

To: Electoral Area Services Committee

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From: Andrea Antifaeff, Planner II

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Subject: Fraser Canyon Complete Communities Study Project Update

Reviewed by: Katelyn Hipwell, Manager of Planning

Graham Daneluz, Director of Planning & Development

Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION

This report is intended to advise the Fraser Valley Regional District Board of progress on the development of the Fraser Canyon Complete Communities Study. Staff are not looking for a recommendation and have forwarded this information should members want more clarification or to discuss this item further.

BACKGROUND

In 2024, the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) applied to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for funding under the Complete Communities program to support the Fraser Canyon Complete Communities and Economic Diversification Study. The FVRD Board endorsed this application in January 2024.

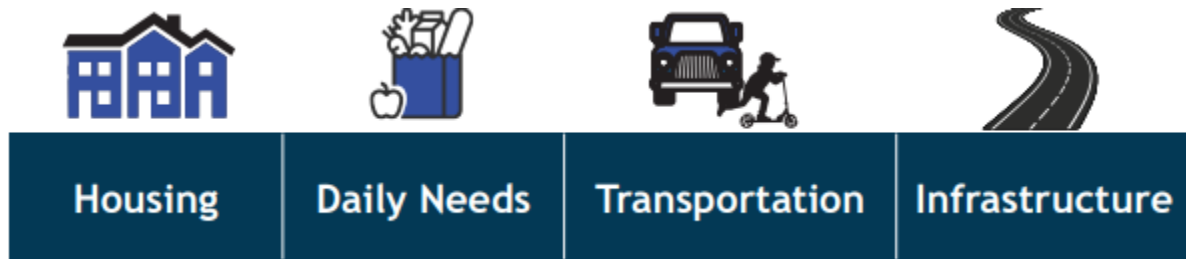
The FVRD was notified in April 2024 that the application was successful. Subsequently, in October 2024, the Board authorized the award of the contract to Dialog BC Architecture Engineering Interior Design Planning Inc. (Dialog).

This Complete Community Study will help the FVRD support the viable development of community hubs, define an affordable housing roadmap for canyon communities, identify opportunities for living/working and guide the development of compact, complete and more energy-efficient rural canyon communities.

The timing of the Fraser Canyon Complete Communities Study coincides with other regular work plan priorities in the region. The outcomes of the study will be integral in informing growth management, and policy direction in the upcoming Official Community Plan update for Electoral Areas A and B. Where recommendations pertain to changes in land use designations, implementation may be undertaken as part of the OCP update.

DISCUSSION

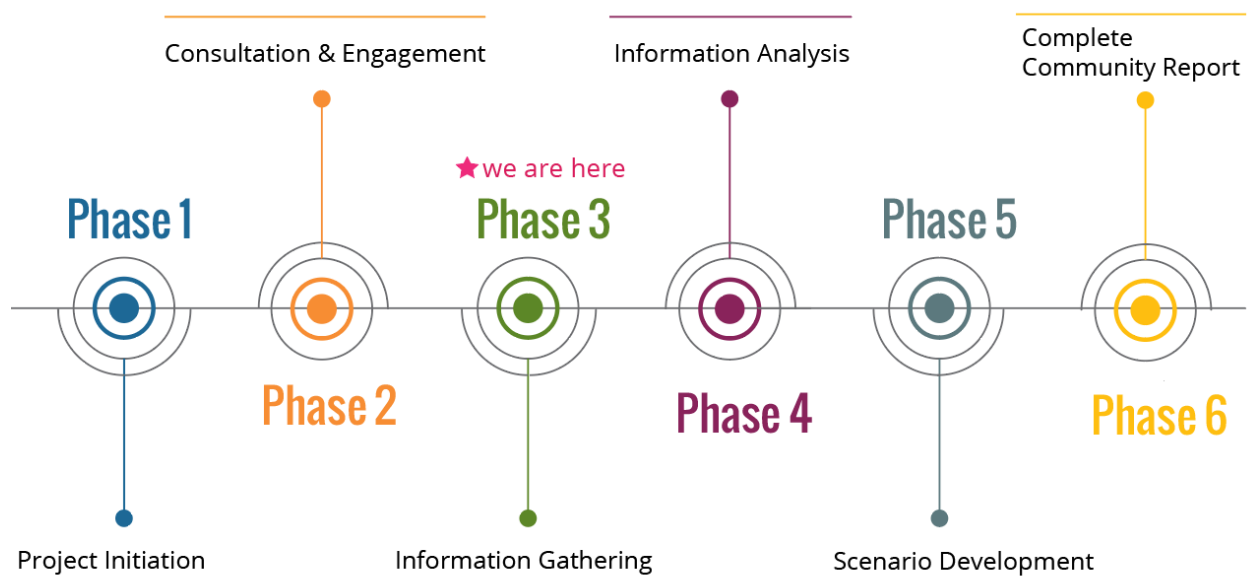
The Fraser Canyon Complete Communities Study analyzes the Fraser Canyon's current and future community completeness through the following four lenses:



The study will explore how the Fraser Canyon can become a more complete and resilient community over the next 20 years by identifying opportunities to enhance livability, economic stability, and **housing diversity**. A key focus will be on understanding the area's unique **socioeconomic context**, including population trends, economic shifts, and the challenges faced by residents in accessing essential services and affordable housing. Innovative and context-sensitive housing options will be explored—such as small-scale infill, adaptable housing forms, and mixed-use development—aimed at meeting the diverse needs of rural households while maintaining the character of the area.

Phased Approach

Dialog (the consultant) has structured the study into six distinct phases, each designed to build upon the last and guide the project. These phases provide a framework for analysis, engagement, and scenario development.



Phase 1 – Project Initiation (Completed)

To launch the project, FVRD staff collaborated with Dialog over the past couple of months to review and compile relevant data, plans, and previous studies. This work sets the stage for the preliminary data analysis and informs the direction of the work ahead.

Phase 2 – Consultation and Engagement (Completed)

In early February 2025, the FVRD launched a [Have Your Say webpage](#) to support public engagement for the Fraser Canyon Complete Communities Study. Although the study is primarily a technical planning exercise, community input is essential for understanding lived experiences in the Fraser Canyon and identifying opportunities to enhance livability in the region.

To gather public feedback, an online survey was developed and made available through the [Have Your Say webpage](#). FVRD staff undertook a broad outreach effort to promote the survey and webpage, posting informational flyers at more than 20 locations throughout the Fraser Canyon. These included local businesses, libraries, and community centres—key gathering points for residents.

In addition to on-the-ground outreach, FVRD promoted the project and survey through social media, sharing posts on its Facebook page on February 20, February 26, March 4, and March 27. These posts encouraged residents to share their experiences and ideas related to the Fraser Canyon region.

To further broaden participation, direct email notifications were sent to key interested parties, including:

- Boston Bar-North Bend Enhancement Society
- Community Futures North Fraser
- Boston Bar/North Bend and Yale fire chiefs
- Nearby Indigenous communities:
 - Boothroyd Indian Band
 - Boston Bar First Nation
 - **Nlaka’pamux Tribal Council**
 - Spuzzum First Nation
 - Yale First Nation

As of today, the Have Your Say webpage has received 168 visits, and 28 residents completed the online survey. Staff recognize that the survey’s low participation rate reflects the ongoing challenges of engaging residents in rural areas, where limited internet access and competing priorities can be barriers to participation. **In response to feedback from the survey question, “How do you want to be engaged?”,** there was clear interest for in-person engagement opportunities. Staff are committed to being responsive to these preferences and will work to incorporate in-person engagement options in future engagement during the OCP process.

A summary of the survey responses is provided in the Fraser Canyon: Complete Communities Assessment Summary Survey dated April 7, 2025, attached as Appendix A and is posted on the [Have Your Say webpage](#).

Next Steps

Phase 3 - Information Gathering (In Progress)

Building on the information gathered in Phases 1 and 2, Dialog will map baseline data to assess how **“complete” the Fraser Canyon currently is within the four complete communities lenses**. Each component will be analyzed by subject-matter experts, with Dialog engaging external partners for their specialized expertise.

Following this analysis, a preliminary data analysis report will be prepared to summarize key findings and establish a foundation for scenario development.

Phase 4 – Information Analysis (In Progress)

The focus will be on an analysis of land compatibility and suitability using GIS techniques, alongside a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to assess the region's strategic development potential. Through spatial assessments across the four complete community lenses, combined with housing viability testing and economic, transportation, and infrastructure reviews, this work will culminate in a needs assessment report.

Phase 5 – Scenario Development

This phase will develop and compare development scenarios using multi-criteria and feasibility analyses to assess suitability, affordability, and implementation potential.

Phase 6 – Complete Community Report

The final Complete Community Report anticipated in Q4 2025 will include the following key deliverables:

- Identification of viable community hub locations
- Conceptual plans illustrating scenarios
- Policy recommendations and action items for implementation

COST

The total cost of the Fraser Canyon Complete Communities Study project is \$135,200 (excluding GST). The entire project is funded by a grant from the Ministry of Housing, administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) under the Complete Communities Program.

CONCLUSION

The Fraser Canyon Complete Community Study will help the FVRD identify and support viable development scenarios within Canyon communities and coincide with the Official Community Plan update in the region.