embed in all codes, including: principles of conduct, expected standards of behaviour, interactions with staff and the public, fair processes to govern the submission and review of complaints, fair processes for the investigation and adjudication of complaints deemed serious, and a robust set of sanctions local governments may consider to address code violations.
- Require each council and board to appoint an independent third party to vet complaints submitted under the code, investigate alleged code violations as necessary, and submit findings and recommended sanctions (where necessary) to the governing body.

Mandatory codes of conduct, standardized to include key elements, would be a central feature of this model. A reliance on independent third parties with a significant role in code administration and enforcement would be another key feature. Local governments under the model would be responsible for providing access to advice and education, including through the appointed third party. Local governments would also be expected to fund the model. As with *Model I: Local Determination*, local governments could collaborate with one another, including through their regional districts, to manage overall costs.

Model III is similar in many respects to the approaches taken in Manitoba, and to a lesser extent the Province of Ontario. Provincial legislation in these provinces has evolved over time to become more prescriptive in response to shortcomings in, and concerns with the efficacy of, earlier less-prescriptive responsible conduct frameworks. Local governments in these provinces, however, remain responsible for administration and enforcement, as would local governments in British Columbia under *Model III*.

CONSISTENCY AND RIGOUR

Model III would help to overcome the variability that exists in the current system. Greater consistency and rigour in the administration and enforcement of codes across the sector would be the expected result.

Model III presents an approach that highlights the role of local governments in the development and application of codes, and that remains accountable to local government. *Model III* may, however, improve on the approach set out in *Model I* by overcoming the variability that exists in the current system. Greater consistency and rigour in the administration and enforcement of codes across the sector would be the expected result.

Assessment of Models

This table assesses the models against specific factors to consider. The assessment is presented to spark further discussion among local governments and responsible conduct stakeholders, not to identify a single, recommended approach.

| MODEL I LOCAL DETERMINATION | MODEL II PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS; CENTRAL ACTION | MODEL III PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS; LOCAL ACTION |
|---|---|---|
| Source of Authority | | |
| Local governments under the model choose to create, administer and enforce codes of conduct using the natural person powers (section 8(1) of the <i>Community Charter</i>). | The province-wide body is established by provincial legislation. Requirements for local governments to establish standardized codes of conduct are also imposed by provincial legislation. | Requirements for mandatory codes of conduct, specific code contents and the use of independent third parties are established through provincial legislation. |
| Scope of Sanctions | | |
| The scope of sanctions is at the discretion of the local government but may be broad, as at present in British Columbia. Sanctions may not include removal or disqualification from office. Sanctions are recommended by the third-party investigator, as deemed necessary, for the consideration of the council or board. Only the council or board may apply the sanctions; councils and boards are responsible for holding their members to account between elections on matters of responsible conduct. | The scope of sanctions is set out by provincial legislation. It is expected that the scope would be broad, as at present in British Columbia. Sanctions may not include removal or disqualification from office. The province-wide body recommends sanctions based on the outcomes of investigations to council and boards for their consideration. Only councils and boards may apply the sanctions against their members. This authority and responsibility may not be delegated, even to a province-wide office established to administer and enforce codes of conduct. | The scope of sanctions is set out by provincial legislation. It is expected that the scope would be broad, as at present in British Columbia. Sanctions may not include removal or disqualification from office. Sanctions are recommended by the third-party investigator for the consideration of the council or board. Only the council or board may apply the sanctions; councils and boards are responsible for holding their members to account between elections on matters of responsible conduct. |
| Precedent | | |
| The model is closest to the <i>status quo</i> approach for several local governments in British Columbia that have established and adopted codes of conduct, and that rely on independent third parties to vet complaints, investigate alleged code violations, and present findings and recommendations to governing bodies for consideration. | The model has no precedent in Canada outside of Quebec, which adopted a form of this model in response to corruption exposed by the Charbonneau Commission. Quebec's approach, however, differs from the model in many respects and does not provide a useful precedent. | The model has no precedent in British Columbia but is similar to approaches taken in some other provinces. The reliance on provincial legislation to require codes of conduct, prescribe (to some degree) the contents of codes, and require the use of independent third parties make the model similar, in particular, to models in force in Ontario and Manitoba. |

| MODEL I LOCAL DETERMINATION | MODEL II PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS; CENTRAL ACTION | MODEL III PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS; LOCAL ACTION |
|--|--|---|
| Local Government Choice | | |
| <p>Local government choice is strong under this model. Provincial involvement is limited to the requirement for councils and boards to consider establishing a code of conduct, or reviewing an existing code, within the first six months after their inaugural meetings.</p> <p>Local governments choose whether to establish a code of conduct. Local governments choose to use independent third parties for code administration and enforcement. Local governments are guided in this choice by best practices.</p> <p>Local governments also determine whether to accept recommendations on what sanctions to apply.</p> | <p>Local government choice is lowest under this model. Provincial requirements limit local government choices related to code establishment and customization. Code administration and enforcement is assigned to a province-wide body, established by provincial legislation.</p> <p>The model does not enable local governments to collaborate on a sub-regional or regional level. Administration and enforcement is undertaken by the province-wide body.</p> <p>Local governments remain responsible for determining whether to accept and impose recommendations on sanctions.</p> | <p>Local government choice is less strong under this model, relative to that in Model I. Provincial requirements limit local government choices related to code establishment and customization, and code administration and enforcement.</p> <p>Local governments may choose to collaborate with one another in use of third parties and to share costs. Local governments appoint their own independent third parties for the purposes of investigation.</p> <p>Local governments remain responsible for determining whether to accept and impose recommendations on sanctions.</p> |
| Oversight and Accountability | | |
| <p>Local councils and boards provide oversight for the model and its application. Local councils and boards are accountable for the structure, content and effectiveness of their codes of conduct, and for the mandate assigned to third-party investigators.</p> <p>Local councils and boards remain accountable for decisions taken with respect to sanctions, and for creating a culture of governance that encourages responsible conduct.</p> | <p>Oversight is provided by the province-wide agency established to administer and enforce codes of conduct. Local governments are accountable for establishing codes of conduct with prescribed contents. The province-wide body's board of directors is accountable for code administration and enforcement efforts.</p> <p>Local councils and boards are accountable for decisions on sanctions, and for creating a culture of governance that encourages, or discourages, responsible conduct.</p> | <p>Local councils and boards, along with the provincial government, provide oversight for the model and its application. Local governments are accountable to the Province for establishing codes of conduct with prescribed contents, and for engaging independent third parties in code administration and enforcement. Independent third parties are accountable to the local councils and boards that use them.</p> <p>Local councils and boards are accountable for decisions on sanctions, and for creating a culture of governance that encourages, or discourages, responsible conduct.</p> |

| MODEL I LOCAL DETERMINATION | MODEL II PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS; CENTRAL ACTION | MODEL III PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS; LOCAL ACTION |
|---|---|--|
| Degree of Standardization | | |
| <p>Codes of conduct are developed by local governments in accordance with best practices, and to reflect local needs and circumstances. Some level of standardization exists based on adherence to best practices.</p> <p>At present under this approach, 30% of local governments are without a code of conduct and the quality of codes of conduct, including their enforcement mechanisms, vary widely.</p> | <p>Standardization of codes is similar to Model III to enable centralized administration and enforcement. Centralized administration and enforcement would not be practicable in an environment with non-standardized codes.</p> <p>This approach ensures that codes of conduct and systems of administration and enforcement are in place for every local government.</p> | <p>The Province's decision to prescribe, through legislation, specific provisions and requirements to include in codes of conduct results in a high degree of standardization.</p> <p>This approach ensures that codes of conduct and systems of administration and enforcement are in place for every local government.</p> |
| Cost Management | | |
| <p>Local governments may manage costs under this model through code design and application, the imposition of budget caps, and the ability to collaborate with one another on the use and funding of independent third parties.</p> <p>It is important to recognize, however, that local governments which make use of the model, and particularly smaller communities, currently cite cost as an issue.</p> | <p>Cost management is most difficult under this model. Standardized codes of conduct, coupled with centralized administration and enforcement, give little ability to local governments to contain costs.</p> <p>Costs under this scenario may also be difficult to manage due to the scope of responsibility across the local government sector.</p> <p>It is uncertain whether the Province would contribute to the operational costs for this model.</p> | <p>Prescriptive provincial legislation makes cost management more difficult under this model. Local governments have less control, relative to Model I, over code design and application. Local governments may collaborate with one another in the use and funding of independent parties.</p> <p>It is uncertain whether the Province would contribute to the operational costs for this model.</p> |
| Fairness | | |
| <p>Fairness is determined in part through the design of complaint and investigation processes in codes of conduct. Fairness is also determined by the process through which local government receives, considers, applies and publicizes recommended sanctions. A process to allow for appeal to local government, and in some cases to courts, is important.</p> <p>Adherence to best practices, and the use of experienced code designers, enhances the potential for fairness. Due to the variance of approaches, though, this approach poses significant risks to ensuring fair procedures.</p> | <p>Provincially-prescribed contents for codes of conduct, including processes for complaints and investigations, determine fairness of model to a large degree. Fairness is also determined by the process through which local government receives, considers, applies and publicizes recommended sanctions.</p> <p>Process to allow for appeal to province-wide body, and ultimately to courts in some cases, would continue.</p> | <p>Provincially-prescribed contents for codes of conduct, including processes for complaints and investigations, help to establish a high degree of fairness in comparison to Model I. Fairness is also determined by the process through which local government receives, considers, applies and publicizes recommended sanctions.</p> <p>A process to allow for appeal to local government, and in some cases to courts, would continue.</p> |

| MODEL I LOCAL DETERMINATION | MODEL II PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS; CENTRAL ACTION | MODEL III PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS; LOCAL ACTION |
|---|--|--|
| Effectiveness | | |
| <p>Effectiveness is determined in large part by the governing body's willingness to design a strong code, support the work of independent parties, and apply sanctions against its members.</p> <p>Ability to emphasize informal resolution approaches in the code of conduct may strengthen effectiveness.</p> <p>This approach currently leaves 30% of local governments without a code of conduct, and a high degree of variability in the quality of the codes of conduct that have been implemented.</p> | <p>Provincial requirement for all councils and boards to adopt codes of conduct, and to include specific provisions in codes, would improve efficacy for the local government as sector as a whole relative to Model I.</p> <p>The centralized administration and enforcement under the model may weaken the ability to resolve matters informally. (Informal resolution often relies on a strong local presence and strong relationships with the parties involved in complaints.)</p> <p>The centralized approach under this model comes with a significant risk in timely service delivery. A centralized office also poses a higher risk of scope creep in practice.</p> | <p>Provincial requirement for all councils and boards to adopt codes of conduct, and to include specific provisions in codes would improve effectiveness for local government as sector as a whole relative to Model I.</p> <p>Prescribed emphasis on informal resolution, coupled with robust set of prescribed sanctions, may further strengthen the effectiveness of this option.</p> <p>The decentralized approach to administration of and enforcement will provide more timely interventions relative to Model II.</p> |

REQUEST FOR INPUT

British Columbia's responsible conduct framework for local government elected officials is designed to help municipalities, regional district boards and their elected members learn about, promote, and ensure adherence to standards of appropriate conduct. Concerns raised by elected officials and staff with shortcomings in the existing framework prompted UBCM and the LGMA to produce this joint *Discussion Paper*.

The *Paper* has explored the potential for mandatory codes of conduct in all local governments in British Columbia and presented three models to address issues related to the administration and enforcement of codes. The *Paper* does not offer prescriptions, nor does it recommend a specific path forward. It has, however, identified a new option for code of conduct administration and enforcement that exists between the status quo and a centralized province-wide service.

The authors of this paper, UBCM and LGMA, invite local government feedback to inform further action on these considerations by the Working Group on Responsible Conduct, and ultimately, by the Province.

To this end, we are inviting local government councils and boards and individual elected officials or chief administrative officers to provide comment on the following questions:

- Should the province be requested to develop legislation mandating codes of conduct modelled on established best practices for all local governments in BC?
- Are legislated changes needed to support code of conduct administration and enforcement?
- And, if so, what factors do you think are most important to the success of a new approach to code administration and enforcement?

Councils and boards are invited to respond to these questions in writing to UBCM to the attention of Paul Taylor, Director of Communications, UBCM (ptaylor@ubcm.ca).

Chief administrative officers may provide responses to Candace Witkowskyj, Executive Director, LGMA (cwitkowskyj@lgma.ca).

The deadline for providing response to the above questions is **November 1, 2024**.

All feedback will be shared with the Working Group on Responsible Conduct as all parties work together to identify a process the next phase of changes to strengthen BC's responsible conduct framework.

Acknowledgements

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Local Government Management Association are thankful to Allan Neilson of Neilson Strategies Inc. for the excellent support he provided during the development of this discussion paper.

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Oversight for this project was provided by Candace Witkowskyj, LGMA's Executive Director and Paul Taylor, UBCM's Director of Communications.

APPENDIX I

UBCM Resolutions on Responsible Conduct 2016-2024

| NUMBER | RESOLUTION TEXT | OUTCOME |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 2016-B70 | <p>Integrity Commissioner for Local Government</p> <p>Sponsor: City of Kelowna</p> <p>Whereas the current legislative tools available to local government in British Columbia regarding matters of questionable conduct and breaches of code of conduct of elected officials result in expensive quasi-judicial processes eroding public confidence, strained internal relationships, and produce limited viable outcomes;</p> <p>And whereas elected officials in local government do not have access to independent advice regarding conflict of interest or other matters related to Codes of Conduct, nor an effective process to objectively resolve contraventions, accusations or public complaints:</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call on the provincial government to enact enabling legislation that would empower local governments with the ability to appoint local independent Integrity Commissioners who would serve the public and elected officials in an advisory, educational and investigative role in the application and enforcement of Codes of Conduct.</p> | Referred to the Working Group on Responsible Conduct |
| 2021-NR1 | <p>Independent Office of Integrity for Local Government</p> <p>Sponsor: City of Maple Ridge</p> <p>Whereas the UBCM Working Group on Responsible Conduct WGRC has been working extensively to support local government initiatives to address less-than-responsible local government conduct by providing local government council and board members with a set of principles and general standards of conduct that can be used to develop their own code of conduct;</p> <p>And whereas the WGRC continues to work on potential legislative change that focuses on the importance of councils and boards turning their minds to codes of conduct in a standardized and consistent manner:</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request the provincial government to establish an Independent Office of Integrity to serve the public, elected officials and local government officials in an advisory, educational and investigative role in the development, application and enforcement of codes of conduct.</p> | Endorsed |

| NUMBER | RESOLUTION TEXT | OUTCOME |
|-----------|---|---------------------|
| 2021-SR3 | <p>Strengthening Responsible Conduct</p> <p>Sponsor: UBCM Executive</p> <p>Whereas responsible conduct of elected officials, both individually and collectively as a Council or Board, is essential to sound and effective governance;</p> <p>And whereas local governments are best served by tools and resources that reflect the legislative framework for local government in British Columbia, which is based on foundational concepts of autonomy, empowerment, accountability and collaboration:</p> <p>Therefore, be it resolved that UBCM ask the provincial government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a legislative requirement that all local governments in British Columbia must consider the adoption or updating of a Code of Conduct at least once early in each new term of office; • Work collaboratively with UBCM and others to consider the design of a mandatory educational module that would support responsible conduct by local elected officials; • Update the oath of office prescribed by regulation to embed the foundational principles identified by the Working Group on Responsible Conduct; and • Provide guidance for local governments that have established an oath of office by bylaw so that these oaths may be updated with the same foundational principles for responsible conduct. | Endorsed |
| 2021-NEB1 | <p>Support for a Provincial Code of Conduct for Local Government Elected Officials</p> <p>Sponsor: City of Port Moody</p> <p>Whereas there is no current legislation to hold elected officials, across the province, to a consistent set of standards of accountability for their behavior and actions;</p> <p>And whereas elected officials should have a right to a respectful and safe workplace;</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that UBCM ask the Province of British Columbia to develop a code of conduct, which is informed by a review of elected official experiences and with input from equity seeking groups, that is overseen by the Province, so that all elected officials have access to a consistent, formal set of standards and process for complaint against other elected officials.</p> | <u>NOT</u> Endorsed |

| NUMBER | RESOLUTION TEXT | OUTCOME |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| 2022-EB77 | <p>Ethics Commissioner</p> <p>Sponsor: City of White Rock</p> <p>Whereas Bill 26 2021: Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act No. 2, 2021 does not require a local government to adopt a Code of Conduct for Council members;</p> <p>And whereas many local governments in British Columbia cannot afford or do not have an independent non-partisan Ethics Commissioner to review and resolve allegations of misconduct:</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call upon the provincial government to immediately create an Office of the Municipal Ethics Commissioner within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs that will: 1 respond to allegations of misconduct by an elected official of a municipal government and conduct an inquiry if warranted; 2 review decisions imposed on an elected official of a municipal government and conduct an inquiry if warranted; and 3 require local governments to adopt a code of conduct for council members.</p> | Endorsed |
| 2023-EB69 | <p>Shared Ethics Commissioner Office</p> <p>Sponsor: City of Nelson</p> <p>Whereas all local governments are required to decide on the implication of code of conduct within the first 6 months of a new term, which may include the designation of a local ethics commissioner officer;</p> <p>And whereas local governments may often lack the resources or expertise to develop local ethics commissioners role:</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that UBCM ask the Province to create a shared local government ethics commissioners offices to serve local governments in the efficient and effective implementation of Code of Conduct policies.</p> | Endorsed |
| Pending | <p>Office of the Municipal Government Ethics Commissioner</p> <p>Sponsor: City of Port Moody</p> <p>Whereas the City of Port Moody strongly supports fair and unbiased resources for local governments;</p> <p>And whereas in support of this principle, the City of Port Moody called upon the Province to establish an "Office of the Municipal Government Ethics Commissioner", which would provide fair and unbiased guidance to local governments on issues such as legality, conflict, code of conduct violations, and bullying:</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that UBCM requests the Province establish an Office of the Municipal Government Ethics Commissioner and require mandatory ethics training for all new elected officials.</p> | Pending |

APPENDIX II

Mandatory Education

Many local government elected officials come into office without a deep background in or extensive knowledge of British Columbia's local government system. The make up and authority of collective decision making bodies will be new to some, as will the roles, responsibilities and limitations of individual elected officials within the bodies. Principles of responsible conduct and accepted norms of behaviour will be regarded by many elected officials as "common sense". The exercise of proper conduct in, and the importance of such conduct to, effective local government decision-making, however, is critical even for these officials to understand.

The need for a strong grounding in British Columbia's local government system, the roles and responsibilities of elected officials and other parties, and the principles of responsible conduct, must be acquired in order to practice and consistently achieve good governance. Education is the tool to provide this grounding.

Across Canada, expectations and requirements related to the participation of local government elected officials in educational programs vary. The approach taken by provinces such as Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is similar to that which is taken by British Columbia: encourages but does not require participation. In some of these places, including British Columbia, the approach is rooted in a commitment to local government autonomy. Local governing bodies and their members in autonomous local governments should determine their own approaches to education.

In Alberta, the Province has had a requirement in place for several years for every municipality to offer orientation training to each council member within 90 days of the member having taking the oath of office. Until recently, there was no accompanying requirement for council members to actually attend the training. As a result of a 2024 legislative amendment, however, every municipality is required to offer, and each member is required to attend, orientation on specific topics to be held before or on the same day as the inaugural council meeting.

In Manitoba, section 84.2(1) of the Province's *Municipal Act* requires each municipality to arrange for training for its elected officials on the municipality's code of conduct within the first six months following election. The same section compels every elected official to attend the training, which is developed by the Ministry of Municipal and Northern Relations, and made available through the Municipal Relations Learning Portal. Members who do not

complete the training within the six month timeline cannot continue to serve as a member of council until the training is completed.

Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) takes a similar approach to Manitoba. However, the content of the mandatory training for elected officials in NL extends beyond responsible conduct to include related topics such as roles and responsibilities, meetings and procedures, access to information and protection of privacy, and conflict of interest. Officials who fail to complete the training cannot continue to sit in office until training has been completed.

In 2021, the UBCM Executive embedded in its special resolution (*Strengthening Responsible Conduct*) a call for the development of a mandatory training module for all local government officials in British Columbia. The desire for mandatory training has not subsided in the intervening years. On the contrary, in the focus group sessions and in interviews conducted for the *Discussion Paper*, the desire for mandatory education on matters of responsible conduct was emphasized. The 2024 UBCM resolutions request to the Province to require all new local elected officials to participate in mandatory ethics training adds to the call. For some, the approaches taken in other jurisdictions are considered instructive.

There are several questions to consider in determining whether education on responsible conduct for elected officials in British Columbia should be mandatory.

- Would mandatory education work to produce greater consistency in the conduct of elected officials across the province?
- What topics should be included in mandatory education?
- Should mandatory education be standardized for all local government elected officials?
- Should responsibility for development and delivery be assigned to a single, central body? Or should design and delivery be decentralized and left to individual local governments or consortia of local jurisdictions?
- When and how often should education be provided?
- What types of incentives, disincentives and penalties should be applied to ensure participation? Who should apply them?
- Who should pay the cost of mandatory education?

These questions and the broader topic of mandatory education warrant further consideration.

APPENDIX III

Resources to Support Responsible Conduct

The [Working Group on Responsible Conduct](#) has developed several resources to assist local governments as they develop, implement and administer Codes of Conduct.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

The [foundational principles](#) provide a basis for how local government elected officials fulfill their roles and responsibilities, including in their relationships with each other, with local government staff and with the public.



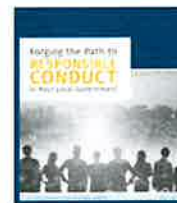
MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT AND COMPANION GUIDE

The [Model](#) provides local government council or board members with a set of principles and general standards that can be used to develop a Code of Conduct. The [companion guide](#) provides discussion questions, tips and resources.



FORGING THE PATH TO RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

This [resource](#) provides guidance on ways to prevent conduct issues by local elected officials, and how best to deal with them if they do arise. Developed by the Working Group on Responsible Conduct, the guide addresses fostering responsible conduct, maintaining good governance and resolving conduct issues for those who serve on Councils and Boards. It also includes considerations for local governments that wish to establish an enforcement process within a Code of Conduct.



ON DEMAND TRAINING: RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT EVERY DAY

This [online course](#) introduces the principles that support responsible conduct through a series of scenarios that explore conduct choices. Please use the course code VV81-5TFM to access the course.



**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF
CODE OF CONDUCT
Adopted: April 20, 2023**

Purpose

In addition to the Oath of Office that the Board members must affirm prior to taking office, the following Code of Conduct sets out shared expectations for conduct and behaviour for how Board members shall conduct themselves while carrying out their responsibilities and in their work as a collective decision-making body for the region.

Application

This code applies to the Board of Directors and staff (where applicable) of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

Key Values

1. Integrity

Board members are keepers of the public trust and must uphold the highest standards of ethical behaviour and are expected to:

- make decisions that benefit the community/region;
- act lawfully and within the authorities of the Regional District;
- be free from undue influence and not act, or appear to act, in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, family, friends or business interests.

2. Leadership

Board members must demonstrate and promote the key principles of the Code of Conduct through their decisions, actions and behaviour. Their behaviour must build and inspire the public's trust and confidence in local government.

3. Responsibility

Board members must act responsibly, within the law and within the authorities of the *Local Government Act* and *Community Charter*. They must follow the letter and spirit of policies and procedures and exercise all conferred power strictly for the purpose for which the powers have been conferred.

4. Respect

Board members and staff must conduct public business efficiently, with decorum and with proper attention to the Regional District's diversity. They must treat each other and others with respect at all times. This means not using derogatory language towards others, respecting the rights of

other people, treating people with courtesy and recognizing the different roles others play in local government decision making.

General Conduct:

Act in the Public Interest

Board members and staff shall act in the public interest by conducting business with integrity in a fair, honest and open manner.

Comply with the Law

Board members and staff shall comply with all applicable federal, provincial and local municipal laws in the performance of their public duties, including but not limited to: the *Local Government Act*, the *Community Charter*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Financial Disclosure Act*, and all applicable Regional District bylaws and policies.

Conduct of Board Members and Staff

Board members and staff will treat one another and the public with dignity and respect and shall refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the Board, Committees, Staff or the public.

Respect for Process

Board members and staff shall perform their duties in accordance with the policies and procedures and rules of order established by the Board governing the deliberation of public policy issues, including involvement of the public.

Conduct of Meetings

Board members and staff shall prepare themselves for meetings, listen courteously and attentively to all discussions before the body, and focus on the business at hand. Cell phones should be turned off during meetings, however, if an urgent matter necessitates that a Director be interrupted during the meeting, the cell phone shall be kept on silent or vibrate.

Board members and staff shall endeavour not to interrupt other speakers or make personal comments or comments not germane to the business of the body or otherwise disturb a meeting.

Decisions Based on Merit

Board members shall base their decisions on the relevant merits and substance of the matter at hand, including input received from staff, Committees, and the public.

Communication and Media Relations

The Regional Board Chair is the spokesperson for the Regional District on Board matters. The CAO or his/her designate is the spokesperson for the Regional District on administrative and operational matters.

Board members will accurately communicate the decisions of the Board, even if they disagree with the majority decision of the Board. A Director may state that he/she voted against a decision but will refrain from making disparaging comments about other Directors or the Board's decision itself.

Social Media

Board members and staff will use caution in reporting decision-making by way of their social media profiles websites ensuring that any material they publish is accurate, precise, and communicates the intent of the Board.

When presenting their individual opinions and positions, Board members and staff shall explicitly state they do not represent the Board or the Regional District, nor shall they allow the inference that they do.

Conflict of Interest

Board members shall familiarize themselves and act in accordance with the provisions set out in the conflict of interest sections of the *Community Charter*.

Gifts

Board members and staff must not, directly or indirectly, accept a fee, gift or personal benefit that is connected with the Board or staff member's performance of their duties, except in accordance with the provisions of the *Community Charter*.

Confidential Information

Board members and staff shall respect the confidentiality of information concerning the property, personnel, legal affairs, or other information of the Regional District distributed for the purposes of, or considered in, a closed Council meeting. Board members and staff shall neither disclose confidential information without proper authorization, nor use such information to advance their own or anyone's personal, financial or other private interests. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, Board members and staff shall not disclose Board resolutions or staff report contents from a closed meeting of the Board

unless and until a Board decision has been made for the information to become public. Board members and staff shall not disclose detail on the Board's closed meeting deliberations or how individual Board members voted on a question in a closed meeting.

Advocacy

Board members and staff shall represent the official policies or positions of the Board to the best of their ability when acting as delegates for this purpose. When presenting their individual opinions and positions, Board members and staff shall explicitly state they do not represent the Board or the Regional District, nor shall they allow the inference that they do.

Policy Role of Board Members

Board members shall respect and adhere to the Board/Chief Administrative Officer structure of municipal government as practiced in the Regional District. In this structure, the Board determines the policies of the Regional District with the advice, information and analysis provided by staff and Board committees. Directors therefore shall not interfere with the administrative functions of the Regional District or with the professional duties of Regional District staff, nor shall they impair the ability of staff to implement or enforce the Board's policy decisions.

Positive Workplace Environment

Board members and staff shall treat other members, the public and staff with respect and shall encourage the personal dignity, self-esteem and wellbeing of those with whom they come in contact with during the course of their professional duties. Comments about Regional District staff performance shall only be made to the Chief Administrative Officer through private correspondence or conversation.

Interactions of Board Members and Staff

The Regional Board operates under a single employee model. The single employee is the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Requests for information from the Board other than over the counter inquiries must be addressed to the CAO who will refer the inquiry to the appropriate staff member to respond.

The Board as a whole, not individual Directors, gives direction to staff through Board resolutions. Accordingly, Directors shall not request staff to undertake work that has not been expressly authorized by the Board.

Implementation

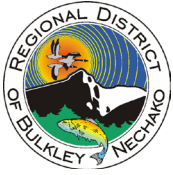
As an expression of the standards of conduct for members expected by the Regional District, this Code is intended to be self-enforcing. This Code therefore becomes most effective when Directors and staff are thoroughly familiar with it and embrace its provisions. For this reason, this Code shall be provided as information to candidates for the Board.

Compliance and Enforcement

Board members are responsible for positive, proactive conflict resolution and will speak first to the Director with which they have a conflict. If unresolved then the Director will inform the Chair and the Chief Administrative Officer about the conflict. The Chair and Chief Administrative Officer will make the necessary considerations and, if needed, seek professional third-party support.

Review

This policy shall be brought forward for review at the beginning of each term as per the *Community Charter* and at any other time that the Board considers appropriate to ensure that it remains current and continues to accurately reflect the standards of ethical conduct expected of members.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board

From: Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services

Date: October 24, 2024

Subject: **Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in the Nechako Watershed Workshop – November 29, 2024 – Prince George, BC**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board authorize attendance of Rural Directors wishing to attend the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in the Nechako Watershed Workshop on November 29, 2024 in Prince George, B.C. The focus of the workshop is to identify priorities for action in the Nechako Watershed.

The deadline for registration is November 22, 2024.

BACKGROUND

The Nechako Watershed Roundtable has extended an invitation to the Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in the Nechako Watershed Workshop on November 29, 2024 in Prince George

ATTACHMENT:

Invitation



Dear Chair Mark Parker,

The **Nechako Watershed Roundtable (NWR)** invites you to participate in a **Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in the Nechako Watershed** workshop, themed **“The Water That Connects Us”**. The workshop will be held on November 29th from 9:00am – 4:30pm at the Sandman Signature Hotel in Prince George, BC.

Severe drought, catastrophic wildfires, mass flooding, and landslide events across British Columbia signify that climate change preparedness is more important than ever. Our resilience depends on water and strengthening the natural defences that can only be provided by healthy watersheds.

The adverse impacts of climate change are manifested largely at the local level, and it is locally led adaptation planning that aligns Indigenous and experiential knowledge that will be most successful at addressing climate risks. We are setting the table to collectively identify priorities for action in the Nechako Watershed.

The NWR is inviting you to join community leaders to participate in dialogue about adaptation and resilience at a watershed scale. This is an important step to setting local priorities, incorporating a greater focus on water, and communicating a collective approach for the Nechako Watershed.

To help set the stage and facilitate this workshop, the NWR is working closely with Dan George of Four Directions Management Services. Dan will be reaching out to you by email about your community's experience of climate impacts, what resilience means to your community and your priority areas of focus in responding to climate change. You will receive the survey shortly and we request that you complete it **by November 8** to allow adequate time for analysis. The results of the survey will be used to inform the day's proceedings – please watch your inbox. Your participation will help to inform and shape collaborative climate adaptation actions that will act as a framework document at the workshop.

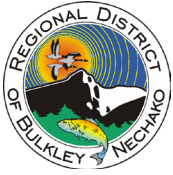
Your attendance and thoughts at this workshop are very important to us. [Please register for this workshop by November 22nd](#). A participant package will be forwarded prior to the event for your review and consideration. Please connect with us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Frenkel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Brian Frenkel

*Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Steering Committee Chair
Nechako Watershed Roundtable*



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: **Future Fuels Forum – January 13-14, 2025 - Prince George, BC**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board authorize attendance of Rural Directors at the Future Fuels Forum – January 13-14, 2025 in Prince George, B.C.

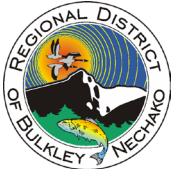
BACKGROUND

The City of Prince George has announced the first Future Fuels Forum taking place January 13-14 at the House of Ancestors in Prince George. The City is emerging as a potential hub for hydrogen and clean energy initiatives, and the Forum will bring together industry leaders, innovators, policymakers and experts to discuss the future of sustainable energy in Northern B.C. Registration for this event is free.

Costs to attend the forums will be allocated to each Rural Director's Conference budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

https://whova.com/portal/registration/futur1_202501/



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: **BC Natural Resources Forum – January 14 – 16, 2025 - Prince George, B.C.**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

That the Board authorize attendance of Rural Directors at the BC Natural Resources Forum, January 14-16, 2025 in Prince George, B.C.

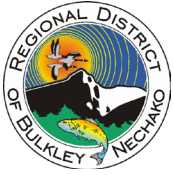
BACKGROUND

The 22nd Annual BC Natural Resources Forum is taking place January 14-16 at the Prince George Conference and Civic Centre. This Forum brings together First Nations, Government and the Natural Resources Sector to discuss opportunities, innovative solutions and success stories. Early Bird registration closes on November 1st. Virtual passes are available.

Costs to attend the forums will be allocated to each Rural Director's Conference budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

<https://bcnaturalresourcesforum.com/registration/2025/>



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: Departmental Quarterly Reports – 3rd Quarter

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

BACKGROUND

Departmental Quarterly Reports for the 3rd Quarter of 2024 have been prepared to keep the Board apprised of the status of strategic priorities, departmental work plans, and normal operations.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Administration Quarterly Report
2. Finance Quarterly Report
3. Protective Services Quarterly Report
4. Planning Quarterly Report
5. Environmental Services Quarterly Report



Administration

July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024

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Staffing

Fulltime permanent:

Curtis Helgesen, CAO

Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services

Anusha Rai, Human Resources Advisor

Danielle Sapach, Administration Clerk

Justin Greer, First Nations Liaison

Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development

Shari Janzen, Economic Development Assistant

Cameron Hart, Economic Development Assistant

Megan D'Arcy, Agriculture Coordinator (part-time)

Marissa Moroski, Custodian

Strategic Priorities

| 2023-2026 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES | |
|--|--|
| Relationships with First Nations | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To enhance relationships with First Nations in the region and explore opportunities to collaborate and work in partnership for the benefit of our communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extend invitations for informal meetings/meals with each First Nations government in the region ○ Share and discuss respective strategic goals and objectives to identify opportunities for cooperation and collaboration on areas of mutual interest ○ Investigate and identify opportunities for the RDBN to provide specific services to First Nations Communities | |
| Advocacy with the Province | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To advocate and build relationships with provincial ministries to ensure the needs of the region are represented, impacts on our communities from their decisions and policies are understood, and adequate resources are made available to support new and increasing expectations of local government. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support efforts to secure an agreement under the Resource Benefits Alliance by engaging with our communities and consistently messaging our expectations to the Province ○ Identify and prioritize topics and issues for provincial advocacy and advance our interests by developing strategic and consistent messaging, and offering solutions that are aligned with mutual goals ○ Extend invitations to ministers or senior ministry staff to visit our region so they can observe and discuss our issues and interests in-person | |
| Housing Supply | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To ensure there is an adequate supply and variety of housing options for our citizens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide support to the non-profit sector in their pursuit of affordable housing projects and initiatives ○ Advocate with the Province for appropriate rules and regulations to reduce impediments to housing development and better-reflect the needs of northern residents ○ Investigate opportunities for the Regional District to plan for and/or support the development of workforce housing | |

Community and Economic Sustainability

- To identify and pursue opportunities to support and diversify our economy.
 - Convene a tourism summit to better-understand the needs of the tourism sector and explore how the regional district can support and advance tourism in the region
 - Revisit, prioritize and advance recommendations of the RDBN Food and Agriculture Plan and the work of the Agriculture Coordinator
 - Continue advocacy efforts with the Federal and Provincial governments, First Nations communities and industry for high-speed internet service and explore innovative solutions for high-speed internet service in partnership with the Connectivity Committee and other partners.

Relationships with First Nations

The First Nations Liaison gave a presentation to staff on the RDBN and First Nations, which addressed the topics of the history of residential schools and the RDBN's approach to reconciliation.

RDBN Staff and elected officials met with the Nechako First Nations, Cheslatta Carrier Nation, and the District of Vanderhoof to discuss amendments to the Nechako Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which all parties have indicated they are almost ready to sign.

Staff drafted a Protocol Agreement to bring to First Nations in the region as a formal document that will provide the foundation for advancing government-to-government relationship building.

Advocacy with the Province

- Resolutions Submitted to the Union of BC Municipalities
 - Housing Support in Northern and Small Communities - endorsed
 - Vaccine Mandate for Healthcare Workers – not endorsed
 - Healthcare Worker Shortage – Reducing Barriers to Training – endorsed
 - Industry Shutdown – Timber Rights – endorsed
 - Expansion of Community Forests for Increased Access to Fiber - endorsed
 - Enhancing the Environmental Assessment Process – endorsed
 - Provincial Funding for Accessible and Transparent Dataset – endorsed
 - Search and Rescue – Capability Approval Process - endorsed

Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Convention

Directors met with the following Ministers/ministry staff during the Convention:

- Premier Eby (RBA)
- Mike Hykaway, ADM, Minister of Forests
- Jessica Brooks, A/ADM, John McEown, Amy Wong, Ministry of Housing/BC Housing

- Peter Pokorny, DM, Michelle Koski, ADM, Shawna Lyttle, Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Leanne Heppell, Jennie Helmer, Paul Vallely, BC Emergency Health Services
- Bobbie Plecas, DM, Chris Rathbone, ADM, Joanna White, ADM – Ministry of Post Secondary Education and Future Skills
- Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship
- Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
- Honourable Bowinn Ma, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness
- Ciro Panessa, President and Colleen Nyce, CEO, Northern Health, Mark Armitage A/DM, Ministry of Health

Economic Development

Community and Economic Stability

Staff continued to support Community Transitions engagement in Fraser Lake until the last meeting when the Committee deemed the Transitions process to be complete. This included supporting the organization and hosting of a Wellness Fair in Fraser Lake on September 5. Staff are now supporting the Community Transition process for Canfor Plateau.

Grant Writers continue to support groups in the region on applications.

Agriculture

The RDBN's application to the Water Infrastructure Program was approved and staff are drafting the Request for Proposals.

Bulkley-Nechako Joint Accessibility Advocacy Committee

The Accessibility Plan has been approved and provided to all partner organizations. The plan is available for download on the [Accessibility webpage](#).

Human Resources

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JH&SC)

Monthly on-site meetings provided JH&SC members and the Board of Directors with a valuable opportunity to engage with field staff, tour the site, and gain insight into current challenges, all while working to enhance safety practices. New safety procedures were developed and implemented to improve clarity for employees, and regular assessments of existing procedures ensure compliance with WorkSafe BC regulations, demonstrating the RDBN's commitment to continuous improvement in safety standards.

Policies and Procedures

While labour relations remain the primary focus of Human Resources, a key secondary priority is reviewing current policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the BC

Administration

July 1, 2024 to September 30, 2024

Employment Standards Act (ESA). We are currently conducting a comprehensive review to update policies in line with the legislative changes. This review process is ongoing, ensuring that policies are updated and reflect the current legal framework.



Finance

July 1, 2024 to September 30, 2024

Staffing

Fulltime permanent:

John Illes, Chief Financial Officer

Kim Fields, Accounting Clerk II (Payroll)

Crystal Miller, Accounting Clerk II (Finance)

Chelsey Fields, Accounting Clerk I (Accounts Payable and Receivable)

Statistic Highlight for the 3rd Quarter 2024

Accounts payable paid a total of \$12,312,386 in invoices for the first nine months of the year of which \$6,200,315 was paid in the last three months.

Accounts Receivable balance as of September 30th is \$312,573 with \$101,544 over 60 days (\$186,777 with \$61,576 over 60 last quarter). A payment of just over \$24,000 at the beginning of October cleared up a portion of the amount owing over 60 days. The larger balances are from the increase in landfilling activities over the construction season.

Accounting

The requisitions from member municipalities and the provincial government (for rural areas) were received in early August.

The only significant transaction not in the 2024 Annual Financial Plan is the receipt of \$2,885,233 from the Northwest BC Resource Benefits Alliance.

Reporting

The third quarter income statements are included as an attachment to this memo.

- The climate action program grant was received for the next three years of \$328,408. This amount was contributed to the climate action program reserve.
- The investment revenue earned each year is contributed to reserves with each reserve account receiving a proportionate share of the earnings based on its total balance.
- The repairs of environmental services' equipment and machinery was higher than budgeted this year as a result of some major repairs and refurbishment of equipment.
- The recycling revenue is lower than expected as the earnings from metal recycling have not yet been realized for the year.

The directors' remuneration and travel expenses report to the end of September is included with this memo as an attachment. There are no concerns noted.

Finance

Quarterly Report – September 30, 2024

Attachments: **Third Quarter Income Statements**
Directors Remuneration and Expenses

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Cash Based Statement of Operations
For the Nine Months Ending September 30, 2024

| Revenue | Budget | Budget (3/4) | Actual | Variance |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Requisition | \$ 14,434,051 | | \$ 14,434,064 | |
| Service Agreements | \$ 104,908 | | \$ 79,334 | |
| Investment Revenue | | | \$ 499,739 | |
| Transfer from Reserve | \$ 2,650,994 | | \$ 2,007,636 | |
| Donations Received | \$ - | | \$ 9,750 | |
| Provincial Grants | \$ 297,082 | \$ 222,812 | \$ 526,919 | \$ 304,108 |
| UBCM Grants | \$ 326,185 | \$ 244,639 | \$ 96,712 | \$ (147,926) |
| NDIT Grant | \$ 313,000 | \$ 234,750 | \$ 4,000 | \$ (230,750) |
| Other Grant Revenue | \$ 300,442 | \$ 225,332 | \$ 198,964 | \$ (26,368) |
| Grant in Lieu of Taxes | \$ 1,299,869 | | \$ 1,270,861 | |
| Northwest Regional Regional Funding | | | \$ 2,885,233 | |
| EMBC Expense Reimbursement | \$ 316,000 | | \$ 301 | \$ 301 |
| Fees and Charges | \$ 99,365 | \$ 74,524 | \$ 95,701 | \$ 21,177 |
| Building Permits | \$ 120,000 | \$ 90,000 | \$ 92,860 | \$ 2,860 |
| Recycling Revenue | \$ 392,000 | \$ 294,000 | \$ 139,120 | \$ (154,880) |
| Land Filling Revenue | \$ 266,000 | \$ 199,500 | \$ 767,855 | \$ 568,355 |
| Misc Revenue | \$ 227,850 | \$ 170,888 | \$ 588,435 | \$ 417,547 |
| ALR Fees | \$ 22,000 | \$ 16,500 | \$ 10,150 | \$ (6,350) |
| Transit Revenue | \$ 36,500 | \$ 27,375 | \$ 29,789 | \$ 2,414 |
| Telus 911 Fees | \$ 72,000 | \$ 54,000 | \$ 59,131 | \$ 5,131 |
| Service Cost Sharing | \$ 254,072 | \$ 190,554 | \$ 190,678 | \$ 124 |
| Municipal Debt Repayment | \$ 739,800 | | \$ 475,076 | |
| Gain on Sale of Asset | \$ - | | \$ 45,090 | |
| Prior Year Surplus Brought Forward | \$ 2,690,143 | | \$ 2,556,448 | |
| | \$ 24,962,261 | | \$ 27,063,847 | |

| Expenditures | Budget | Budget (3/4) | Actual | Variance |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Directors' Remuneration | \$ 500,469 | \$ 375,352 | \$ 386,088 | \$ (10,737) |
| Directors' Travel | \$ 180,403 | \$ 135,302 | \$ 80,754 | \$ 54,549 |
| Grant in Aid | \$ 461,334 | \$ 346,001 | \$ 123,184 | \$ 222,816 |
| Elections | \$ 6,000 | \$ 4,500 | \$ - | \$ 4,500 |
| Employees Salaries | \$ 5,659,794 | \$ 4,244,846 | \$ 4,033,325 | \$ 211,520 |
| Employees Benefits | \$ 1,780,736 | \$ 1,335,552 | \$ 1,252,170 | \$ 83,382 |
| Municipal Service Grants | \$ 2,457,744 | | \$ 2,526,765 | |
| Society Service Grants | \$ 3,097,500 | \$ 2,323,125 | \$ 2,124,748 | \$ 198,377 |
| Agreement with BC Transit | \$ 163,002 | \$ 122,252 | \$ 113,950 | \$ 8,302 |
| Utilities | \$ 209,307 | \$ 156,980 | \$ 142,043 | \$ 14,937 |
| Vehicle and Machinery Expense | \$ 209,000 | \$ 156,750 | \$ 352,936 | \$ (196,186) |
| Vehicle and Machinery Fuel | \$ 485,000 | \$ 363,750 | \$ 316,869 | \$ 46,881 |
| Office Costs | \$ 1,137,555 | \$ 853,166 | \$ 660,296 | \$ 192,870 |
| Landfill and Transfer Station Costs | \$ 713,763 | \$ 535,322 | \$ 237,585 | \$ 297,737 |
| 911 Costs | \$ 272,200 | \$ 204,150 | \$ 123,257 | \$ 80,893 |
| Emergency Services and Operations | \$ 391,500 | \$ 293,625 | \$ 87,541 | \$ 206,084 |
| Insurance | \$ 289,849 | \$ 217,387 | \$ 249,073 | \$ (31,686) |
| Legal | \$ 45,000 | \$ 33,750 | \$ 14,142 | \$ 19,608 |
| Audit and Accounting | \$ 42,500 | \$ 31,875 | \$ 9,350 | \$ 22,525 |
| Special Projects | \$ 1,685,851 | \$ 1,264,388 | \$ 288,310 | \$ 976,079 |
| Misc Expenses | \$ 53,711 | \$ 40,283 | \$ 10,945 | \$ 29,338 |
| Capital Expenses | \$ 3,495,000 | \$ 2,621,250 | \$ 2,268,084 | \$ 353,166 |
| Contribution to Reserves | \$ 801,480 | | \$ 1,400,224 | |
| Long term Borrowing Expenses | \$ 777,016 | | \$ 312,210 | |
| Prior Year's Deficit Brought Forward | \$ 46,547 | | \$ 81,547 | |
| Total Expenses | \$ 24,962,261 | | \$ 17,195,396 | |
| Net Surplus (Deficit) | \$ - | | \$ 9,868,451 | |

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

| REMUNERATION | Actual | | Budget | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Nine Months | | 12 Months | |
| Director's Remuneration - "A" | \$ | 14,234 | \$ 19,694 | 72% |
| Director's Remuneration - "B" | \$ | 18,150 | \$ 26,893 | 67% |
| Director's Remuneration - "C" | \$ | 22,014 | \$ 32,283 | 68% |
| Director's Remuneration - "D" | \$ | 34,741 | \$ 46,975 | 74% |
| Director's Remuneration - "E" | \$ | 14,102 | \$ 18,506 | 76% |
| Director's Remuneration - "F" | \$ | 13,006 | \$ 18,881 | 69% |
| Director's Remuneration - "G" | \$ | 13,400 | \$ 18,881 | 71% |
| Director's Remuneration - SMITHERS | \$ | 18,370 | \$ 26,424 | 70% |
| Director's Remuneration - TELKWA | \$ | 11,958 | \$ 19,506 | 61% |
| Director's Remuneration - HOUSTON | \$ | 19,764 | \$ 28,610 | 69% |
| Director's Remuneration - GRANISLE | \$ | 13,415 | \$ 18,944 | 71% |
| Director's Remuneration - BURNS LAKE | \$ | 13,620 | \$ 19,537 | 70% |
| Director's Remuneration - FRASER LAKE | \$ | 11,882 | \$ 18,819 | 63% |
| Director's Remuneration - FORT ST. J | \$ | 14,153 | \$ 20,225 | 70% |
| Director's Remuneration - VANDERHOOF | \$ | 17,438 | \$ 25,674 | 68% |
| ALTERNATE Director's Remuneration | \$ | 7,262 | \$ - | |
| Total | \$ | 257,509 | \$ 359,849 | 72% |

| TRAVEL | Acutal | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------|----|--------|-----|
| | Nine Months | | | | |
| Electoral Area "A" Travel | \$ | 2,896 | \$ | 5,075 | 57% |
| Electoral Area "B" Travel | \$ | 142 | \$ | 3,750 | 4% |
| Electoral Area "C" Travel | \$ | 2,565 | \$ | 8,125 | 32% |
| Electoral Area "D" Travel | \$ | 6,279 | \$ | 22,625 | 28% |
| Electoral Area "E" Travel | \$ | 200 | \$ | 1,750 | 11% |
| Electoral Area "F" Travel | \$ | 2,194 | \$ | 4,800 | 46% |
| Electoral Area "G" Travel | \$ | 2,559 | \$ | 2,800 | 91% |
| SMITHERS Travel | \$ | 4,091 | \$ | 7,075 | 58% |
| TELKWA Travel | \$ | 1,717 | \$ | 4,550 | 38% |
| HOUSTON Travel | \$ | 1,640 | \$ | 2,975 | 55% |
| GRANISLE Travel | \$ | 1,867 | \$ | 3,500 | 53% |
| BURNS LAKE Travel | \$ | - | \$ | - | |
| FRASER LAKE Travel | \$ | 840 | \$ | 2,625 | 32% |
| FORT ST. J Travel | \$ | 2,333 | \$ | 10,809 | 22% |
| VANDERHOOF Travel | \$ | 2,357 | \$ | 2,975 | 79% |
| ALTERNATE TRAVEL | \$ | 1,889 | | | |
| Total | \$ | 33,570 | \$ | 83,434 | 40% |

RURAL GOVERNMENT

| REMUNERATION | Acutal | | Budget | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|------------|
| | Nine Months | | 12 Months | |
| Director's Remuneration - "A" | \$ 12,485 | \$ | 16,902 | 74% |
| Director's Remuneration - "B" | \$ 8,744 | \$ | 13,564 | 64% |
| Director's Remuneration - "C" | \$ 11,191 | \$ | 13,031 | 86% |
| Director's Remuneration - "D" | \$ 9,219 | \$ | 13,092 | 70% |
| Director's Remuneration - "E" | \$ 14,928 | \$ | 18,697 | 80% |
| Director's Remuneration - "F" | \$ 13,300 | \$ | 15,293 | 87% |
| Director's Remuneration - "G" | \$ 9,338 | \$ | 12,511 | 75% |
| Total | \$ 79,205 | \$ | 103,090 | 77% |

| TRAVEL | Acutal | | Budget | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|------------|
| | Nine Months | | Full Year | |
| Electoral Area "A" Travel | \$ 4,763 | \$ | 12,000 | 40% |
| Electoral Area "B" Travel | \$ 4,973 | \$ | 12,000 | 41% |
| Electoral Area "C" Travel* | \$ 12,070 | \$ | 14,000 | 86% |
| Electoral Area "D" Travel | \$ 4,398 | \$ | 12,000 | 37% |
| Electoral Area "E" Travel | \$ 5,405 | \$ | 12,000 | 45% |
| Electoral Area "F" Travel | \$ 9,526 | \$ | 12,000 | 79% |
| Electoral Area "G" Travel | \$ 6,048 | \$ | 12,000 | 50% |
| Total | \$ 47,183 | \$ | 86,000 | 55% |

* includes a \$2,000 allowance for SNRHD travel



Protective Services Department

July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024

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General

The Protective Services Department is responsible for facilitating the RDBN's Emergency Management Program, 911 Service, Rural Fire Protection, and Emergency Response. This report provides a brief update on the status of the 2024 Protective Services Workplan and the ongoing operations of the services provided to residents.

With the hiring of a new Director of Protective Service on August 6, there have been some changes to the department. Staff continues to build on the excellent work of the previous Director as they negotiate this change.

Fulltime permanent

- Director of Protective Services – Scott Zayac
- Regional Fire Chief – Jason Blackwell
- Emergency Services Manager– Christopher Walker
- Protective Services Assistant – Trina Bysouth

Full/Part time temporary

- FireSmart Educator – Mike Huntley
- Emergency Management Technician - Grace Zayac

Vacated positions

- EOC Wildfire Recovery Manager – Trevor Kier (contract ended August 8)
- Summer students – Jordan Illes and Alexandra Aebischer

Indigenous Engagement

In keeping with the Regional Districts 'Strategic Focus Areas', the Protective Services Department is working to enhance relationships with First Nations in the region and explore opportunities to collaborate and work in partnership for the benefit of communities. This quarter, staff visited 4 First Nation communities, engaged in conversations with a total of 7 First Nations in the region and met with the Partnership Coordinator with EMCR this quarter.

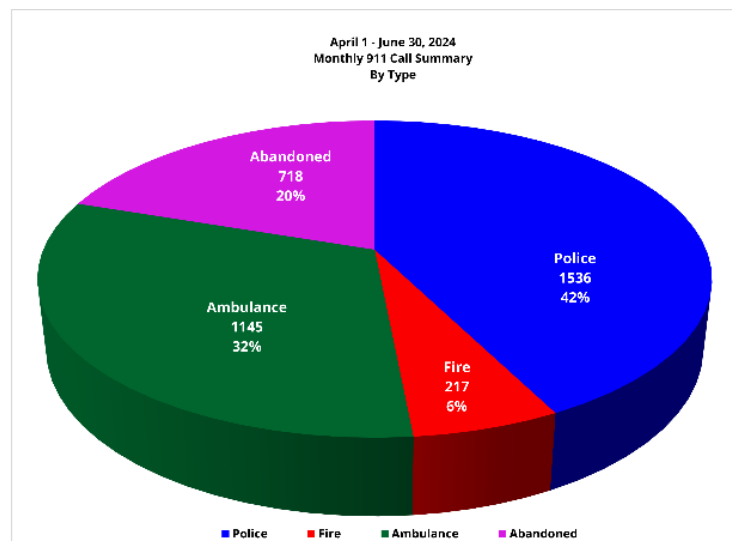
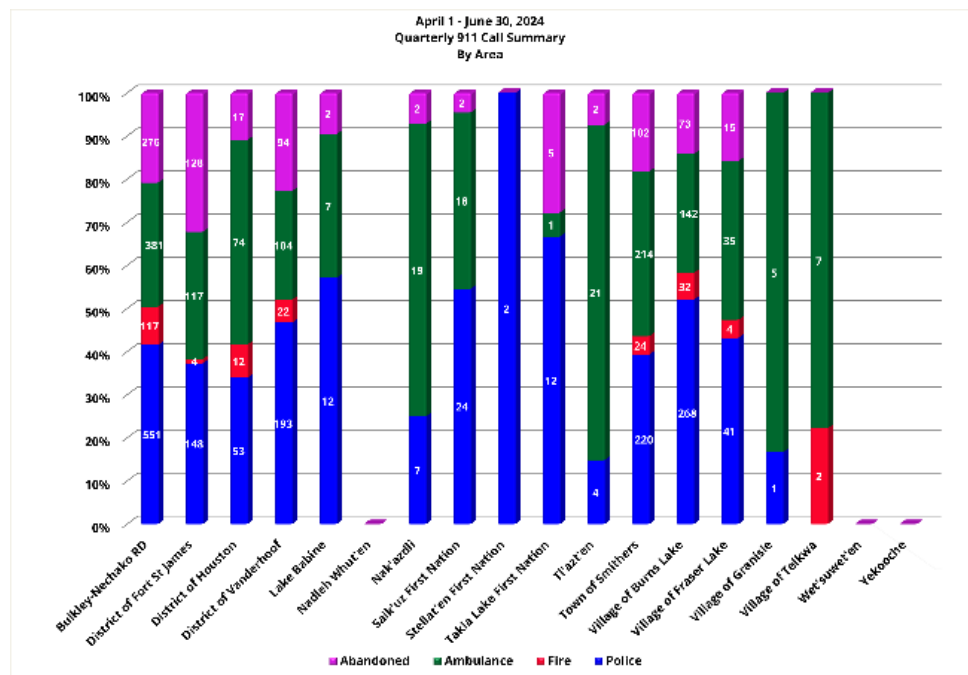
Staff training and education remains an important component of the department and staff are working to bring Indigenous led cultural safety and competency training to the RDBN. Increasing partnerships and improving cooperation with regional First Nations as well as incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the department is a priority.

911 Service

Second quarter 911 Call Summary statistics are included along with the third quarter statistics.

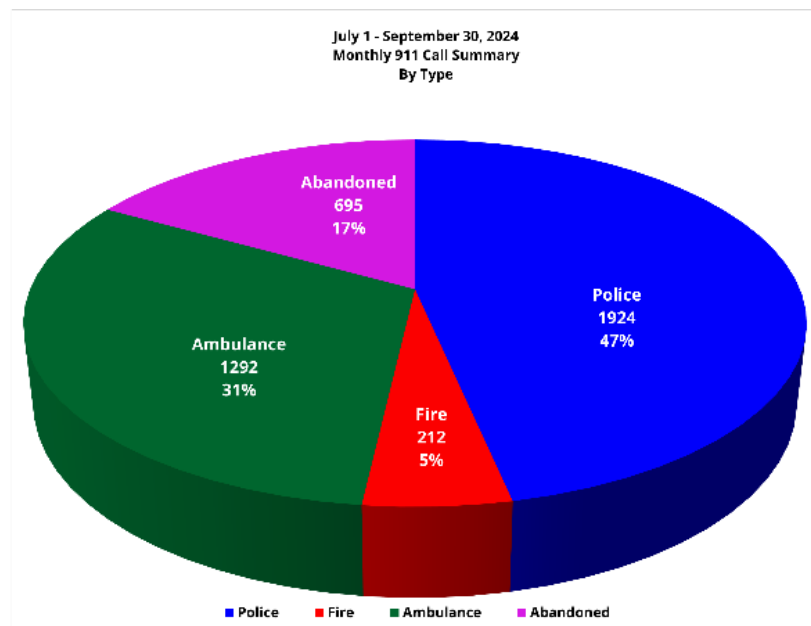
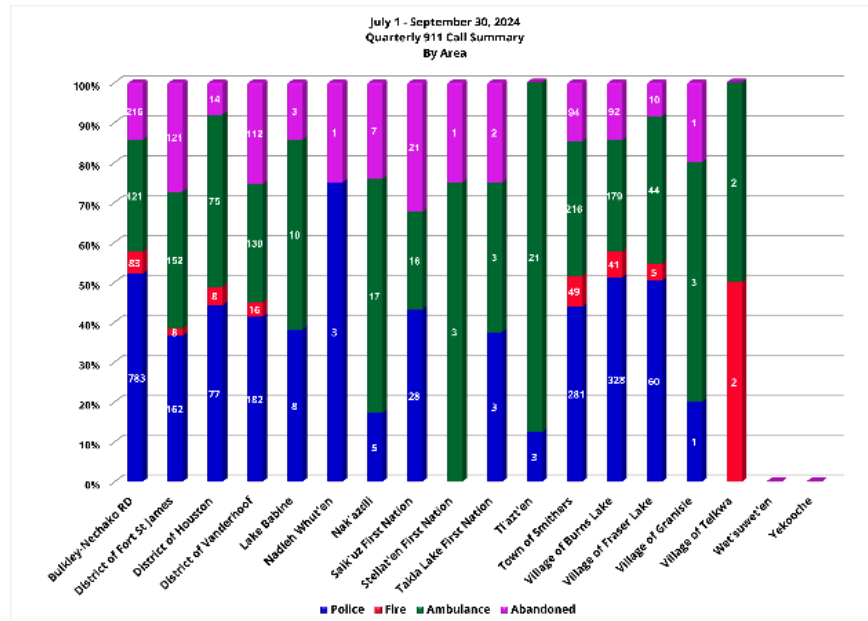
Second quarter:

E-COMM received **3,616** calls for the months of April, May and June from within the geographic boundaries of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. The charts below show the 911 calls received by jurisdiction and call type.



Third quarter:

E-COMM received **4,123** calls for the months of July, August, and September from within the geographic boundaries of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. The charts below show the 911 calls received by jurisdiction and call type.



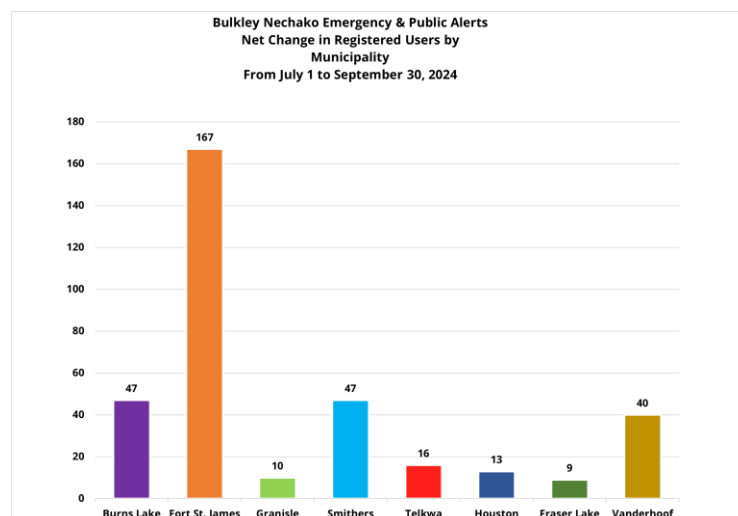
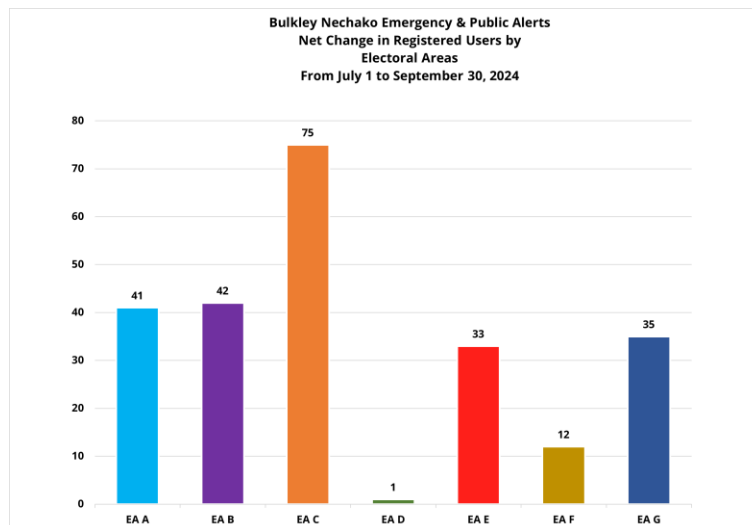
Transition to NG911

Staff continue to work with the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George and Tower Communications to coordinate the purchase and installation of upgraded dispatch consoles in all the Fire Halls to support the increased functionality of NG911. To date new dispatch consoles have been installed in Smithers, Houston, Granisle, Burns Lake, and Fort St. James.

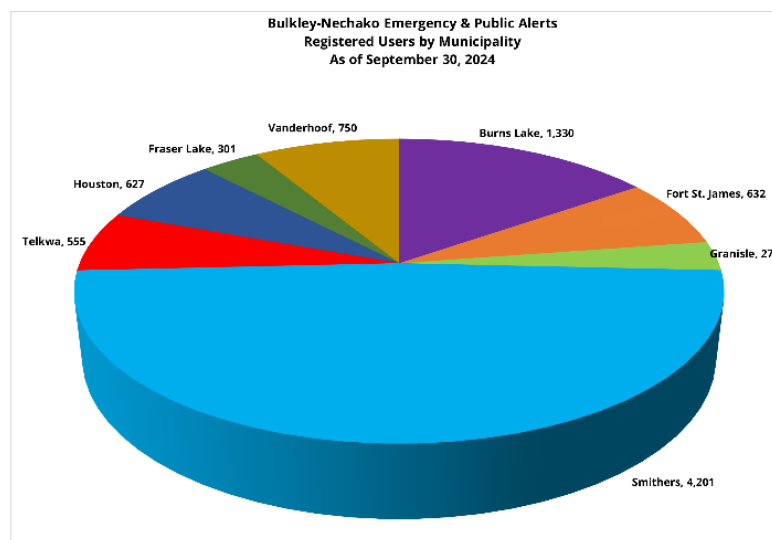
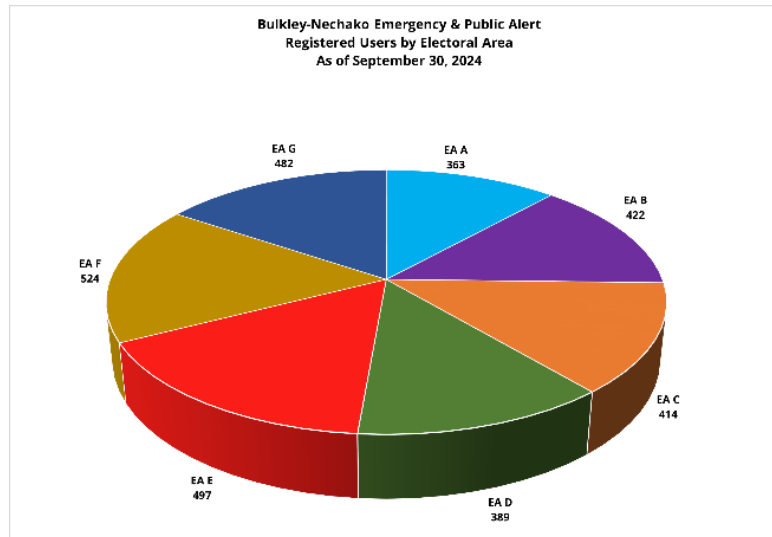
Staff are engaging with communities and other local governments to determine how to best utilize the NG911 grant funding.

Bulkley Nechako Emergency & Public Alerts

The RDBN's emergency and public alert platform is Voyent Alert! This is a key part of the Regional District's crisis communication plan. In Q3 there were **239** new users in the electoral areas and **349** new users in the municipalities which is reflected in the two graphs below.



There are a total of **3,091** users signed up in the electoral areas and **8,666** users signed up in the municipalities. With approximately 41% of the RDBN population over the age of 20 signed up with the platform, the department will be working on new ways of promoting the service and increasing sign-ups.



Staff participate in monthly training sessions to increase efficiency and functionality of the platform. During the 2024 wildfire season, Evacuation Alert, Orders, and Rescinds were sent out through Voyent Alert! by the EOC Information Officers instead of Voyent Alert! staff. This increase in staff capacity decreases the time needed to send out critical alerts and information to the public. As the RDBN moves away from the practice of delivering all

Evacuation Alerts door to door with SARs volunteers, the importance of reaching a greater percent of the population through Voyent Alert! increases.

Rural Fire Protection

Expansion of Fire Protection Areas

Three properties located on McCabe Rd are being recommended to be included in the Smithers Rural Fire Protection Area. This is pending approval from the Town of Smithers Council.

A bylaw for the expansion of the Telkwa Rural Fire Protection Area was approved at the August board meeting and staff are working with the Telkwa Fire Department to add a few homes at the end of Jackpine subdivision into the Fire Protection Area.

Administration, Training, and Support

The Regional Fire Chief acquired a wildland firefighting skid unit for each of the four rural fire departments. The skid units were donated by a company called GlobalMedic which provides disaster relief around the globe. The skid units will be secured to trailers acquired using NCP funds. A half ton pickup will have the ability to tow the skids, greatly assisting rural departments in wildfire response.

New water tenders for the Southside Fire Department and the Cluculz Lake Fire Department were ordered through Fort Garry Fire Trucks, with an estimated delivery of May 2025. The acquisition of these trucks will increase the water delivery capacity of the departments and help ensure residents receive a reliable response. The trucks will be purchased utilizing grant funding to ensure there are no tax increases for residents.

Three additional underground water tanks will be installed for fire suppression purposes in the summer of 2025. Telkwa Rural South, Burns Lake Rural East, and Luck Bay in Fort St. James Rural will each be receiving one. These 10,000-gallon tanks will help provide water resources for fire suppression purposes in these areas. Once these are completed the RDBN will have installed a total of seven underground tanks across the region.

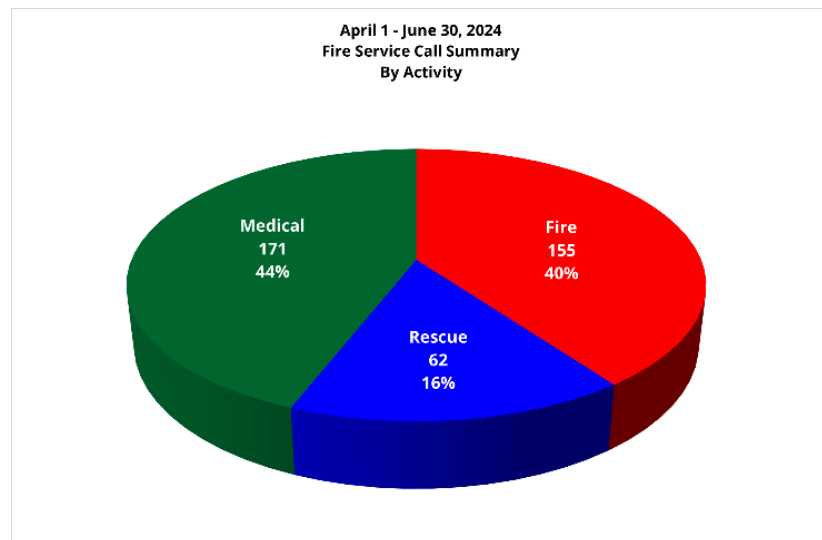
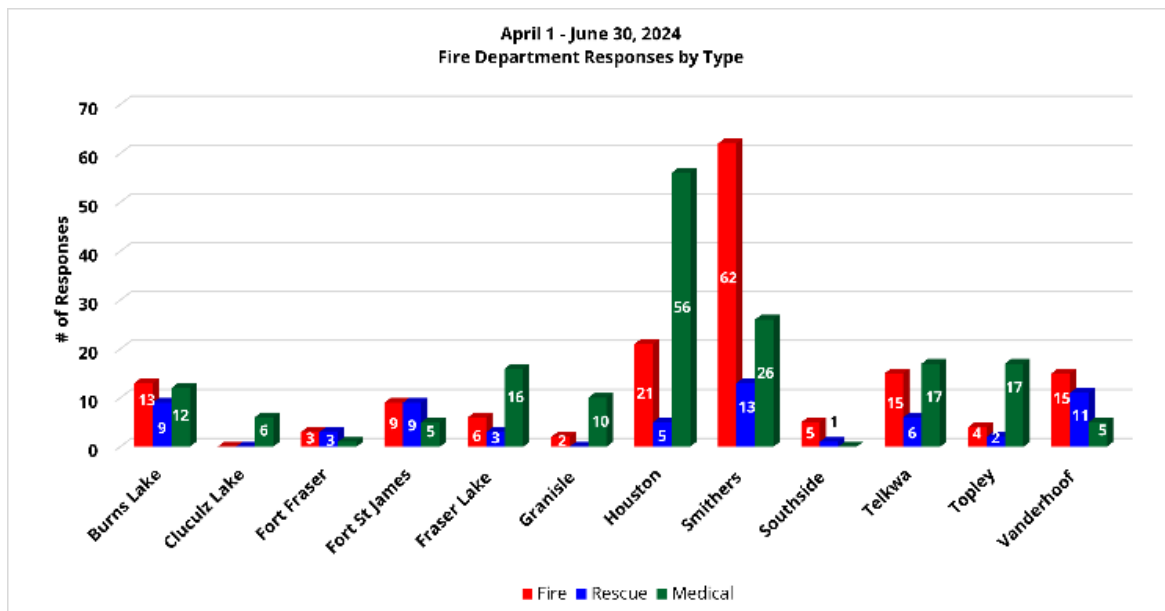
The radio range in the Cluculz Lake Fire Protection Area is quite limited and this poses safety concerns. There are several locations in the area where there is no radio or cell connection with Fire Operations Communications Centre. Tower Communications completed testing of two possible repeater locations that will improve the radio coverage in the area. Staff will be looking at options to utilize some 911 capital reserves in 2025 to purchase and install necessary equipment.

Fire Department Response

Fire department responses vary in type and frequency across our region. Second quarter 911 Fire Rescue statistics are included along with the third quarter statistics.

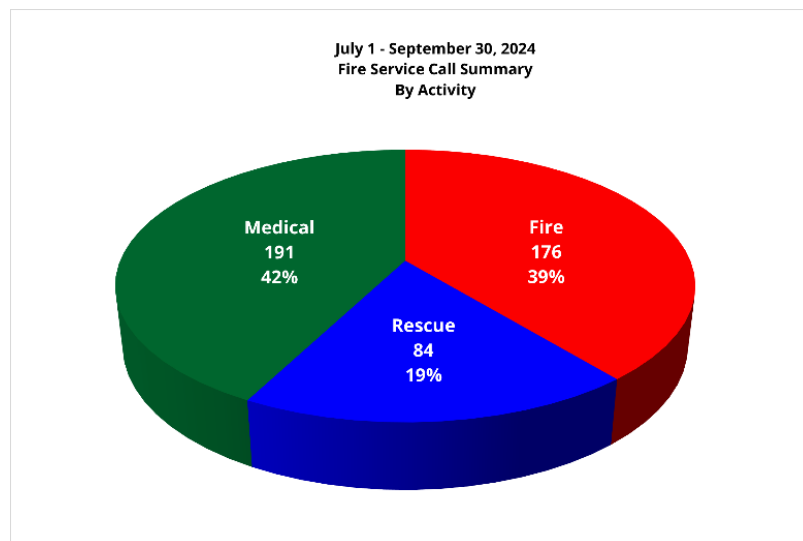
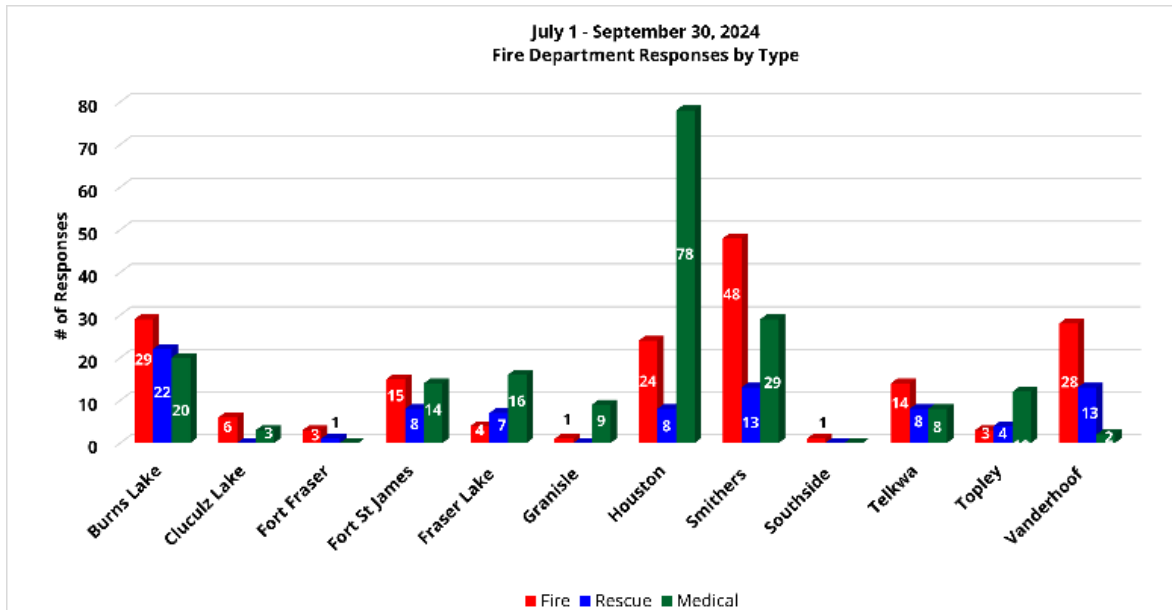
Second quarter:

Of the **3,616** calls received from April - June, **388** were forwarded to the Fire Operation Communication Centre for Fire Department response. The charts below show the 911 calls received by call type and Department.



Third quarter:

Of the **4,123** calls received from July - September, **451** were forwarded to the Fire Operation Communication Centre for Fire Department response. The charts below show the 911 calls received by call type and Department.



Emergency Management Program

2023 Wildfire Recovery

Although wildfire recovery efforts are continuing, the contracted recovery management position has ended. Any further recovery work will be performed by staff.

People/Communities/Housing

Eligible residents, who lost primary residences, were connected with a second Red Cross support program. There is also a resident who lost access to tenure and grazing licenses because the land is no longer able to support livestock. The resident, province and federal agencies are looking for solutions and RDBN staff continue to monitor and advocate for the resident where possible.

Health

No new actions this quarter.

Economy

The province is working on several reports outlining the economic impacts on the regional forestry and agriculture sectors.

Connections were established with Northern BC Tourism Association Emergency Management Specialist to develop strategies for informing tourists of the impacted areas during fire season.

Environment

Slope and geological assessment reports were received from the Germansen Landing and Colleymount areas. There are no notable landslides risks due to intense wildfires in the areas.

Infrastructure and Governance

No new actions this quarter

Emergency Response

The Emergency Operations Centre was activated twice this quarter for a total of 50 days. During July 20 – August 21, two days were at level three, with the remaining days at level one. Three evacuation alerts, one evacuation alert expansion, one evacuation order and one evacuation order expansion, were issued for wildfires, G41261 Laidman Lake and G41243 Pitka Creek.

The second EOC activation was August 30 – September 16, four days were at level two, with the remaining days at level one. Three evacuation alerts were issued for two wildfires, R11204 Sabina Lake and R12015 Mount Wells. One Hazard Notice for air quality was issued due to the increase of wildfire smoke in the area. A clean air facility was opened at the Southside Health and Wellness Centre for a total of 3 days. Masks were distributed to the

three First Nations in area and at the Southside Wellness Centre. The Southside residents appreciated the RDBN opening this facility. Staff is looking at ways to support communities to open clean air facilities at community halls when necessary.

Development and review of emergency plans

The Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan is in development and being amended to align with EDMA. Documents in development and awaiting department review include:

- Policy document (on hold while regulations are being developed)
- Flood Plan
- Wildfire Plan
- Re-Entry Plan
- Demobilization Plan
- Livestock and Pet Plan (on hold while regulations are being developed)
- Air quality plan

Staff and volunteer training

RDBN staff continue to train and prepare for EOC activations. Staff have completed training in:

- ESS Branch Coordinator
- Intro to ICS
- Intro to EOC
- Intro to ESS
- Intro to Emergency Management

Staff have also developed EOC education videos for refresher training. This will be a key resource for new staff and staff with limited EOC experience.

Administration of Emergency Support Services Program

ESS Group Lodging cots, sleeping kits and pillows were purchased. These would be available for evacuated residents requiring short term group lodging. The mobile ESS trailer was sold for \$17,897. This money will go back into the protective services department.

Public Education

Emergency preparedness and FireSmart were the focus of the Social Media campaign on the Bulkley Nechako Emergency Information Facebook page. Educating the public on the benefits and advantages of the Voyent Alert! system is also a departmental priority. The development of a Community Emergency Preparedness Toolkit has also started. The Toolkit will be a resource for communities or neighborhoods wanting to organize and better prepare for emergencies.

Program to Enhance Rail Safety Engagement (PERSE)

The contract for this project was awarded to Calian. The contractor is currently in the data collection and analysis phase and preparing for public and partner engagement sessions for late October-November.

FireSmart

60 Home Partners Assessments were completed this quarter, totaling **119** for the year. **22** rebates amounting to \$14,558 have been awarded this year.

Summer students have attended **13** farmer markets events this quarter and the organization of a Regional Community FireSmart Committee has started.

Regional Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan Development

Frontera Forest Solutions continues to make progress on the Regional Community Wildfire Resiliency plan. The third and final field portion of the plan was recently completed, and staff anticipate seeing a draft document in mid-October.



Planning Department

July 1 – September 30, 2024

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Staffing

Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning
 Maria Sandberg, Planning and Parks Coordinator
 Danielle Patterson, Senior Planner
 Vacant, Senior Planner (Housing)
 Cameron Kral, Planner
 Jason Berlin, Senior Building Inspector
 Steve Davis, Building Inspector
 Daryn Larson, Building Inspector
 Fiona Richardson, Development Services Clerk
 Jason Thompson, Bylaw Enforcement Officer
 Deneve Vanderwolf, Transit Coordinator / Planning Technician
 Rowan Nagel, GIS
 Hannah Zayac, Summer Student

The Planning Department includes 12 full-time positions, and a summer student providing Land Use Planning, Building Inspection, Parks and Trails, Transit, GIS and Bylaw Enforcement Services. Building Inspection and Bylaw Enforcement Services are also provided to select municipalities on a contract basis.

Land Use Applications and Referrals

Agricultural Land Reserve Applications

The Planning Department has received one new ALR Non-Farm Use application in the third quarter of 2024 for recreation and utility uses at Round Lake. One Non-Farm Use application for industrial/commercial use was processed in the third quarter and sent to the Agricultural Land Commission.

Official Community Plan Amendments and Rezoning Applications

The Planning Department has received one rezoning application in the third quarter of 2024, which is in progress. Three OCP and/or rezoning applications are carried over from previous quarters as they are on hold by the applicants; one rezoning application is carried over awaiting an ALC decision, and one OCP/rezoning application is in progress from the second quarter. Planning staff have worked on Regional District initiated official community plan amendments and zoning amendments during the third quarter. They include:

- **RDBN-02-21** – two Zoning Bylaw amendments for agriculture-related housekeeping amendments and general housekeeping amendments. Adopted September 12, 2024.

- **RDBN-01-24 (Part 2)** – proposed optional housing flexibility amendments to the OCPs and the Zoning Bylaw. In progress. Public Hearing held October 10, 2024.

Temporary Use Permits

The Planning Department received one temporary use permit (TUP) application in the third quarter of 2024, which is in progress. One TUP for an industrial use is carried over from 2023 as it is on hold from the applicant. One TUP from 2023 for an industrial use is no longer on hold by the applicant and is being processed by staff.

Development Variance Permits

The Planning Department received one development variance permit (DVP) application in the third quarter of 2024 for varying minimum parcel area at subdivision.

Subdivision Referrals

The Planning Department received one subdivision referral in the third quarter of 2024. It was processed and comments were provided to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Land Use Reviews

The Planning Department completed twenty-five land use reviews for building projects in the third quarter of 2024.

Other Referrals

A total of eight miscellaneous referrals were received in the third quarter of 2024. Three referrals related to the energy sector (natural gas, window power, and energy infrastructure), two referrals were for changes in and about a stream, one referral was mining related, one referral was related to a woodlot, and one was a municipal referral. Ten referrals were processed in the third quarter, including three referrals carried over from the second quarter. One referral is in progress.

Special Projects

Special Projects refers to a wide variety of projects that do not fit within the regular day to day work program of the Planning Department. In the third quarter of 2024 the Planning Department had the following special project accomplishments.

- In July the Planning Department reported to the Board on the Coastal GasLink Pipeline Ltd. (CGL) referral regarding amendments to its Environmental Assessment Certificate (EAC). The Board directed staff to respond to the Environmental Assessment Officer that CGL's response does not address RDBN comments/concerns.

- In August the Planning Department reported to the Board on CGL's comments regarding the July RDBN response. The Board directed staff to respond to the Environmental Assessment Officer that CGL's response does not address RDBN comments and concerns remain.
- In September the Planning Department provided to the Board for their receipt the Regional Housing Initiative Work Plan.
- In September the Planning Department reported to the Board on the Agricultural Land Commission Annual Report for 2023/2024.
- The Planning Department Summer Student worked on digitizing the Regional District's Planning Department records. This process will continue over the next few years.

Long Range Planning

The Fort St James Rural OCP draft was presented to the public at a well-attended open house on July 31, 2024. Some additional fine-tuning of the draft was done following feedback from the public and referral agencies. The OCP bylaw has now progressed to the formal approval process and received first and second reading at the September 26th Board meeting. A public hearing was held on October 15th, 2014.

A report to the Board regarding the work plan for the Housing Planner position was provided to the Board at their September 12, 2024 meeting.

Building Inspection

The RDBN and service municipalities received a total of 51 building permit applications in the third quarter of 2024, with a total construction value of **\$12,981,014**. This is comparable to the 50 building permit applications with a total construction value of \$16,713,575 received in the third quarter of 2023. This includes five new dwellings being built in the rural areas and three in municipalities receiving building inspection services.

Third Quarter Building Permit Data for 2024

| Area | Total Permits | Total Construction Value (\$) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A | 17 | 2,565,000 |
| B | 6 | 1,345,000 |
| C | 1 | 40,000 |
| D | 2 | 344,500 |
| E | 0 | 0 |
| F | 2 | 685,000 |
| G | 0 | 0 |
| Burns Lake | 2 | 16,066 |
| Fort St. James | 3 | 65,000 |
| Fraser Lake | 0 | 0 |
| Granisle | 4 | 7,133,448 |
| Houston | 8 | 156,000 |
| Telkwa | 6 | 631,000 |
| Second Quarter RDBN Totals | 51 | 12,981,014 |
| Smithers | 14 | 1,140,764 |
| Vanderhoof | 13 | 455,488 |
| Total | 78 | 14,577,266 |

Bylaw Enforcement

Complaints continue to be steady in the third quarter and moving into the fourth quarter. Outstanding issues continue to be resolved, and files closed. Bylaw enforcement services is currently proceeding through the process to enforce on one unsightly property. There has been a lot of interest from the posted newspaper add reaching out to Contractors who are interested in bringing the property into compliance. Bylaw enforcement along with support from two Building inspectors performed a site visit to document all the items on the unsightly property.

Bylaw Files Statistics by quarter for the RDBN

| BYLAW COMPLAINTS (file created) | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Year 2024 | Carried Forward | New Files | Total Files | Resolved |
| 1 st Quarter | 19 | 9 | 28 | 6 |
| 2 nd Quarter | 22 | 13 | 35 | 14 |
| 3 rd Quarter | 31 | 11 | 46 | 4 |

| NON-BYLAW COMPLAINTS (no file created) | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Year 2024 | Dog | Sewerage | Squatter/Unhoused | Other |
| 1 st Quarter | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 2 nd Quarter | 14 | 8 | 5 | 12 |
| 3 rd Quarter | 8 | 0 | 1 | 4 |

Bylaw enforcement services continue to be provided to the District of Houston under agreement as a half time position. The District of Houston statistics are tracked separately.

Staff presented a draft bylaw establishing a bylaw dispute adjudication system to the Board at their October 10, 2024 Board meeting for initial consideration and referral to municipalities for comment. Once comments from municipalities are received a bylaw will be presented to the Board for formal consideration.

Parks and Trails

Cycle 16 Trail

Staff continue to look forward to discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure regarding the trail development process moving forward given recent funding announcements for completion of the trail. Staff are also eager to discuss trail ownership issues moving forward.

Highway 35 Multi-use Trail

The Highway 35 Multi-use Trail Conceptual Design Study was completed in the third quarter. The consultant presented the conceptual design report to the Board at the September 26th Board meeting.

Staff have not received any information from the Province regarding this summer's recent funding announcements for completion of the trail but look forward to discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure regarding the trail design process moving forward.

Round Lake

The Board received the proposed redevelopment plans for the Round Lake Park development at their October 10, 2024 Board meeting, and approved funds for the required archaeological assessment required by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Mapping and Inquiries

In the third quarter, the GIS Technician completed 92 tasks for RDBN staff. These requests included 45 for the Planning Department, 14 for Protective Services, 4 for Administration & Finance, and 6 for Environmental Services. In addition, 28 public and 21 government inquiries were answered.

House Numbering

A total of 196 addressing changes were processed in the third quarter of 2024. Of these, 50 were new or changed addresses associated with an ongoing initiative to identify unaddressed structures. Of the remaining 146, 27 new addresses were issued in the rural area and 85 new addresses were issued for municipalities and First Nations. The rest were corrections, verifications, or changes to our road network data.

Additionally, the ongoing unaddressed structures project was completed in the third quarter, with associated addressing letters being sent to property owners in early September. In total, this project located and addressed 187 structures and dwellings, and corrected data associated with 39 previously issued addresses. This project has also improved internal RDBN data and led to numerous corrections to provincial data provided by BC Assessment and the Land Title Survey Authority.

Transit

Third quarter ridership numbers are as follows. Compared to the third quarter of 2023 ridership is slightly less on route 161 and shows a slight increase on route 162.

| Route | Year | July | August | September | Total |
|-------------------|------|------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| 161 Prince George | 2024 | 390 | 468 | 302 | 1160 |
| | 2023 | 406 | 518 | 401 | 1325 |
| 162 Smithers | 2024 | 272 | 242 | 152 | 666 |
| | 2023 | 158 | 210 | 146 | 514 |



Environmental Services

July 1 to September 30, 2024

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Priorities

All efforts made by Environmental Services staff are working towards improving “the 5 C’s”:

- Continuity – Minimize the impact of disruptive events/circumstances
- Capacity – Ensure that there is manpower and resources to maintain the services we provide
- Compliance – Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and WorkSafe BC
- Consistency – Establish equal and consistent region-wide access to diversion services
- Competency – Ensure a high level of competency of RDBN staff with a reliable training program that ensures a safe work environment.

Services Provided

Solid Waste Management:

- Operation of two (2) sub-regional landfills located near Houston (Knockholt) and Vanderhoof (Clearview) and one (1) local landfill in Manson Creek.
- Operation of eight (8) transfer stations located in Smithers/Telkwa, Houston, Granisle, Burns Lake, Southside, Fraser Lake, Ft. St. James and Vanderhoof,
- Operation of eight (8) recycling depots located in Smithers/Telkwa, Houston, Granisle, Burns Lake, Southside, Fraser Lake, Ft. St James and Vanderhoof.
- Waste hauling operations transport waste from Transfer Stations to Landfills
- Environmental monitoring and reporting to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy as per RDBN Operational Certificates.

Liquid Waste Management:

- Operation of septage receiving facilities at Smithers/Telkwa, Houston, Burns Lake and Fort Fraser.

Fort Fraser Water and Wastewater Systems:

- Operation of a small water supply and distribution system
- Operation of small wastewater collection and treatment system

Somerset Sewer Collection & Distribution System

- Operation of small sewage collection and leach field distribution system

Staffing

Full-time Permanent:

- Director of Environmental Services
- Waste Diversion Supervisor
- Operations Supervisor
- Training & Safety Supervisor
- Environmental Technician
- Environmental Services Office Assistant – vacant (under review)
- Recycling Program Coordinator - vacant
- Field Assistant West
- Field Assistant East
- 11 x Transfer Station & Recycling Depot Attendants
- 2 x Landfill Operators
- 4 x Landfill Attendants
- 2 x Waste Haul Drivers

Part-time Permanent

- 1 x Landfill Attendant
- 9 x Transfer Station & Recycling Depot Attendants
- 2 x Waste Haul Drivers

Casual (holiday and sick coverage):

- 5 x Transfer Station and Recycling Depot Attendants (3 vacant)
- 1 x Landfill Attendant

Temporary

- 2 x gate-check
- 1 x litter picker

Notable Department Activity

- Management Staff focus on continuing operations
- Addressed several WorkSafe concerns, including the improvement of facilities, procedures, equipment and staff training
- Implementation and monitoring of the gate-check and load screening process
- Asbestos related training, procedures development and documentation have been a significant focus for management
- Planned activities and training for the August 1 staff event
- Recruitment for a Recycling Program Coordinator continued
- Improve onsite training for new staff to ensure a strong foundational knowledge and proficiency and practical safety awareness
- Recruitment and training of permanent and casual attendants and cross-training of current Transfer Station and Recycling Depot Attendants continues
- Monitoring of the in-house maintenance plan for Manson Creek Landfill
- Monitored the new Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) recycling programs
- Public Education Program: staff has worked on improving the information provided on the RDBN website
- The disposal application process for various special wastes were improved
- Developing and implementation of a Unified Sign system for RDBN waste facilities is ongoing
- Wood waste (brush) diversion to local sawmills has continued in the East
- Evaluation and planning for Wood waste program in the west
- Quarterly ground water sampling of active and closed landfills
- Efforts to complete backlogged landfill reporting
- Development of video surveillance program for waste facilities
- 2024 Capital Projects – Completion of various projects and purchases.
- 2024 Capital Projects – Planning and design of various projects

Solid Waste Management Plan Monitoring

The 2018 Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is a long-term vision of how the RDBN would like to manage its solid waste in accordance with the pollution prevention hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover and Residuals Management). Section 4 of the SWMP gives clear direction on how to achieve our regions goals via a series of strategies and recommendations, listed below along with an implementation update for this quarter.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Strategies

Strategy 1: Increase Reduction and Reuse

- Ongoing operations

Strategy 2: Expand Access to Residential Recycling

- Continue to operate 8 Recycling Depots
- Electronics, small appliances and power tools, CO2/smoke detectors, paint, lights/lamps and fixtures

Strategy 3: Increase Industrial Commercial Institution (ICI) Sector Recycling

- No actions

Strategy 4: Increase Organics Diversion

- Continue to accept brush and yard waste at Transfer Stations
- Support the Town of Smithers composting feasibility study

Strategy 5: Increase Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste Diversion

- No actions

Strategy 6: Support Expansion of Extended Producer Responsibility Programs

- Continue operating full range of available EPR programs
- Vanderhoof, Burns Lake and Smithers Recycling depots began hosting the full range of EPR programs

Strategy 7: Support Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Diversion

Supplies have been purchased, preparing training program

Strategy 8: Support Recycling and Diversion of Agricultural Plastics

- Continued to host the CleanFarms agricultural plastics pilot program. This 3-year pilot program was scheduled to end on June 30, 2024.
- The cost for an additional year (June 2024 to June 2025) is \$48,500.
- A final report for the 3-year pilot will be brought back to the Board in November to review options

Strategy 9: Expand Regional Education and Behaviour Change Programs

- Staff has been working closely with communications to update the website, develop new and relevant educational material, and finalizing signage at sites

Supporting Policies and Bylaws

Assess Cost Recovery Through User Fees

- No actions
- Recruitment efforts for a Recycling Coordinator. Hiring this position will build capacity toward User Pay implementation

Update Current Facility Regulation and User Fee Bylaw

- Completed in 2020. No new updates

Implement Disposal Charges for Camp Waste and Other Industries

- Completed in 2020. No new updates

Mitigate Illegal Dumping

- No actions
- Staff have received several reports of illegal dumping and are investigating the information

2024 Capital Projects Update

The third quarter of 2024 has been used for planning projects and completing small projects.

| Environmental Services Capital - Q3 - July 1 to September 30, 2024 | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Reference | Site | Project | Status | Budget | Cost |
| Rolling Stock | BLTS | Skidsteer for RD | Complete | \$110,000 | \$117,000 |
| Rolling Stock | FSJTS | Skidsteer for RD | Complete | \$110,000 | \$117,000 |
| Rolling Stock | HAUL | New Walking Floor Trailer for FLTS | Complete | \$220,000 | \$176,000 |
| Rolling Stock | Field Ops | New flat deck - replace P3 | Complete | \$130,000 | \$127,000 |
| Rolling Stock | Field Ops | 3/4 Ton or 1/2 Ton Pick Up | Complete | \$95,000 | \$66,000 |
| Rolling Stock | Field Ops | Mini excavator | Complete | \$110,000 | \$118,000 |
| Floor resurfacing | VTS | Floor resurfacing | In-progress | \$300,000 | \$0 |
| Clearview | CLF | Leachate collection lagoon | Planning & Design | \$400,000 | \$0 |
| Fraser Lake | FLTS | Transtor removal and roof structure | Deferred | \$170,000 | \$10,000 |
| Required Safety | Various | Safety Improvement (5 Projects) | In Progress | \$125,000 | \$84,000 |
| Site Improvements | Various | Site Improvements (18 Projects) | In Progress | \$490,000 | \$616,000 |
| Total | | | | \$2,260,000 | \$1,431,000 |

Note that the “Site Improvements” category is over budget due to unplanned purchases, projects and repairs. Due to WorkSafe requirements for asbestos exposure control, a number of large purchases were necessary to comply. Various small projects that were necessary, opportune or larger in scope than planned required labour and/or materials. In addition, this category includes several large capital repairs to vehicles and equipment that will extend their lifetime for 2 years or more.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: **Items to be brought forward to the public agenda from Special (In-Camera) Meeting**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

BACKGROUND

As per the Board recommendation, the following motion is being brought forward from the Special (In-Camera) meeting of October 10, 2024:

Proposed Amendment to the Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy

I.C.2024-13-3 "That the Board approve the proposed amendments to the Pregnancy and Parental Leave Policy as presented and rename it to the Maternity and Parental Leave policy."

Dog Control in the RDBN

I.C.2024-13-6 "That the Board direct staff to move forward with dog control regulations in the Cluculz Lake area."

ATTACHMENTS:

Maternity and Parental Leave Policy



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO MATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with the Employment Standards Act and provide necessary support to RDBN employees during significant life events.

Policy Statement

In accordance with Section 50 and 51 of the Employment Standards Act, employees are entitled to unpaid time off in the form of maternity and/or parental leave when they have a baby or adopt a child. Pregnant employees can take both maternity and parental leave.

Maternity Leave

1. Eligibility and Duration

- An employee who is pregnant is entitled to an unpaid Leave of Absence for a maximum of seventeen (17) consecutive weeks.

2. Timing of Leave

- Before the Birth or Sec 50 (1) (a): Leave must begin no earlier than 13 weeks before the expected birth date and no later than the actual birth date.
- After the Birth or Sec 50 (1) (b): Leave continues for at least six weeks after the birth and ends no later than 17 weeks after the leave began.
- A certificate from a doctor or nurse practitioner may be required if an employee wants to return to work sooner. If the employee is unable to return to work for reasons related to childbirth, the leave can be extended for six weeks (for a total of 12 weeks).

3. Termination of Pregnancy

- Employees can take up to six (6) additional consecutive weeks of unpaid leave starting on the date a pregnancy ends.
- An employer may request a note from a doctor or nurse practitioner that says when the pregnancy ended.
- The request should be submitted in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to the employee's return to work date and must specify the length of the extension and the revised date the employee will be available to return to work.



4. Request for Leave

- A request for leave should be given in writing to the Regional District at least four (4) weeks before the day the employee proposes to begin leave and state when the employee will be starting the leave.

5. Returning to Work

- The employee returning to work after maternity leave shall provide to the Regional District at least four (4) weeks prior notice of their intention to return.
- The Regional District will offer the employee, without loss of seniority, the same position.

6. Employee Not Returning to Work

- An employee who takes maternity leave shall not terminate their employment before the leave expires or when it expires without giving the Regional District at least four (4) weeks' written notice of the termination.

7. Extended Leave

- An employee who is unable to return to work for reasons related to the birth or the termination of the pregnancy is entitled to up to six (6) additional consecutive weeks of unpaid leave.
- This request must be accompanied by a medical practitioner's or nurse practitioner's certificate if required by the employer.

Benefits for the maternity and parental leave

- Benefit coverage will be maintained during the period of separation under the current plans, provided the employee continues to pay their share of the premiums. Additionally, the employee will continue to accrue vacation and sick day entitlements during their maternity and parental leave.



Parental Leave

1. Eligibility and Duration

An employee who requests parental leave is entitled to:

- For a parent who takes leave under section 50 (maternity leave): Up to 61 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave, which must begin, unless the employer and employee agree otherwise, immediately after the end of the leave taken under section 50.
- For a parent, other than an adopting parent, who does not take leave under section 50: Up to 62 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave, which must begin within 78 weeks after the birth of the child or children.
- For an adopting parent: Up to 62 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave, which must begin within 78 weeks after the child or children are placed with the parent.

2. Additional Leave for Special Conditions

- If the child has a physical, psychological, or emotional condition requiring an additional period of parental care, an employee is entitled to up to an additional 5 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave, beginning immediately after the end of the leave taken under the standard parental leave.

3. Request for Leave

A request for leave must:

- Be given in writing to the employer.
- If the request is for leave under section 50 (1) (a) or (b), be given to the employer at least four (4) weeks before the employee proposes to begin leave.
- If required by the employer, be accompanied by a medical practitioner's or nurse practitioner's certificate or other evidence of the employee's entitlement to leave.

4. Combined Entitlement

- An employee's combined entitlement to leave under section 50 and section 51 is limited to 78 weeks plus any additional leave the employee is entitled to under section 50 (3) or subsection (2) of this section.

5. Criteria for Parental Leave

- To qualify for parental leave, a new parent must have been hired by the Regional District at least 13 weeks before the leave begins, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Regional District and the employee.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: **Ministry of Citizens' Services application to the CRTC**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Citizen's Services has submitted an application to the CRTC requesting a change in confidentiality restrictions on telecommunications data and sharing of said data with Provinces.

The comment period for this application is open until November 21, 2024. The Ministry is hoping local governments will submit responses to this application.

Comments can be submitted by following these steps:

1. [Follow this link](#) to the CRTC's Open Part 1 Applications Page
2. Scroll down to:
 - a. [8000-P114-202404929](#)
Application to disclose certain Annual Facilities Survey data
Province of British Columbia
3. Click the "Submit" button
4. Accept the terms and conditions
5. Click the "In support" box and write a comment in the comment box and/or attach a document.

Comments will be important in the consideration of this application, and some ideas are provided below:

- As a representative of *the* Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, I believe that access to accurate connectivity data is important to our community, administrative and

management operations, including the ongoing work of the Province to expand connectivity.

- Providing street information at a tighter level on the ISED Internet Availability map will better enable the public to understand accurately the service options in their location.
 - The current hex is too large and shows service options not available in a location, a circumstance worsened for small footprint communities served by a mix of technologies.
 - Hex's can overlap multiple communities, making it impossible to discern service levels and providers in individual communities.
 - This data is integral to ensuring that all citizens, including in rural and remote areas, can access reliable, high-speed internet and mobile wireless services by knowing where services are available to them.
- Service information not consistently treated by providers as confidential should not continue to be held in confidence by the Commission.
- Access to broadband, mobile wireless, and transport coverage information is key to ensuring the ability to identify the final homes that require high-speed connectivity.

Staff will submit a response from the RDBN, but there are no restrictions on the number of submissions, so individual Directors who wish to are encouraged to submit their own comments on this important topic.

Inaccurate service data has proven a barrier to connectivity infrastructure planning across the region and the province, and the RDBN has participated in several opportunities to advocate for changes to this aspect of the process.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Jason Blackwell, Regional Fire Chief
Date: October 24, 2024
Subject: Fire Safety Act

RECOMMENDATION:**(all/directors/majority)**

Receive.

BACKGROUND

The Fire Safety Act (FSA) received Royal Assent back in May 2016 and came into force August 1, 2024. The FSA replaces the aging Fire Services Act. One of the main driving forces behind the FSA is to ensure a single standard of fire safety for public buildings across the province, regardless of jurisdiction.

The FSA initially caused some significant concerns for regional districts as it now includes fire inspections of public buildings as well as fire investigations in rural areas. As a result, the Single Standard for Fire Safety Working Group (SSFSWG) was created. This group comprised UBCM representatives (including CAO Helgesen), and the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) and was created to address concerns and suggest amendments to the act. This group provided feedback and recommendations to the OFC but in the end the FSA was brought into force on August 1, 2024, without any changes.

Even though the act was not changed, some of the main concerns were clarified in the Fire Safety Act Q&A document. Moving forward the OFC has committed to assisting regional districts with inspections and investigations. Another big concern was around the regional district being considered a "monitoring entity." This designation would require regional districts to have a risk-based compliance model for fire inspections - basically a proactive approach. It was determined that regional districts are not "monitoring entities" and as such are only required to complete fire

inspections on public buildings outside municipal boundaries under the following circumstances:

- Changes in major occupancy and use of a public property
- New public building being constructed
- Complaint received about a premises
- At the request of the owner or occupier of a premises

Fire Investigations must be completed within 5 days after the date on which the local authority learned of a fire that destroyed or damaged property or resulted in injury or death.

The OFC has committed to conducting fire inspections and investigations for regional districts upon request and regional districts will not incur any financial costs for these services. This process is laid out in the “Regional Districts Fire Inspections and Investigations Procedures” document. The OFC has stated this arrangement be evaluated on an ongoing basis which is concerning in that this arrangement may not last forever and there will potentially be a further downloading of responsibilities on to regional districts.

Even though the OFC has committed to providing inspections and investigations upon request, there is still a requirement under the FSA for regional districts to designate fire inspectors and fire investigators. This must be done in writing on or before October 28th, 2024.

The designated inspectors and investigators will have one year from the October deadline to meet the minimum training requirements set by the OFC. Prior learning assessments can be completed for individuals that have taken previous training in these areas. The OFC is also offering free online training courses in early 2025 for both the inspectors and investigators.

Another issue regional districts are facing is the increased costs and staffing time to undertake these new requirements. With no established service for fire inspections and investigations, there is no mechanism for the regional districts to tax for this service. For this reason, staff will be requesting the assistance of the OFC for any inspections or investigations that fall within the jurisdiction of the regional district. Once staff have determined potential workloads, a determination will be made on the feasibility of handling these responsibilities internally, as this avenue of the fire service is an interest to the Regional Fire Chief.

Designations for fire inspectors will be the Regional Fire Chief and the Building Inspectors. Building Inspectors already inspect new construction of public buildings and most of the BC Fire Code requirements are already covered in these inspections.

Designations for fire investigators will be the Regional Fire Chief and the Chief Officers of any municipal fire department that has a rural component to their fire protection area. The designation for municipal fire department Chief Officers will only be for the portion of their fire protection area outside of municipal boundaries.

Staff will work with municipalities to determine levels of training required for the "Investigator" designations.

ATTACHMENTS

Fire Safety Act - Question and Answer Document

Regional Districts Fire Inspection and Fire Investigator Procedures Document

Fire Safety Act
Questions and Answers
Date Revised: September 17, 2024

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Office of the
Fire Commissioner



Change Summary

Note: Changes as of September 17, 2024, are reflected in highlight. Only significant changes have been highlighted.

| Date Version | Question Number | Change |
|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| August 19, 2024 | #14 | Update: Second bullet added to provide additional information about the designation template and clarified that the template does not need to be returned to the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC). |
| August 19, 2024 | #15 | New: Addresses if a local authority can designate a contractor to be a fire inspector or fire investigator. Also advises that the Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard and associated PLARS are on the OFC's website. |
| August 19, 2024 | #16 | New: Outlines if an improvement district can designate fire inspectors or fire investigators. |
| August 19, 2024 | #18 | New: Provides a brief response to address if a local authority needs to adjust their bylaws to designated fire inspectors and/or fire investigators. |
| August 19, 2024 | #24 | New: Addresses if there is a requirement for a |

| | | |
|-----------------|-----|--|
| | | regional district to identify a public building. |
| August 19, 2024 | #27 | Update: Added/adjusted copy for clarity. |
| August 19, 2024 | #28 | Update: Clarified that this question was related to an independent fire department, not a volunteer fire department. |
| August 19, 2024 | #30 | Update: Advises that the Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard and associated PLARS are on the OFC's website. |
| August 19, 2024 | #32 | Update: Advises that the Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard and associated PLARS are on the OFC's website. |
| August 19, 2024 | #43 | Update: Added last bullet for clarity. |
| August 19, 2024 | #45 | Updated: Clarified that local assistant to the fire commissioner (LAFC) training and transfers and renewals will no longer be done as of August 1, 2024, and added clarity regarding the return of the LAFC badges. |
| August 19, 2024 | #47 | Update: Added last bullet for clarity. |

| | | |
|--------------------|-----|--|
| August 19, 2024 | #48 | New: Outlines if Local Assistants to Fire Commissioner can still complete fire inspections and fire investigations. Also advises that the Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard and associated PLARS are on the OFC's website. |
| August 19, 2024 | #49 | New: Addresses insurance company reporting. |
| September 17, 2024 | #22 | Added clarity on what Federal buildings could/could not be inspected. |
| September 17, 2024 | #45 | Added request to include a letter that reflects the LAFC name and badge number and the sending department's name when return a badge. |

Background

This Question and Answer (Q&A) document is a living document and will be updated regularly. The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) will endeavour to notify partners when the Q&A is updated. However, we suggest that you check back regularly for updates.

The OFC has attempted to place the subject matter in the appropriate category. However, given that there is crossover, please review the entire document.

If you have a question that is not included in this Q&A, please email it to: OFC@gov.bc.ca

The Fire Safety Act (FSA) legislation can be located [here](#).

The Office of the Fire Commissioner

1. What is the role of the Office of the Fire Commissioner?

- The Office of the Fire Commissioner's (OFC) mandate is to minimize the loss of life, injury, and damage to property from fire by administering and enforcing British Columbia's fire safety legislation and regulations.
- The OFC leads provincial fire prevention and fire reporting programs, promotes fire safety awareness and establishes minimum training standards for fire inspectors, fire investigators and fire services personnel. The OFC also provides structure fire expertise and coordinates fire services during emergencies.
- The Fire Safety Act (FSA) establishes the powers and duties of the fire commissioner who is responsible for administering the FSA and its regulations.
- The fire commissioner must also establish standards for fire inspectors and fire investigators, who are required to be designated by the local authority under the FSA.

2. What is the role of the Office of the Fire Commissioner, fire service advisors?

- The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) has regionally located fire service advisors throughout the province.
- Fire service advisors are knowledgeable fire safety experts who can assist with any aspect of the Fire Safety Act (FSA).
- They are also delegated by the fire commissioner as fire inspectors and fire investigators under the FSA and are appropriately trained to the published standard for each function – meaning they may conduct inspections and investigations in any area of the province when requested.
- All OFC fire service advisors have worked in the fire services field for several years and have established collaborative working relationships with fire services personnel throughout the province.
- The OFC is committed to maintaining a collaborative approach to the development of a single standard of fire safety, as intended under the FSA.
- The local authority can reach out to their regional fire service advisor for support with any matter under the FSA.
- To locate the fire service advisor for your area, visit: [Request technical assistance or fire investigation support - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/technical-support/)

3. What is the Office of the Fire Commissioner’s contact information?

- The contact information for the Office of the Fire Commissioner is:
 - Main phone number: 1-888-988-9488
 - After hours emergency: 1-800-663-3456
 - Email: OFC@gov.bc.ca

Definitions under the Fire Safety Act

4. How are municipalities and regional districts identified under the Fire Safety Act?

- The following definitions are used under the Fire Safety Act to define municipalities and regional districts:

- **Local authority** means:
 - (a) the council of a municipality;
 - (b) the board of a regional district;
 - (c) any authority prescribed by regulation;
- **Monitoring entity** means the council of a municipality.

5. How is a premises defined under the Fire Safety Act?

- **Premises** means any of the following:
 - (a) a private dwelling;
 - (b) a public building;
 - (c) the parcel of land on which a private dwelling or public building is located;
 - (d) a motor vehicle within the meaning of the Motor Vehicle Act, railway vehicle, aircraft, vessel or other means of transportation.

6. How is a private dwelling defined under the Fire Safety Act?

- A **private dwelling** means the following:
 - (a) a structure that is occupied as a private residence;
 - (b) if only part of a structure is occupied as a private residence, that part of the structure;
 - (c) any other structure located on the parcel of land on which a private residence is located, except for a structure
 - (i) to which the public is ordinarily invited or permitted access, or
 - (ii) that is used for commercial, industrial or institutional purposes.

7. How is a public building defined under the Fire Safety Act?

- A **public building** means the following:
 - (a) a building other than a building that is a private dwelling;
 - (b) a structure
 - (i) to which the public is ordinarily invited or permitted access, or
 - (ii) that is used for commercial, industrial or institutional purposes;
 - (c) a facility, including a storage yard or tank farm.

8. What is risk-based compliance monitoring?

- Risk-based compliance monitoring applies to all monitoring entities, which under the Fire Safety Act is defined as municipalities.
- Risk-based compliance monitoring means that proactive inspections will be conducted, and higher risk public buildings will be inspected more frequently in municipalities.
- High-risk buildings include public buildings such as bars, apartments, hotels, college residences, large office buildings and sawmills, among other public buildings.

9. What does reactive inspections mean?

- As regional districts (RD) are not monitoring entities, they will operate within a reactive (complaint based or owner requested) inspection framework.
- Upon request from a RD, the Office of the Fire Commissioner, fire service advisors, will conduct fire inspections and fire investigations, at no cost to the RD.

10. In Part 6 of the Fire Safety Act, Compliance Monitoring, is the monitoring entity the same thing as a designated fire inspector from the local authority?

- The monitoring entity is defined as the council of a municipality, not the designated fire inspector. The fire inspector will work for the monitoring entity.

11. The Fire Safety Act does not include a definition for a fire service advisor. Does this mean that fire service advisors cannot complete fire investigations or fire inspections?

- Section 3 of the Fire Safety Act (FSA) enables the fire commissioner to hire employees to perform the work of the fire commissioner, without assigning any specific role or function title.
- This means that fire service advisors will continue to be recognized as representatives of the fire commissioner and will be able to perform the work of the fire commissioner.
- In addition, the fire commissioner will use the power to delegate under section 5 of the FSA to enable the Office of the Fire Commissioner fire service advisors to perform fire inspections and fire investigations, as needed.

[Fire Safety Act Overview](#)

12. What is the Fire Safety Act (FSA)?

- On August 1, 2024, the Fire Safety Act (FSA) came into force, replacing the Fire Services Act of 1979.
- The FSA meets the B.C. government's commitment to achieve a single standard of fire safety in the province and will:
 - enable local authorities to designate personnel to carry out fire inspections and fire investigations and enable local fire services to perform tactical evacuations.

- establish an administrative penalty enforcement model to address non-compliance issues in a more direct, timely and effective manner.
- implement a risk-based approach for fire safety compliance monitoring in municipalities.
- Under the FSA and the associated regulation, there is a prescribed maximum amount of costs recoverable from an owner by a local authority, or the fire commissioner, for securing evacuated premises up to \$100,000.
- The FSA will protect people and communities through regular fire safety inspections and effective enforcement that will help prevent fire-related tragedies, preserve human life, and protect property and economic loss due to fires.

13. When did the Fire Safety Act come into effect?

- The Fire Safety Act (FSA) came into effect on August 1, 2024.
- The FSA legislation can be located [here](#).

Fire Inspectors and Fire Investigators and Local Authorities

14. What is a local authority required to do now that the Fire Safety Act has been brought into force?

- Now that the Fire Safety Act (FSA) has come into force, the local authority (municipalities and regional districts) must designate, in writing, a person or a class of persons as fire inspectors (section 8) and fire investigators (section 23).
- The local authority is to use their own template for the designations. Note: there is no requirement to return the designation to the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) at this time. Once the OFC has their technology solution in place, the OFC will contact departments to confirm designates.
- As of August 1, 2024, there is a one-year transition period before designated fire inspectors and fire investigators must meet established training standards.

- The transition period does not make the requirement of designating fire inspectors or fire investigators optional for local authorities.
- All local authorities should designate their fire inspector(s) and fire investigator(s) as soon as the FSA comes into force on August 1, 2024, and before the Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner program ends on October 28, 2024.
- The transition period will provide the time for local authorities to ensure that the designated fire inspector or fire investigator has obtained the required training.
- During fall 2024 and winter 2025, the OFC will work closely with all partners to ensure a measured implementation of the FSA requirements.

15. Can a local authority designate a contractor to be a fire inspector and/or a fire investigator?

- A local authority must designate, in writing, a person or a class of persons as fire inspectors (section 8) and fire investigators (section 23).
- A local authority can designate a contractor to be a fire inspector or fire investigator if they meet the Fire Safety Act Inspector Training Standard and Fire Safety Act Investigator Training Standard.
- Designated fire inspectors and fire investigators that already meet the Fire Safety Act Inspector Training Standard and Fire Safety Act Investigator Training Standard, should complete a “Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition” (PLAR) form to confirm for the local authority that they meet the standard.
- As of August 19, 2024, the Office of the Fire Commissioner Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard can be found here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)
- The Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and Investigator Standard PLARs can also be found here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)

16. Can improvement districts designate fire inspectors and/or fire investigators?

- Under the Fire Safety Act (FSA), a local authority is defined as a council of a municipality or a board of a regional district. Improvement districts are not identified as a local authority in the FSA and are not authorized under the FSA to appoint fire investigators or fire inspectors.
- Only local authorities are required and authorized to designate fire investigators or fire inspectors for their local government jurisdictions.
- The OFC, local authority partners and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, will discuss improvement districts' requests to appoint fire investigators and fire inspectors. We expect to provide an update to the improvement districts toward the end of the year.
- In the meantime, the OFC, fire service advisors are placed throughout the province and work with improvement districts to support fire safety measures in their fire protection areas.
- The OFC remains committed to supporting improvement districts as requested.
- To locate the fire service advisor for your area, visit here: [Request technical assistance or fire investigation support - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/technical-support/technical-support-province-of-british-columbia)

17. What section of the Fire Safety Act designates fire investigators and fire inspectors?

- Designation of fire inspectors – section 8 of the Fire Safety Act (FSA) outlines:
 - Section 8 (1) A local authority must designate, in writing, persons or a class of persons as fire inspectors to conduct fire safety inspections.
 - (2) A local authority may designate an individual as a fire inspector under subsection (1) only if the individual meets the applicable standard established by the fire commissioner.

- Designation of fire investigators – section 23 of the FSA outlines:
 - Section 23 (1) A local authority must designate, in writing, persons or a class of persons as fire investigators to conduct fire investigations.
 - (2) A local authority may designate an individual as a fire investigator under subsection (1) only if the individual meets the applicable standard established by the fire commissioner.

18. Does the local authority need to adjust their bylaws to designate fire inspectors and/or fire investigators?

- Fire inspector and fire investigator designation can be done by resolution or a change to a bylaw, depending on how the service is setup. However, it may be different for each local authority.
- Please reach out to your Chief Administrative Officer for advice.

19. What are the estimated timelines to designate a fire inspector and fire investigator?

- **August 2, 2024 – to October 28, 2024 (before the Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner program ends)** – local authorities designate a person or class of persons as fire inspector or fire investigator, in writing, for any portion of their jurisdiction.
- **August 19, 2024** – the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) posted the Fire Safety Act Inspector Training Standard and Fire Safety Act Investigator Training Standard. The Office of the Fire Commissioner also posted the two corresponding “Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition” (PLAR) forms. These documents can be located here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)
- **August 20, 2024 – July 31, 2025** – fire services review the PLAR form against the Fire Safety Act Inspector Training Standard and Fire Safety Act Investigator Training Standard and confirm via the PLAR that the designated fire inspector and fire investigator meet the fire inspector and fire investigator training standards. It is the responsibility of the local government to ensure the PLAR is signed off accurately and that the PLAR stays in the personnel file of the designated fire inspector and fire investigator. The PLAR does not need to be returned to the OFC.

- **Late 2024** – online training for fire inspectors and fire investigators will be available through the OFC.
- **July 31, 2025** – transition period ends, and the local authority is required to ensure the persons designated as fire inspector(s) and fire investigator(s) meet the fire inspector and fire investigator standards, whether that be through the PLAR or the OFC online training.

20. Who is responsible for conducting fire inspections and investigations?

- Under the Fire Safety Act (FSA), it is a requirement for local authorities (municipalities and regional districts (RDs)) to designate local fire inspector(s) and fire investigator(s).
- Municipalities will operate within a risk-based compliance monitoring model, which means that their designated fire inspector(s) will be responsible for conducting all fire inspections.
- As in the Fire Services Act, the FSA also continues the requirement for all fires to be investigated and reported to the fire commissioner. Locally designated fire investigators will fulfil this requirement.
- As RDs are not monitoring entities, they will operate within a reactive (complaint based or owner requested) inspection framework.
- Upon request from a RD, the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) fire service advisors, will conduct fire inspections and fire investigations.
- The RD has the discretion to use their own designated fire inspector(s) and fire investigator(s), or to request the OFC to support the inspection or investigation requirements.
- Ultimately, both reactive inspections and risk-based compliance monitoring are intended to keep occupants safe from potential fire hazards, with the goal to prevent fire-related tragedies, preserve human life, and protect property and economic loss due to fires.

21. Now that the Fire Safety Act has come into force, are designated inspectors and investigators required to meet the training standards right away?

- No, there will be a 1-year “transition period” (as defined in section 53 of the FSA) before designated inspectors and investigators have to meet the required training standards.
- The transition period will end July 31, 2025. At that time, the local authority is required to ensure the persons designated as fire inspector(s) and fire investigator(s) meet the fire inspector and fire investigator standards.

22. Does the Fire Safety Act apply to federal reserve lands?

- The Fire Safety Act (FSA) does not apply to federal reserve lands.
- Enforcing fire codes on First Nations lands is under federal jurisdiction, and the (FSA) does not apply to on-reserve public buildings.
- Federal lands such as the Port Authority lands, a Canada Coast Guard base, or airports, would not be inspectable under the FSA; however, a building within a municipality where a tenant is federal such as a post office, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) office, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), is inspectable under the FSA.
- If a local authority receives an enquiry about inspections or investigations on federal reserve lands, the local authority can refer the enquirer to the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), and the OFC will contact the First Nation to offer support to conduct the inspection.

23. Why are regional districts operating within a reactive model?

- Regional districts (RDs) are not defined as monitoring entities in the Fire Safety Act.
- The RDs have identified resource and administrative challenges which may prevent them from undertaking fire inspections and fire investigations in their areas.

- The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) has committed to performing fire inspections and fire investigations on behalf of the RD, at no cost to the RD.
- Upon request from an RD, the OFC fire services advisors will conduct fire inspections and fire investigations.
- However, an RD with sufficient resources and local expertise may choose to undertake all inspections and investigations within their jurisdiction.

24.What is the requirement for the regional districts to identify a public building?

- Risk-based compliance monitoring applies to public buildings within municipalities (monitoring entity).
- Regional districts (RD) are not a monitoring entity and are not required to implement a risk-based compliance monitoring system. As such, there is no requirement for RDs to identify public buildings for fire inspections as RDs will be reactive (e.g., complaint-based).
- The Office of the Fire Commissioner expects that most of inspections in the RDs to be focused on public buildings, defined as:
 - a building other than a building that is a private dwelling;
 - a structure
 - to which the public is ordinarily invited or permitted access, or
 - that is used for commercial, industrial or institutional purposes;
 - a facility, including a storage yard or tank farm.
- If a complaint is submitted that does not focus on a public building, the RDs and the OFC (who may be doing these inspections on behalf of the regional district) will determine if an inspection is required or reasonable.

25.Does the local authority have ability to determine which jurisdictional area(s) the designated fire inspector or fire investigator covers?

- Yes, the local authority is fully empowered to designate the function of fire inspector and fire investigator, if the person meets the training standards issued by the fire commissioner.

26.If the local authority chooses not to investigate fires outside of their established fire protection areas who would be required to investigate and make the fire report to the fire commissioner?

- The legislative requirement in section 25 of the Fire Safety Act (FSA) is for local authorities to investigate all incidents of fire in their respective jurisdictions that they are made aware of per the duty to report fires in section 22 of the FSA.
- The defined fire department fire protection area is not a limiting factor on this requirement of the local authority.
- The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) has committed to performing fire inspections and fire investigations on behalf of the regional district (RD), at no cost to the RD.
- RDs may request support from the OFC via the process outlined in the “Regional District Inspections and Investigations Procedures” document. The document can be located here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

27.Are regional districts expected to conduct fire inspections and fire investigations where there is no service establishment bylaw in the area?

- As regional districts (RD) are not monitoring entities, they will operate within a reactive (complaint based or owner requested) inspection framework.
- When an RD receives an enquiry related to fire inspections or fire investigations, the RD can directly contact the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) to request an OFC fire service advisor conduct fire inspections and fire investigations. This service is provided at no cost to the RD.

- The process for RDs is outlined in the “Regional District Inspections and Investigations Procedures” document that can be located here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)

28. For properties outside of a regional district fire protection service area, but where an independent fire department may exist, is there any requirement for these fire departments to conduct inspections and investigations?

- If an independent fire department receives a request for an inspection, or is involved in, or notified about a fire that has destroyed or damaged property, there are a few options to get support for a fire inspection or fire investigation.
 1. The independent fire department can reach out to the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC).
 2. The independent fire department can contact the regional district’s designated fire inspector(s) or investigator(s) to advise the OFC that a fire has destroyed or damaged property.
 3. If the independent fire department has members designated by the local authority as fire inspectors and/or fire investigators, the independent fire department may conduct fire inspections and/or fire investigations.
- Contact information for the OFC is:
 - Main phone number: 1-888-988-9488
 - After hours emergency: 1-800-663-3456
 - Email: OFC@gov.bc.ca

29. Are regional districts expected to take on the full responsibility for inspections and investigations at some point in the future?

- The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) has committed to performing inspections and investigations on behalf of the regional districts at no cost, as outlined in the “[Fire Safety Act: Regional District Inspection and Investigations Procedures](#)” document.

- The OFC will be working with UBCM during implementation of the Fire Safety Act to ensure the appropriate processes and resources are in place.

Fire Investigator and Fire Inspector Training

30. What can you share about fire inspector and fire investigator training?

- There are different and specific training requirements for designated fire inspectors (“Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard”) and fire investigators (“Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard”).
- Designated fire inspectors and fire investigators that already meet the Fire Safety Act Inspector Training Standard and Fire Safety Act Investigator Training Standard, should complete a “Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition” (PLAR) form to confirm for the local authority that they meet the standard.
- It is the responsibility of the local government to ensure the PLAR is signed off accurately and that the PLAR stays in the personnel file of the designated fire inspector and fire investigator.
- Designated fire inspectors and fire investigators who do not meet the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard, must take the OFC inspector and investigate training.
- Designated fire inspectors and fire investigators that meet the OFC Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard and who have signed off on the PLAR, are also welcome to take the OFC training.
- The OFC will provide two online training courses: one for fire inspectors and one for fire investigators. Training materials for the courses and the online training will be provided at no cost.
- Each course will deliver attainable minimum standards and can be completed online in approximately 8 – 10 hours (per course). Online training for fire inspectors and fire investigators will be available late 2024.

- A fire inspector and fire investigator can perform both roles if they have taken both courses.
- As of August 19, 2024, the Office of the Fire Commissioner Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard can be found here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.gov.bc.ca/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)
- The Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and Investigator Standard PLARs can also be found here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.gov.bc.ca/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)

31. Is there a limit to the number of people who can be designated and complete the training?

- There is no limit on the number of people who can be designated to complete the training.
- The local authority can designate a person or a class of persons as fire inspectors or fire investigators. This includes designating all building inspectors as fire inspectors under the Fire Safety Act.

Tools, Processes and Procedures

32. What types of procedures and process documents will be put in place for the Fire Safety Act?

- The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) continues to work on procedures and process documents including:
 - Fire Safety Act Inspector Training Standard (completed August 19, 2024)
 - Fire Safety Act Investigator Training Standard (completed August 19, 2024)
 - Fire Safety Act Self-Assessment Manual

- Guidelines to Risk Analysis for Monitoring Entities in British Columbia
- Fire Safety Act Evacuation Procedures
- Fire Safety Act Reviews (Appeals) Policy and Procedure
- Fire Safety Act Regional District Fire Inspections and Investigations Procedures
- Fire Safety Act Administrative Penalty Manual
- The OFC expects most of these documents to be shared with fire services and municipalities and regional districts as appropriate, and building owners as necessary, in early fall 2024.
- As of August 19, 2024, the Office of the Fire Commissioner Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard can be found here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)
- The Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and Investigator Standard PLARs can also be found here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)
- There will be a one-year transition period before designated fire inspectors and fire investigators must meet the published training standards.
- The transition period will end July 31, 2025. At that time, the local authority is required to ensure the persons designated as fire inspector(s) and fire investigator(s) meet the fire inspector and fire investigator standards.

Fire Safety Act and Owners

33.What does the Fire Safety Act mean for building owners?

- The Fire Safety Act (FSA) places a duty on owners of buildings to ensure that there is no fire hazard on, or in the owner's premises. The BC Fire Code reinforces this established responsibility, and the FSA provides the province with tools to ensure compliance.
- To meet the requirements of the FSA and the BC Fire Code, building owners and operators may be required to conduct fire safety self-assessments and

put the appropriate fire safety measures in place. The frequency and requirements for a Fire Safety Assessment are set by the monitoring entity (municipalities).

- Failure to conduct a fire safety self-assessment may result in more enforcement actions by the monitoring entity, which may include completing a fire inspection for a fee from the municipality.
- Any established fire inspection fee will be imposed by the local authority via bylaw.
- The Fire Safety Act (Risk Analysis for Compliance Monitoring) Regulation defines some of the requirements in establishing a risk-based compliance monitoring system and the overall risk for public buildings. Note: the regulation will be shared in early fall.
- During fall 2024 and winter 2025, the Office of the Fire Commissioner will work closely with all partners, including premise owners, to ensure a measured implementation of the FSA requirements.

34. Can you share more about the Safety Self-Assessments and the process?

- The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) is currently developing a: Fire Safety Act Self-Assessment Manual”.
- The OFC expects this document to be shared with fire services, local authorities, and building owners, in early fall 2024.
- This manual is primarily intended to be used by the building owner or building owner’s authorized agent (representative) to complete a Fire Safety Self-Assessment and Declaration.
- The British Columbia Fire Code (BCFC) outlines building owner responsibilities. The BC Fire Code, Sentence 2.2.1.1.(1). of Division C, states, “unless otherwise specified, the owner or the owner’s authorized agent shall be responsible for carrying out the provisions of this Code.”
- For more information on the BCFC, visit: [BC Codes 2024 - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/bc-codes-2024)

- The building owner or the owner's authorize agent must be compliant with the Fire Safety Act, the BC Fire Code, and any other applicable regulations.
- A Fire Safety Self-Assessment Form and Declaration confirms the status of the building fire and life safety systems and confirms that these systems are inspected, tested, and maintained as required by the Fire Safety Act and the BC Fire Code.
- During the fall 2024 and winter 2025, the OFC will work closely with all partners, including premise owners, to ensure a measured implementation of the FSA requirements.

35. How will the Fire Safety Act impact owners and any renovation permits, including life safety system requirements?

- The Fire Safety Act does not impact renovation permits including life safety requirements. Building life safety system requirements are in the British Columbia Building Code (BCBC) and the British Columbia Fire Code (BCFC). These codes administer the required life safety systems through inspection, testing and maintenance requirements of the code.
- Although the BCFC is a regulation of the Fire Safety Act (FSA), and the fire commissioner is responsible administering the FSA and its regulations, this will not interfere or impede the BCBC.
- There are explanatory statements in the BCBC and the BCFC that respect and limit the application of the current code requirements to existing buildings that were constructed under previous versions of the codes.
- Essentially, neither sets of codes are to be used to impose a requirement to install current code standards on an existing building, provided that the life safety system of the existing building is still sufficient to address the fire hazards present by the major occupancy use of the building.
- The local government building official is responsible for determining the appropriate application of the BCBC using "BCBC2024 Div. Part 1 Sentence 1.1.1.1(1) Application of this code" to the renovation permit application.

- For more information on the BCBC and the BCFC, visit: [BC Codes 2024 - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.bccsa.ca/BC-Codes-2024-Province-of-British-Columbia-gov.bc.ca)

Administrative Monetary Penalties

36.What are the administrative monetary penalties under the Fire Safety Act?

- The Fire Safety Act establishes the authority for the fire commissioner to issue an administrative monetary penalty (AMP) in specific circumstances of non-compliance, such as non-compliance of a fire inspector order or a preventive evacuation order.
- An AMP is designed to deter non-compliance with requirements under the FSA and the regulations.
- AMP amounts are:
 - up to \$25,000 in the case of an individual and \$50,000 in the case of a corporation.
 - if an offence continues for more than one day, separate daily administrative penalties, each not exceeding the maximums previously noted, may be imposed by the fire commissioner.
- An AMP will be considered by the Office of the Fire Commissioner after the local authority has exhausted all the tools (e.g., bylaws) that they have at their disposal.
- Administrative penalties are only considered for serious, repeated and deliberate cases of non-compliance with the FSA.
- Administrative penalty matters are between the provincial government and the person who is thought to have contravened the FSA act or failed to comply with an order issued under the FSA.

37.Will designated fire inspectors and fire investigators be imposing administrative penalties under 33 (1) of the Fire Safety Act?

- No. The authority in Section 33(1) is only for the fire commissioner, or delegate, who may impose an administrative penalty.

- The local authority designated fire inspectors and fire investigators will make a request for the issuance of an administrative penalty from the fire commissioner or delegate.
- As such, only the Province, through the Office of the Fire Commissioner, will issue an administrative penalty.
- However, because the primary principle of the administrative penalty is obtaining compliance and not punitive measures, the issuance of the administrative penalty will only be done when all other attempts and actions by the local authority have not been successful in obtaining compliance from a premise owner.

Administrative Requirements/Approach

38.Are local authorities required to implement new record-keeping policies to meet statutory requirements under the new Act?

- Local authorities can continue to manage inspection and investigation enquiries from the public in the same manner that they currently do.
- The Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) will record all requests for support and service, including those made by regional districts (RD). An interim solution will be put in place while the OFC works to put a new technological solution in place.
- The OFC is working to develop and implement a centralized database to retain these records. Once in place, the OFC will be able to share relevant inspection and investigation information with UBCM, local authorities and premises owners.
- During the implementation phase of the Fire Safety Act, the OFC is committed to continue working collaboratively with UBCM to monitor implementation and develop/update applicable policy and procedures as needed.

39.Will the local authorities be compensated for inspections or is the “fee” referenced in section 20 imposed only by a local authority bylaw?

- Failure of an owner to conduct a fire safety self-assessment may result in more enforcement actions by the monitoring entity, which may include performing an actual fire inspection for a fee.
- Under Section 20 of the Fire Safety Act, monitoring entities (municipalities) can establish fees for fire inspections and impose the fees via municipal bylaw.

40. Will fire reporting be a requirement for the designated investigator, or can an alternate be assigned?

- The Fire Safety Act does not restrict the reporting of the investigation information to the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) from being assigned to another person or alternate within the local authority; however, the alternate must have access to the OFC's FIRES reporting system.
- Section 25 of the FSA outlines the requirement that a local authority must begin a fire investigation within 5 days after the date on which the local authority learned of a fire that destroyed or damaged property or resulted in injury or death.
- In municipalities, this will be done by the local authority's designated fire investigator.
- The process for municipalities is different than the process for regional districts (RDs).
- The OFC and UBCM have worked to develop a "Regional District Inspections and Investigations Procedures" document that provides for the OFC to function as the designated investigator and inspector and to complete fire investigations and fire inspections, at no cost, on behalf of the RD, as requested. The document can be located here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)

41. Who owns the fire investigation report?

- The fire investigation report and all corresponding information will belong to the local authority to enable them to meet the legislated obligation of reporting the fire incident information to the fire commissioner.
- Once the fire incident report is submitted to the Province, then the information becomes the Province's to use and protect as reflected in the Information Management Act.

42.If a local authority pays for an alternate fire investigator to complete the fire investigation report, does the local government own the report?

- The ownership of the report to the local authority should be confirmed by the local authority and the alternate fire investigator through their specified contract.
- The requirement to submit a fire incident report from the fire investigation to the fire commissioner remains and needs to be met by the local authority.

43.If a local authority designates a member from their own staff as a fire inspector and/or fire investigator, is the employee protected from personal liability when carrying out the function of inspector/investigator?

- Section 6 of the Fire Safety Act states that any person performing the work of the fire commissioner when delegated by the fire commissioner has immunity from legal proceedings short of gross negligence or actions made in bad faith.
- The local authority staff is provided immunity by the Local Government Act (section 738) for actions related to their obligations under the Fire Safety Act, short of gross negligence or actions made in bad faith.

Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner

44. Can you provide an overview of the local assistant to the fire commissioner program?

- Under the former Fire Services Act and the Fire Code Administration Regulation, the fire commissioner was responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Fire Services Act and the current British Columbia Fire Code.
- Also under the former Fire Services Act, local assistants to the fire commissioner (LAFCs) were appointed to assist the fire commissioner with fire investigation and the enforcement of fire legislation and the regulations.
- In many cases, the LAFC was the fire chief or other fire service member of a community fire department.
- A LAFC could also be a fire service volunteer, particularly in regional districts, and local police could also fill this function if no LAFC had been appointed by the fire commissioner in any area outside of a municipality.
- The LAFC exercised the powers of the fire commissioner when they carried out those duties mandated under the Fire Services Act and regulations. The LAFC function and efforts were accountable to fire commissioner and not the local authority and LAFC training was provided for individuals who were appointed as a LAFC.

45. What is the status of the local assistants to the fire commissioner program?

- The Fire Safety Act (FSA) came into effect on August 1, 2024. As a result, the local assistants to the fire commissioner (LAFC) functions that were part of the Fire Services Act will be discontinued within 90 days and the LAFC program will end October 28, 2024.
- LAFC training or any other LAFC modifications (e.g., transfers or renewals) will not continue after August 1, 2024.

- As outlined in section 41 (3) of the Fire Services Act, all fire departments must return their LAFC badges to the Office of the Fire Commissioner.
- The badges are to be returned at the fire department's cost. When returning a badge, please also include a letter that reflects the LAFC name and badge number and the sending department's name.
- Contact and address information for returns are as follows:
 - Mailing details:
 - Office of the Fire Commissioner
 - Attn: Tammy-Lou Nieman
 - PO Box 9214 Stn. Prov. Govt.,
 - Victoria, B.C. V8W 9J1
 - Courier details:
 - Office of the Fire Commissioner
 - Attn: Tammy-Lou Nieman / Contact number (236-478-2385)
 - 4th Floor - 910 Government Street
 - Victoria B.C., V8W 9J4
- Under the FSA, local authorities will have to designate, in writing, a person or a class of persons as fire inspector(s) and fire investigator(s). This should be done once the FSA is brought into force on August 1, 2024, and ideally before the LAFC program ends on October 28, 2024.

46.What will be used to identify inspectors and investigators under the Fire Safety Act)?

- Identification for fire inspectors and fire investigators under the Fire Safety Act will be determined by the local authority who designates the fire inspector and fire investigator.

47. Under the Fire Services Act, a Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner was protected from prosecution. Are these same protections available to the fire inspectors and fire investigators under the Fire Safety Act?

- Section 6 of the Fire Safety Act reflects that any person performing the work of the fire commissioner, when delegated by the fire commissioner has immunity from legal proceedings short of gross negligence or actions made in bad faith.
- The local authority designated fire inspectors and fire investigators are provided immunity by the Local Government Act (sec. 738) for actions related to their activities under the Fire Safety Act, short of gross negligence or actions made in bad faith.

48. Can existing Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner still complete investigations/inspections?

- Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner (LAFC) that were appointed under the Fire Services Act, can continue to fulfill the role of fire inspector and fire investigator until October 28, 2024, when the LAFC positions will end.
- After October 28, 2024, previous LAFC positions will no longer be active, and they will be unable to fulfill any of the duties that existed under the Fire Services Act.
- The Fire Safety Act (FSA) requires that the local authority (municipalities and regional districts) must designate, in writing, a person or a class of persons as fire inspectors (section 8) and fire investigators (section 23).
- There will be different and specific training requirements for designated fire inspectors ("Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard") and fire investigators ("Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard"). Refer to the "Fire Inspector and Fire Training" section of this Q&A for more information on the online training for fire inspectors and fire investigators that is to follow.

- Designated fire inspectors and fire investigators that already meet the Fire Safety Act Inspector Training Standard and Fire Safety Act Investigator Training Standard, should complete a “Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition” (PLAR) form to confirm that they meet the standards.
- As of August 19, 2024, the Office of the Fire Commissioner Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and the Fire Safety Act Investigator Standard can be found here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)
- The Fire Safety Act Inspector Standard and Investigator Standard PLARs can also be found here: [Fire Safety Act reference documents - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)
- We encourage all local authorities to designate their fire inspectors and fire investigators as soon as possible.

Insurance Companies

49. Do insurance companies still need to report on fire losses under the new Fire Safety Act

- On August 1, 2024, the new Fire Safety Act came into effect replacing the Fire Services Act.
- With the new act in place, insurance companies are no longer legislated to report on fire losses as they were under the Fire Services Act section 19.
- However, insurance companies continue to be valued partners in ensuring accurate data from fire incident claims to help evaluate fire loss, economic impacts and fire trends in our province. Insurance reports also help ensure accuracy in fire incident reporting from local governments.
- In late fall 2024, the Office of the Fire Commissioner will contact the insurance sector about the continuation of the insurance reporting process. Until then, please continue to report on fire losses through the insurance fire report that can be found, here: [Reporting a fire: guidelines, manuals and forms - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/fire-safety-act-reference-documents)



Office of the
Fire Commissioner



Fire Safety Act PROCEDURES 1.0

**Revised: 2024-07-31
Created: 2023-12-18**

Fire Safety Act: Regional District Fire Inspections and Investigations —PROCEDURES

AUDIENCE

These procedures are intended for the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC), Fire Services Advisors (FSA), regional districts (including fire services) and building owners and occupiers.

BACKGROUND

- These procedures:
 - are specific to regional districts.
 - support the Province's commitment to a single standard of fire safety for public buildings in the province.
 - are consistent with current practices under the *Fire Services Act*. At present, FSAs within the OFC support local authorities¹ with conducting fire inspections and investigations.
 - address the issues raised by members of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), that due to a lack of expertise, capacity, and funding constraints, regional districts may need support from the OFC to conduct fire inspections of public buildings and fire investigations under the *Fire Safety Act* once it comes into force.
- The OFC will provide advice and/or perform fire inspections of public buildings and fire incident investigations as requested by regional districts². The OFC will continue to work with regional districts to explore other options for conducting fire inspections of public buildings and fire investigations in regional districts.

Rationale

Below is the rationale for the OFC supporting regional districts with conducting fire inspections and investigations under the *Fire Safety Act*.

- **Consistency**—FSAs are regionally located throughout the province. They regularly conduct fire inspections and investigations according to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, which supports a consistent and standardized approach to those activities throughout British Columbia.

¹ Under the *Fire Safety Act*, local authorities are defined as a municipality, regional district, or any authority prescribed by regulation.

² Agreed upon by the Single Standard of Fire Safety Working Group (SSFSWG) and supported by UBCM Executive, November 17, 2023.



Office of the
Fire Commissioner



Fire Safety Act PROCEDURES 1.0

**Revised: 2024-07-31
Created: 2023-12-18**

- **Expertise**—FSAs are trained in accordance with NFPA standards and maintain their professional development requirements. The skills of fire inspectors and fire investigators are perishable, and therefore, need to be routinely maintained.
- **Capacity and resources**—Some regional districts do not have the capacity, expertise, or funding to conduct fire inspections and investigations without support from the OFC.

DOCUMENTATION AND REVISIONS

- The OFC will be responsible for developing a tracking system to document regional districts' requests for assistance with fire inspections and investigations.
- Any decisions on record keeping by the regional district regarding fire inspections and investigations will be solely at their discretion and developed to meet their internal procedural requirements as the regional districts are not defined as a monitoring entity under the *Fire Safety Act*.
- The OFC will meet with UBCM annually before April 1 to review the effectiveness of these procedures and make amendments, as required, to reflect new information or processes.

APPLICATION

- OFC FSA staff will support regional districts with fire inspections and investigations upon request.
- Some regional districts have the expertise, capacity, and funding to conduct fire inspections and investigations within their jurisdictions.
- Regional districts will not incur any financial costs for the services provided by the OFC. This arrangement will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms and definitions apply to these procedures only.

Local Authority: As defined in the *Fire Safety Act*, means the council of a municipality, the board of a regional district and any authority prescribed by regulation.

Designated Inspector: Any person, or class of persons, designated by a Local Authority as a fire inspector under the *Fire Safety Act* (when it comes into force).

Designated Investigator: Any person, or class of persons, designated by a Local Authority as a fire investigator under the *Fire Safety Act* (when it comes into force).

Fire Department: A department established and operated as a Local Authority service responsible for the prevention or suppression of fires in a defined Fire Protection Area by a Local Authority or a board, or commission of a registered society having the responsibility for the management or conduct of work or services through a service agreement, or equivalent of any of the above.

Fire Protection Area: A geographically defined area that is determined by a Local Authority service

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|---|---|
|    | <p><i>Fire Safety Act</i> PROCEDURES 1.0</p> <p>Revised: 2024-07-31 Created: 2023-12-18</p> |
|---|---|

establishment bylaw, municipal service, or service agreement between the Local Authority for the fire department and the party benefiting from the fire protection service by means of an established service delivery agreement or equivalent.

PROCEDURES

- Under the *Fire Safety Act*, Local Authorities are required to designate fire inspectors and fire investigators for their jurisdictions. There is a one-year transition period (from the date the FSA came into force) for Local Authorities to train designated inspectors and designated investigators before they will be required to meet the standards established by the Fire Commissioner. (**Note:** The OFC will provide training and training-related documents for these individuals to meet the new standards.)
- The current Local Assistants to the Fire Commissioner (LAFC) function will be phased out three months after the *Fire Safety Act* comes into force.
- A regional district Designated Inspector or Designated Investigator can request assistance from the OFC to conduct an inspection or investigation.
- The procedures for regional districts to request assistance are listed below:

1) Inspections

- a) Situations that may require an inspection:
 - i) changes in major occupancy and use of a public property or premises
 - ii) new public building being constructed
 - iii) complaint received about a premises
 - iv) at the request of the owner or occupier of a premises
- b) Process:
 - i) Regional district may first determine if the required action is:
 - (a) to issue a Fire Safety Assessment Checklist (to be completed by an owner or agent), or, if
 - (b) the location requires a physical inspection, then assign the required action to the Designated Inspector(s) within their jurisdiction
 - ii) If the regional district's Designated Inspector(s) is/are unavailable, or requires support, then the regional district representative may initiate a request for support from the OFC by sending an email to OFC@gov.bc.ca with the following details:
 - (a) address of inspectable premises
 - (b) reason for inspection
 - (c) identification and contact information of owner/occupier of premises
 - iii) The OFC will assign the task to the appropriate OFC FSA. The FSA will contact the owner to enter the premises at a reasonable time and date
 - iv) The OFC FSA will perform and record the inspection



Office of the
Fire Commissioner



Fire Safety Act **PROCEDURES 1.0**

Revised: 2024-07-31

Created: 2023-12-18

- v) The OFC FSA will enter the information into the single standard of fire safety tracking system (future system) and provide a copy of the fire inspection report to the regional district and building owner or owner's agent.

2) Investigations:

- a) Situations requiring investigations:
 - i) all fire incidents (post-fire)
 - ii) any fatalities due to a fire incident
 - iii) high-impact to community fire incidents
- b) Process:
 - i) As required under the *Fire Safety Act*, the owner/occupier would inform their local fire department or the fire commissioner (the OFC) of the fire incident
 - (a) If the information comes to OFC directly then the OFC must inform the regional district of the incident having occurred in their jurisdiction
 - ii) The regional district will determine if their Designated Investigator(s) is/are able to conduct the investigation of the fire incident
 - iii) If the regional district's Designated Investigator(s) is/are not available, or is unable to begin the investigation within the legislated five days, or there was a fatality because of the fire, or the incident was significant to the community, the regional district may contact the on-call OFC FSA by calling the Emergency Co-ordination Centre (ECC) at 1-800-663-3456
 - iv) Caller will provide the following details:
 - (a) address/location of the fire incident
 - (b) fire type (building/vehicle/outdoor/etc.)
 - (c) status of fire suppression efforts
 - (d) any details of the fire provided by the local fire department
 - v) On-call FSA will request support from the appropriate OFC FSA member
 - vi) Assigned OFC FSA will attend the scene and investigate the fire incident
 - vii) Assigned OFC FSA will collect all required information and complete the appropriate Fire Inventory Reporting Evaluation System (FIRES) reports
 - viii) OFC FSA will inform the regional district of the actions taken to support the regional district and the fire investigation details that were recorded in FIRES

END OF PROCEDURES



October 4, 2024

Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
37 Third Avenue, PO Box 820
Burns Lake, BC
V0J 1E0
Attn: Stoney Stoltenberg, Director, and Curtis Helgesen, CAO

Dear Mr. Stoltenberg and Mr. Helgesen

I am writing to thank you and your team at the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for establishing the Recreation Contribution Grant Program and for reaching out to advise our organization of this new and unique opportunity.

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude how impactful it is that the Recreation Grant contributes to operational expenses on a multi-year basis. The annual grant we have received for \$15,000 from 2024-2027 will provide a stable funding source to invest in our core operations (trail maintenance, fuel expenses and property insurance), helping to ensure we can continue to offer excellence in the cross country skiing experience.

We greatly appreciate your support of the Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club and express our thanks on behalf of the community that loves this sport.

Sincerely,
J Chapman
Jen Chapman
President, Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club

From: [Raymond, Mark AF:EX](#)
To: [Mark Parker](#); [Cheryl Anderson](#)
Cc: [Barclay, Brent S AF:EX](#); [Tabe, Karen L AF:EX](#)
Subject: Letter re Shavings Supply Shortage
Date: October 11, 2024 3:17:59 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Please do not click on links on open attachments from unknown sources.

Good Afternoon Mark & the RDBN Board of Directors,

Thank you for your letter summarizing the impact of the recently announced closure of the Canfor Plateau Sawmill in Vanderhoof.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food (the Ministry) understands the local agriculture sector is reliant on wood shavings to support the sector. The Assistant Deputy Minister met with the Nechako Valley Regional Cattlemen Association representatives last May and was updated on the aspen grinding initiative. The Ministry is keen to explore options on how we can work with the Association and the University of British Columbia to explore alternative options.

The Ministry of Forests (Forests) is responsible for the fibre supply in the region and access to material is the primary concern for the grinding initiative. Forests have encouraged the Association to work with existing tenure holders to secure fibre and Forests will explore tenure options.

The Ministry is interested in engaging and potentially partnering with the various stakeholders to find a stable solution to the ongoing concern. I encourage the Nechako Valley Regional Cattlemen Association to work directly with my staff, Brent Barclay and/or Karen Tabe. I have Cc'd them on this email stream.

If you wish to follow up, please call me directly.

Sincerely,
 Mark Raymond
 Executive Director
 BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food
Mark.Raymond@gov.bc.ca
 604-226-7226

From: Cheryl Anderson <cheryl.anderson@rdbn.bc.ca>
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 5:56 PM
To: Minister, AF AF:EX <AF.Minister@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX <Premier@gov.bc.ca>; Minister, FOR FOR:EX

<FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca>; Mercier, Andrew FOR:EX <Andrew.Mercier@gov.bc.ca>

Subject: Letter re Shavings Supply Shortage

[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.

Good afternoon,

Attached please find a letter from the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors.

Thank you,

Cheryl Anderson

Director of Corporate Services

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako | www.rdbn.bc.ca

cheryl.anderson@rdbn.bc.ca | Cell: (250) 692-6592

37 3rd Avenue | PO Box 820, Burns Lake BC V0J 1E0

Office Phone: 250-692-3195 | 1-800-320-3339

I respectfully acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territories of the First Nations in the Bulkley and Nechako watersheds.

This message is intended for the addressee(s) named and is confidential. The message must not be circulated or copied without the prior consent of the sender or the sender's representative Corporation.



October 4, 2024

Reference: 70534

Mark Parker
Chair, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
37 - 3rd Avenue
Burns Lake BC V0J 1E0
Email: mark.parker@rdbn.bc.ca

Dear Mark Parker:

I am writing to thank your delegation for taking the time to meet with Ministry of Housing representatives at this year's Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Annual Convention held in Vancouver on Tuesday September 17, 2024. We appreciated the opportunity to connect in-person.

Since we met, a provincial election has been called, and I am following up on behalf of the Ministry of Housing. I would like to acknowledge the important topics discussed during our meeting.

In our meeting, we discussed some of the challenges associated with building in the north, where construction costs can surpass the potential sale prices of properties. Concerns were raised about the impact of the current Step Code on northern communities, as well as the role of inspections in the building process, including acknowledgement of the potential for added costs and delays associated with bringing in architects from outside the region for project inspections.

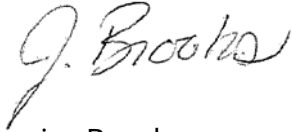
We are in the election period, and the BC Government is in caretaker mode; issues regarding future funding for programs and other policy and operational decisions will be deferred until after the election is complete and the incoming government is in place.

Thank you for taking the time to meet and bring forward these issues that are important to the Province, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, and foremost the people of British Columbia.

Page 1 of 2

Mark Parker
Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Brooks".

Jessica Brooks
Executive Director
Planning and Land Use Management Branch

CC: Curtis Helgesen, CAO, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
John McEowan, BC Housing
Amy Wong, BC Housing



Reference: 43329

October 17, 2024

VIA EMAIL: info@rdbn.bc.ca

Mark Parker, Chair
Regional District of Bulkley Nechako
37 – 3rd Avenue
Burns Lake, British Columbia
V0J 1E0

Dear Mark Parker:

On behalf of Minister Cullen, thank you for taking the time to meet with us and staff from the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, at this year's Union of British Columbia Municipalities Convention in Vancouver on September 17, 2024, to discuss natural resources dataset.

We understand that the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako is seeking data on aquifers. Where the province has data, we can share it. We are still collecting data on aquifers, especially in the northern part of the province. Please reach out to Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Information Officer Andy Calarco, Natural Resource Information and Digital Services Division for data questions at Andrew.calarco@gov.bc.ca.

Again, thank you for your time. I am grateful we had the opportunity to meet about topics of mutual importance to provincial and local government.

Sincerely,



Lori Halls
Deputy Minister

pc: Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship
Andy Calarco, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Information Officer Natural
Resource Information and Digital Services Division