

To: Electoral Area Services Committee

Date: 2025-05-15

From: Andrea Antifaeff, Planner II

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**Subject: Area C Official Community Plan Update – Revised Engagement Strategy and Public Feedback Post 1st Reading**

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## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board endorse the revised engagement strategy as outlined in the staff report dated May 15, 2025, to receive feedback on the draft Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1747, 2024

**AND THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board receive the What We Heard report (Appendix A) for information purposes.

## BACKGROUND

In November 2024, the FVRD Board endorsed a revised engagement strategy to support the Electoral Area C Official Community Plan (OCP) update and implementation. This revision supersedes the previously endorsed strategy from September 2022.

**In April 2025, staff advised the Board that, due to the developer's withdrawal of the "Harrison Rise" zoning amendment application, the existing engagement strategy would be reviewed for possible streamlining. Staff have now developed a revised strategy that differs from the original timeline and request the Board's endorsement.**

## DISCUSSION

### Early Consultation

In September 2022, the FVRD Board resolved to undertake early and ongoing consultation for the Area C OCP with the following parties:

- Electoral Area C residents and landowners within the Plan area;

- **Leq'á:mel First Nation; Sts'ailes, Sq'éwlets, Nooaitch Indian Band, Esh-kn-am Cultural Resources Management Services, Cheam First Nation, Union Bar First Nation, Stó:lō Nation, Peters First Nation, Popkum First Nation, Sumas First Nation, Skwah First Nation, Kwaw-Kwaw-Apil't First Nation, Skawahlook, and Kwantlen;**
- School District 78 Fraser-Cascade and School District 75 Mission;
- Local, provincial, and federal government agencies and other stakeholders.

Staff have proceeded in alignment with this resolution.

Since 2021, and prior to first reading, the three components of this OCP – Area C-wide policies, Lake Errock Neighbourhood Plan, and Harrison Mills Neighbourhood Plan have progressed on different timelines. While interconnected, each has involved distinct consultation activities. A summary of engagement prior to first reading is provided in the staff report dated June 13, 2024 (Appendix B).

#### Harrison Mills Neighbourhood Plan

Significant consultation has already occurred for the Harrison Mills Neighbourhood Plan, including seven community meetings. This plan was developed collaboratively with the community to reflect local values and priorities, ensure environmental protection, and support a balanced approach to the redevelopment of the resort and associated lands.

#### Lake Errock Neighbourhood Plan

The Lake Errock Neighbourhood Plan was initiated in response to zoning and OCP amendment applications associated specifically with the Harrison Rise development proposal. In this case, the applicant determines the nature of the proposed development and has the right to have their application considered by the FVRD Board. This approach differs from the process used for the Harrison Mills Neighbourhood Plan, which did not originate from specific application but rather emerged through a collaborative public planning process. Although the two approaches are distinct, both are legitimate and common approaches for neighbourhood planning in British Columbia.

Engagement for the Lake Errock Neighbourhood Plan included two public information meetings, regular updates on the Have Your Say webpage, ongoing email submissions, and a petition submitted to the FVRD in 2024. While the draft neighbourhood plan includes policies to address the key concerns raised by residents, such as environmental protection, traffic management, and servicing, the fundamental development concept remains unchanged.

The draft OCP, including the two neighbourhood plans, will be brought to the FVRD Board in July for consideration of second reading. A summary of changes from the first reading draft will be provided, including enhanced policy language related to environmental protection, servicing feasibility, and traffic impacts to be addressed at the time of rezoning. The underlying development concept remains the same and continues to reflect the original application submitted by the developer.

The input received from the public in opposition to the proposed Harrison Rise development concept cannot be resolved through further policy refinement or additional technical studies at the rezoning

stage. Staff are confident that the proposed OCP policies would provide a robust framework for achieving community benefits from the proposed development and also be effective for mitigating potential negative impacts. However, a large part of the public input received to date concerns fundamental opposition to the scale and density of the proposed development, not the policy framework that surrounds it. Moreover, recent public feedback has expressed frustration that the development concept has not changed to address community feedback, growing fatigue with the engagement process, and diminished trust in its effectiveness.

As a result, staff do not believe there is a benefit in holding additional public information meetings. The revised engagement strategy recommends that the FVRD Board receive the Servicing Feasibility Study results, consider the OCP for second reading and then direct staff to proceed to public hearing.

### Area C OCP Consultation

#### Revised Engagement Sequence

Sequence of Consultation and Engagement			
	Post 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading COMPLETE	➡ Servicing Feasibility Communication ➡	Public Hearing
Level of Participation	Inform  Consult	Inform	Inform  Consult
Purpose	Receive feedback on 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading draft	Present Feasibility Study outcomes	Receive public comment on draft OCP
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referrals</li> <li>• Mail-out/ Postcard</li> <li>• Have Your Say Discussion and Email Blast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mail-out               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of Feasibility Outcomes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Have Your Say Update and Email Blast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mail-out               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice of Hearing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Have Your Say Update and Email Blast</li> <li>• In-person or virtual hearing</li> </ul>
Follow-up with FVRD Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Report – Updated Engagement Strategy, Next Steps</li> <li>• Staff Report – Revised Engagement Strategy &amp; Summary of Public Comments on 1<sup>st</sup> reading draft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Presentation to EASC</li> <li>• Staff Report – Summary of Feasibility Outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Report – Public Hearing Summary, Next Steps</li> </ul>

## Post 1<sup>st</sup> Reading Consultation

### *Referrals – Complete*

Formal referrals following the FVRD Board's first reading of the Area C OCP were sent to Indigenous communities, government agencies, private businesses, and community groups. The referrals invited comments and feedback on the draft OCP and identified opportunities to meet with FVRD staff for additional discussion. Staff are currently working through addressing the referral comments received and these comments will be summarized in a future report to the FVRD Board.

### *Public Mail-out and Have Your Say Discussion Forum – Complete*

In January 2025, a public mail-out was sent to residents within the Plan area along with an email blast to residents registered on Have Your Say to receive communications on the Area C OCP project. The mail-out provided the following key information:

- Illustrated the anticipated consultation sequence
- Directed residents to the project Have Your Say webpage to review the draft OCP
- Solicited feedback and comment on the draft Area C OCP through a Have Your Say discussion forum
- Indicated pending feasibility study and future presentation of study outcomes.

The Have Your Say discussion forum was open for comment from January 24 to March 15, 2025. During this period, there were thirty-seven comments posted in the discussion forum and an additional six emails containing comments were received.

The feedback received following first reading of the draft Area C OCP is consistent with previously received feedback with a large majority of respondents expressing strong opposition to the proposed Harrison Rise development. Respondents cited concerns about the scale and density of the proposal, **impacts on the lake's ecology, stormwater runoff, aquifer integrity, fire risk, traffic** volumes on Highway 7, and the lack of supporting infrastructure. Some felt that the OCP prioritizes development interests over community values, rural character, and environmental protection. Multiple submissions called for comprehensive environmental studies, transparency in technical data, and genuine reflection of resident input in the OCP. A small number of comments unrelated to Harrison Rise raised separate planning concerns, such as private property rights near Echo Lake and minimum lot sizes. Overall, the dominant theme was strong resistance to large-scale development in Lake Errock and a desire for a plan that reflects local values and sustainable growth.

The comments received are included in the *What We Heard Report* attached as Appendix A.

## Servicing Feasibility Study Communication

### *Original Engagement Strategy*

The previously endorsed engagement strategy included an in-person meeting and an interactive survey to present the Servicing Feasibility Study findings and gather public feedback. Following the engagement, staff intended to report the results and feedback to the FVRD Board, along with options for proceeding to second reading.

### *Updated Engagement Strategy*

The Servicing Feasibility Study primarily analyzing the impact on water, sewer, solid waste, transit, community recreational facilities, parks and trails, and fire protection service is nearing completion. **However, with the developer's withdrawal of the zoning amendment application, the FVRD will** finalize the Study with currently available information and based solely on the engineering requirements outlined in the FVRD Terms of Reference. Alternative scenarios, as were previously requested by the developer, will not be explored. When a zoning amendment application is made in the future a new servicing feasibility study will be required at that time.

Given this context, staff are recommending a simplified communication path. The withdrawal of the zoning amendment application presents an opportunity to streamline the timeline for consideration of the OCP moving forward. Once finalized, the Study will be presented to the Electoral Area Services Committee, published on the Have Your Say project page, and a summary of the Study outcomes will be mailed to all residents within the Plan area. Additionally, an email notice will be sent to residents registered to receive communications on the Area C OCP project to inform them that the Study is publicly available for review.

### *Rationale for Not Proceeding with In-Person Public Consultation*

The developer has confirmed that the required servicing standards and community benefit expectations render the project economically unviable at this time. **Staff's preliminary review of** aspects of the Study supports this conclusion, with significant infrastructure and servicing costs – potentially including unquantified DCCs and ACCs – exceeding feasible limits.

As the developer has withdrawn the zoning amendment application for Harrison Rise and the Study findings will not be used to support any immediate decision-making on the zoning amendment application, further public consultation is not warranted at this time. Community input is most valuable when there is an application under consideration. However, it is important to recognize that if the OCP, along with the Lake Errock Neighbourhood Plan, is adopted as currently drafted, a future zoning amendment application consistent with the OCP would not require a public hearing. In that case, the level of public consultation would be limited to informing the public, rather than involving them in the decision-making process.

## Public Hearing

### *Virtual or In-Person Public Hearing*

At the direction of the FVRD Board, a public hearing will be conducted following second reading of the draft Area C OCP. A notice of hearing will be mailed to residents within the Plan area and published to the FVRD website and Have Your Say project page. The public hearing will be conducted in-person or virtually, which can be determined at the time the FVRD Board directs staff to conduct the hearing. The FVRD Board, in consultation with staff, will decide on the format of the public hearing per the *FVRD Public Hearings in the Electoral Areas Policy*. Considerations related to the safety, accessibility, and convenience of public hearing participants, and the safety of FVRD staff, will be primary considerations.

### **Next Steps**

The steps outlined in Table 2 present the revised consultation and engagement strategy pathway for the Area OCP update. Steps 1a and b – initial consultation on the first reading draft have been completed. The project is now moving into Step 2, which involves the publication of the Servicing Feasibility Study for the Lake Errock Neighbourhood Plan. This study, currently being finalized by Urban Systems Ltd., is expected to be completed by June 2025.

Following the release of the Study, staff anticipate bringing the draft OCP forward for 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in Summer 2025 (Step 3) following with a public hearing (Step 4) in late summer or early fall 2025.

This phased approach ensures a transparent and inclusive planning process, providing adequate opportunity for residents, Indigenous communities, agencies, stakeholders, and the FVRD Board to consider and provide comments on the various aspects of the Area C OCP update. This process will help to ensure that the final OCP and Neighbourhood Plans reflect the needs and aspirations of Area C residents.

Step	Responsible	Timeframe
1. Consultation on 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading draft		
a. Referrals	FVRD	Completed
b. Mail-out, Have Your Say Discussions	FVRD	Completed
2. Publication of Servicing Feasibility Study for Lake Errock Neighbourhood Plan	FVRD	Study in progress by Urban Systems -Anticipated June 2025

3. Consideration of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	FVRD Board	Anticipated Summer 2025
4. Public Hearing	FVRD	Summer-Fall 2025

*Table 2: Next Steps on the Consultation Path*

## **COST**

The Area C Official Community Plan update has been identified as a multi-year priority project for the 2024/2025 Electoral Area Planning work plan. Costs associated with this update are covered through the Electoral Area Planning Services budget.

Costs associated with consulting services for the review of the proposed Harrison Rise development are covered through capacity funding secured through the Developer Contribution Agreement. Completion of the Servicing Feasibility Study is considered part of this review and covered through the capacity funding.

## **CONCLUSION**

The FVRD has undertaken extensive and ongoing public consultation to support the development of the Area C Official Community Plan, including the integration of the Lake Errock and Harrison Mills Neighbourhood Plans. Considering the developer's withdrawal of the Harrison Rise zoning amendment application, staff have revised the engagement strategy to reflect the current project needs while continuing to ensure meaningful, productive, and accessible public participation.

The updated strategy reflects the evolving scope of the OCP update and aims to streamline communication efforts where appropriate – particularly around the Servicing Feasibility Study while keeping consultation focused on actionable components of the Plan. The revised sequence maintains transparency and ensures meaningful opportunities for input from residents, Indigenous communities, stakeholders, and agencies to provide input at key milestones. It also responds to the growing engagement fatigue in the community and acknowledges the extended timeline of the OCP and neighbourhood plan update process.

Together, the original and revised engagement activities constitute a comprehensive and adaptable consultation strategy that meets legislated requirements and reflects best practices in public engagement. Endorsing the revised strategy ensures the planning process can move forward in a timely and responsive manner.