

Directors Report March 2023

March has been a busy month with meetings with our MLA, meetings with our MP and of course finalizing details with this years 2023 budget and tax implications for Area D residents.

Meeting with MLA

Productive meeting with focus on the following key items

- Water Meter Grant for those on the Northern Water System
- MoT and Main Road and snow removal problems
- MoT and Main road prioritize road resurfacing and consult more with the community
- MoT and Main road cleaning up area ditches and replace culverts as needed
- Discussed the need for speed controls in Area D such as around parks
- Traffic issues at Crawford Rd and 19A
- Promoting active transportation in Area D

2023 Area D Budget

As some are most likely aware this year there is an average increase in taxes of approximately \$300 per household.

With this tax increase the following initiatives and projects will be realized

1. Strathcona Gardens new swimming pool complex and significant building updates will be moving forward. This \$73 million project is very welcome after the years of delay from the previous area Director and City of Campbell River Council. This project will be providing a number of local well paying jobs to boot.
2. All of the area D community parks projects now have the appropriate budget to proceed.

Those projects are

- I. Parks Master Planning
- II. Hagel Park Greenway North and Storie Creek Trail
- III. Hagel Park Drainage problems
- IV. Salmon Point Trail Head Development V. Storie Creek New Bridge
- VI. Oyster River Nature Park trail and Signage upgrade
- VII. Hagel Park Public Washroom
- VIII. Mittlenatch Park and furniture

3. Suitable budget was approved for Area D to update the Official Community Plan (OCP) and start tackling zoning changes.
4. \$75,000 has been budgeted for a comprehensive traffic study.
5. Gas tax money has been moved to support the Northern Area D water infrastructure upgrades. In the past few weeks alone there have been how many problems with the aging water infrastructure.
6. Should the grant application to the province for bus shelters fail as the last application did area D does have some funding to start purchases. A single bus shelter for the most basic shelter is over \$27,000.

BC Transit

How happy are folks with BC Transit bus service in Area D?

I have requested a review of this service schedules and I would love to hear from those that are using the bus service.

I am also keen to learn how many people use the bus stop located at Engels Rd and are heading North into Campbell River. I am looking at whether this bus stop can be improved to accommodate a future bus shelter so it would be nice to know how much this bus stop is used.

Please contact me with all your concerns regarding the transit service. Email me jrice@srd.ca

One of the first items that I did tackle last year as soon as I was sworn in was the lack of bus shelters in Area D. The first grant application for bus shelters was not successful. SRD staff have applied for a provincial grant which I am hoping will be successful and will provide Area D with enough funds to purchase 4 bus shelters. Over the next few months the SRD should know if this grant application will be successful. If this grant application is not successful there is some budget to start purchasing bus shelters 2023.

North Island 911

How many think about the 911 service?

For many we only think about it when we need it.

The Campbell River Fire Department provides 911 services to a large portion of BC. Supported by North Island Communications the North Island 911 service has been busy updating equipment, and providing much need redundancy to its systems. While the yearly operating budgets continue to increase for the Strathcona Regional District there is no question how valuable this service is to the entire North Island.

As part of a Federal Government Initiative 911 services are moving towards Enhanced 911 services that will see many improvements to the system. Currently the North Island 911 service is on track to see these new enhanced services to begin in late 2025. It is very exciting to see the City of Campbell River as the hub for 911 services for the North Island and to be able to service a large portion of BC.

BC Hydro and the Campbell River Watershed

Just a reminder to the folks that are connected to the Northern Area D Water Service provided by the the City of Campbell River that this water service continues to encounter challenges with changing weather patterns that continue to put a strain on water management. I encourage every to think about water conservation all year round as our water sheds are still recovering from last years drought that continued into Dec 2022.

Official Community Plan (OCP) and Zoning Update

I know there is a lot of interest to get going with the Official Community Plan (OCP) much needed update and the desire to tackle zoning changes and I have been asked whats the hold up getting going. I can insure everyone in Area D that Official Community Plan Updates are a priority and now that budget has been approved for 2023 I do expect that over next several months there will be progress on this very important plan that will satisfy all those in the community. My understanding is that staff will be preparing a report which will be brought to the board which will outline the update process that some of the Electoral Directors are requesting.

Contacting the Director

If you have questions or concerns that you would like to discuss with me please call me @ 250.203.1598 or send a detailed email to jrice@srd.ca