

---

**TO:** Geoff Garbutt  
General Manager, Strategic and  
Community Development

**DATE:** May 2, 2016

**FROM:** Jeremy Holm  
Manager, Current Planning

**MEETING:** EAPC

**FILE:** 6630-01

**SUBJECT: Consultative Process Intended to Identify Rural Area Signage Concerns**

---

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the community consultation process intended to identify rural signage concerns follow the Community Consultation Plan included as Attachment 1.
2. That staff be directed to report back to the Board on the outcome of the community consultation process and provide recommended options for addressing community concerns related to effective signage in rural areas.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present a proposed Community Consultation Plan intended to identify rural signage concerns to inform future consideration and options for addressing community concerns related to effective signage in rural areas.

## BACKGROUND

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board at its meeting of April 23, 2013 approved the following motion:

*MOVED Director Veenhof, SECONDED Director Young, that staff be directed to prepare a report to the Board on a proposed consultative process with the intent of identifying rural signage concerns and reducing any impediments to effective signage.*

Effective and informative signage is important to the local economy, is a public safety factor and can strengthen community identity and pride. The RDN is involved in regulating signs in rural areas through zoning and sign regulations as well as through development permit guidelines, which can ensure that proposed signage is consistent with community objectives and the vision set out in an Official Community Plan (OCP). Official Community Plans can include policy statements that provide direction with regard to the community's vision and interest in how signage should be incorporated into a community. Generally the various OCPs within the RDN support signage improvements related to community identification and active transportation. The Regional District of Nanaimo OCPs generally support maintaining a balance between protecting rural integrity and promoting a vibrant rural

economy and also support minimizing and grouping signs to improve signage effectiveness while reducing distractions and clutter. Official Community Plan review, such is currently underway in Electoral Area 'H', provides opportunity for a community to define and express its vision as to how signage should be incorporated into the community.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) has jurisdiction over road rights-of-way in unincorporated areas and plays a significant role in signage in rural areas. The MOTI has strict standards for traffic signs and guidelines for service and attraction signs on highways.

Following Board direction in 2013, staff worked on a series of pilot projects that support community identification and economic development through signage upgrades, or installations in a highway right-of-way.

1. Lighthouse Country Business Association – Lighthouse Country entrance signs at Qualicum Bay and Deep Bay on Highway 19A, Electoral Area 'H'.
2. Lighthouse Country Business Association – Horne Lake/Mary Lake tourism and area services sign on Highway 19A, Electoral Area 'H'.
3. Nanoose Bay Community Signage Program on Highway 19, Electoral Area 'E'.
4. Directional signage consistency at intersections on Highway 19 and directional signage for communities and attractions on Highway 19A, Electoral Area 'H'.

Pilot projects 1, 2 and 3, which were partially funded through grants from the RDN through the Northern Community Economic Development Select Committee, resulted in the installation or upgrade of community identification and information signs. New sign installations within the highway right-of-way were installed under permit from the MOTI. These projects provide examples of "out of the box" community signage improvements that can be achieved in cooperation with the MOTI through the RDN's involvement and support. Pilot project 4, which requires the MOTI to undertake signage improvements in highway rights-of-way, has not currently resulted in improvements to directional and service and attraction signage based on identified inconsistencies in the application of the MOTI's signage standards and guidelines. Lack of progress on this project has highlighted that new approaches to advocacy are required for improvements to directional signage and services and attraction signage within highway rights-of-way. These pilot projects will provide reference and will help inform staff's analysis and recommendations for options to address community concerns related to effective signage in rural areas.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. To proceed with a community consultation process intended to identify rural area signage concerns as outlined in the Community Consultation Plan included as Attachment 1.
2. To not proceed with a community consultation process to identify rural area signage concerns.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Staff have reviewed the proposed development and note that the proposal has no implications related to the Board 2016 – 2020 Financial Plan. The cost of the proposed Community Consultation Plan is estimated at \$3500, which can be accommodated within the approved 2016 Community Planning budget.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

Staff have reviewed the 2016 – 2020 Board Strategic Plan and note that the proposed community consultation process intended to identify rural signage concerns is consistent with the RDN strategic priorities of focusing on service and organizational excellence, relationships and economic health.

## **INTER-GOVERNMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Community Consultation Plan identifies a number of government stakeholders including, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Ministry of Agriculture and local First Nations to be included in consultation regarding community concerns related to effective signage in rural areas.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IMPLICATIONS**

A Community Consultation Plan is proposed to provide stakeholders an opportunity to identify rural signage concerns (see Attachment 1 - Community Consultation Plan). The proposed consultation process, which is intended to occur between June and September 2016, provides a number of different methods for obtaining community feedback including:

- three open houses (north, central and south);
- social and earned media;
- a project website, email notification and an online questionnaire; and,
- staff availability for meetings with community groups and individuals.

## **SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

Staff have prepared a proposed Community Consultation Plan and have provided recommendations based on Board direction to prepare a report on a proposed consultative process with the intent of identifying rural signage concerns and reducing impediments to effective signage. A number of signage related pilot projects have been undertaken that provide reference and will help inform staff's analysis and recommendations for options to address community concerns related to effective signage in rural areas. Should the Board approve the proposed community consultation process, which is scheduled for June through September 2016, staff anticipate reporting back to the Board in November 2016 on the outcome of the community consultation process and recommended options for addressing community concerns related to effective signage in rural areas.

---

Report Writer

---

General Manager Concurrence

---

CAO Concurrence

**Attachment 1  
Community Consultation Plan**

**Regional District of Nanaimo  
Rural Area Signage  
Community Consultation Plan  
June – September 2016**

This Community Consultation Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Public Consultation/Communication Framework.

This Plan outlines a process to be used to obtain community and stakeholder input into identifying signage concerns to inform consideration of options for addressing community concerns related to effective signage in the RDN's Electoral Areas (except for Electoral Area 'B').

The following outlines the proposed Community Consultation Plan.

### **Objectives**

To conduct a public consultation process that raises awareness, and provides opportunities to gather community feedback to identify signage concerns to inform consideration of options to for addressing community concerns related to effective signage in the RDN's Electoral Areas (except for Electoral Area 'B').

### **Methodology**

A number of different stakeholders have been identified. This list will evolve as the RDN becomes aware of who is interested/affected by the project. As part of the project, staff will engage the following stakeholders and governments and encourage their involvement.

#### *Stakeholders & Governments*

- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Business Associations & Chambers of Commerce
- Agriculture and Aquaculture Organizations
- First Nations (Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as, Stz'uminus, Qualicum)
- Electoral Area Residents
- Real Estate Industry

The proposed Community Consultation Plan will provide stakeholder groups, governments and individuals an opportunity to identify signage concerns and inform consideration of options for addressing community concerns related to effective signage in rural areas.

The following background information is available to inform the process:

- RDN staff reports related to the project
- Relevant RDN Bylaws and Policies
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure publications:
  - Manual of Standard Traffic Signs & Pavement Markings
  - Service & Attraction Sign Manual

The above information will be made available through the following methods:

- Project website
- Hard copies (available for viewing at the RDN administration building and at RDN-sponsored events)

Feedback will be solicited through the following methods:

- Email
- One-on-one meetings with staff
- Telephone
- RDN-Sponsored events
- Written submissions

### **Tools and Tasks**

A number of different tools will be used to obtain feedback that will be considered in making additional recommendations to the Board on how to proceed:

#### *Project Promotion/Earned Media*

Promotional material will be developed as well as a news release. Staff will approach local media outlets to assist in promoting the project and encouraging the community to participate. RDN social media resources (including Twitter and Facebook) will be used to promote the project and encourage community participation.

#### *RDN-Sponsored Open Houses and Presentations*

The RDN will host three open houses (north, central and south) where information about the project will be provided along with a staff presentation.

The purpose of the open houses is to provide opportunity to obtain community feedback on rural area signage concerns. Information will be provided in the form of displays and a presentation. In addition, the open houses also provide a chance for people to ask questions and discuss issues around rural area signage. Community feedback will be collected using methods such as a questionnaire. Following the completion of the open houses, staff will consolidate the results in a report to be presented to the Electoral Area Planning Committee and to the Board at a later date.

#### *Online Questionnaire*

An online survey will be developed to obtain input on rural area signage concerns and impediments to effective signage. Following completion of the questionnaire, staff will consolidate the results in a report to be presented to the Electoral Area Planning Committee and to the Board at a later date.

#### Project Referral

A referral will be sent to member municipalities, First Nations, and Provincial Ministries involved in informational and directional signage. The purpose of the referral will be to raise awareness of the project and request comments or concerns with regard to effective signage in rural areas. Any comments received will be considered and consolidated in a report to be presented to the Electoral Area Planning Committee and to the Board at a later date.

### *Social Media Presence*

Following the preparation of a news release, the RDN will use social media including Facebook and Twitter to promote the project. Social media will also be used to direct interested members of the public to sources of information and formal opportunities to provide input.

### *RDN/Project Website and Email Alerts*

The RDN Get Involved, Highlights, and homepage thumbnails may be used to promote the project and direct website users to the project website, which will be used to provide up to date information about the project including upcoming events. In addition, the RDN email alert system will be used from time to time to inform participants by email about upcoming events.

### **Outcomes**

The desired outcomes of this process include a report outlining the community's perspective on rural area signage concerns and potential impediments to effective signage. These outcomes will be used to inform staff recommendations regarding options for reducing impediments to effective signage in rural areas for the Board's consideration.

### **Schedule**

The Community Consultation Plan is proposed to be initiated in June and run through to September 2016. It is intended that the results will be presented in a report to the Board with staff recommendations in November 2016.

### **Resources**

The Community Consultation Plan will be led by a Senior Planner with assistance from other planning staff. All work required to undertake this process will be done with existing staff resources. The Senior Planner will coordinate with the RDN Communications Coordinator with respect to the preparation of a news release and promotional material.

### **Budget**

All costs associated with this Community Consultation Plan can be accommodated within the 2016 Community Planning Budget.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The success of the process will be evaluated. The process will be deemed successful if it results in meaningful input providing community perspective on rural area signage concerns and potential impediments to effective signage, which helps to inform recommended options for addressing community concerns related to effective signage in rural areas.