

Constituent Update: Balancing Community Growth & Protecting Our Green Spaces

Dear Area D Residents,

As Electoral Area D continues to be one of the most desirable places to live in our region, a topic frequently raised in our community conversations is how we navigate future development while preserving the quiet, rural character and natural beauty we all cherish.

It is completely natural to want Area D to remain unchanged. However, with a significant amount of privately owned land across our area, total non-development is neither realistic nor legally feasible. Instead, our goal must be **managed, responsible growth**—ensuring that any new housing or commercial activity directly contributes to the quality of life for current residents and respects our surrounding environment.

With the adoption of our updated **Official Community Plan (OCP)**, we have established a clear, modernized framework to guide how growth happens in Area D. Here is how responsible development works to protect and enhance our community:

- **Protecting Natural Areas through Infill:** By prioritizing "gentle density"—such as secondary suites and carriage houses in existing residential areas—we accommodate housing needs without opening up raw wilderness or causing unserviced rural sprawl.
- **Securing Public Parks and Trails:** Through statutory parkland dedications during land subdivision, development allows us to turn what would be private land into dedicated public parks, beach access points, and connected trail networks for everyone to enjoy.
- **Sharing the Local Infrastructure Cost:** A growing and modernizing tax base helps fund critical public services—including road upkeep, solid waste and recycling depot operations, fire protection, and regional recreation facilities—so existing homeowners do not carry the financial burden alone.
- **Housing Choices Across Life Stages:** Managed growth provides options for local seniors looking to downsize while staying in Area D, as well as opportunities for younger families and local workers to find homes.
- **Upgrading Environmental and Fire Standards:** Modern development must meet strict standards under British Columbia's Riparian Areas Protection Regulations (RAPR), rainwater management guidelines, and FireSmart principles, helping reduce environmental impact and community wildfire risks.

Development in Area D does not have to mean losing our identity. By holding new projects to high environmental standards and directing growth into appropriate areas, we can protect our salmon streams, shoreline, and forest canopy while building a resilient, vibrant rural community.

I welcome your ongoing feedback and questions.

Warm regards, **John Rice: Candidate: For Area Director, Electoral Area D Regional District**