



## Regional Board Adopts Communications & Engagement Strategy

*Communications Advisor, Shelley Termuende*

In the 2019 to 2022 Strategic Plan, the qathet Regional District (qRD) Board listed communications as a strategic priority. Within this priority, the Board requested improved public education and awareness regarding qRD initiatives and services, an internal communications capacity assessment, and the development of a regional communications strategy to address both internal and external communications and engagement.

In March, 2021, staff prepared and launched a Request for Proposals and hired a consultant to develop a Regional Communications and Engagement Strategy. The project completed in February, 2022. The project's final report was adopted by the qRD Board on May 26, 2022.

Throughout the fall and winter of 2021, a region-wide survey seeking feedback regarding current qRD communications and engagement practices was developed and circulated. Community outreach sought input from local key actors, including staff, Board members, the business community and local non-profit organizations. qRD staff and the consultants also hosted virtual community workshops for the City of Powell River and all qRD participating Electoral Areas to hear from each community regarding their communications and engagement preferences.

The new Regional Communications and Engagement Strategy provides amendments to current communications and engagement policies and procedures. The Strategy also provides an analysis of the qRD's use of social media, and delivers



staff with tools, including a corporate writing style guide, corporate brand guide and branded templates for use throughout the organization.

Recommendations from the Strategy include: strengthening our corporate presence on social media, updating our communications policies, improving our information sharing procedures by recognizing each area's distinct preferences, more regularly surveying the public, and reporting out on engagement outcomes.

Additional recommendations include: updating website content and navigation to make it more user friendly, providing staff with engagement training, and hosting information sessions in each Electoral Area and the City of Powell River to improve public education and

qathet: *Working Together*

A name gifted to the  
Regional District by  
Tla'amin Nation Elders.

awareness about the qRD and the services provided in each community.

The Regional Communications and Engagement Strategy is the result of significant public engagement and feedback. The qRD would like to thank everyone who participated. This Strategy will be a foundational document to streamline future communications and engagement efforts for the qRD and the communities we serve.

qRD staff are currently implementing the recommendations outlined in the Regional Communications and Engagement Strategy and we look forward to facilitating better conversations with you.

For more information, visit  
us at [qathet.ca](https://www.qathet.ca)



# Message from the CAO



*Chief Administrative Officer, Al Radke*

During the past year, COVID-19 continued to impact service delivery within the qathet Regional District (qRD). Provincial Health Officer Orders were always at the forefront of how we went about business. Most of this was seamless to the public as we observed and adhered to our COVID Safety Plan or Communicable Disease Prevention Program. These documents were paramount as they identified the protocols that staff followed to conduct business,

interact with one another as well as have face-to-face time with the public.

When it came to interacting with the public, this most often meant innovation and adaptation of new techniques or technology to meet expectations, especially with regard to public meetings. The norm became virtual meetings for governance at the Committee and Board level as well as Public Hearings. Much of what we did was under the umbrella of the provincial state of emergency. Once those measures began to relax, and were eventually eliminated, the qRD then had to adopt bylaws that enshrined these innovative activities and made them legal without a state of emergency in effect. We are now operating a hybrid system, with in-person and virtual attendance options at governance meetings.

COVID-19 has been the culprit of supply chain shortages and a significant contributor to inflation. What was once considered to be off-the-shelf computer purchases became weeks on end delivery lead times. We all understand that we already have the 'Powell

River factor' when procuring infrastructure materials, like specialized labour, etc., but the pandemic has elevated that phenomenon. This could potentially have adverse consequences on future planned construction projects or on those already under way.

As we begin to rise out of the pandemic and begin to return to 'old normal', I commend qRD staff on their exemplary performance. Throughout all of the challenges, staff have been steadfast. They have been dedicated to supplying services for the public to enjoy safely and without compromise. My sincere appreciation goes out to every qRD employee, contractor and representative working tirelessly for the public to make the qRD a better place to live no matter what pitch they are thrown or what distraction they encounter.

The Board approved Strategic Plan is what guides our operations. The Board sets the sail and staff are committed to carrying out their wishes.

To learn more about the qathet Regional District's Strategic Plan, please visit [qathet.ca/strategic-plan](https://qathet.ca/strategic-plan)

## Livestream Meetings Using CivicWeb Portal

*Manager of Administrative Services, Michelle Jones*

The qathet Regional District (qRD) has added a new video platform into the meeting portal in order to improve public access to qRD meeting livestreams and recordings.

Livestreaming videos will be viewable alongside meeting agendas in real time. The archived video links will be displayed next to agendas or published minutes with timestamps next to each item.

The goal is to increase transparency and accessibility by enabling the public to easily access current meeting agendas and minutes, videos, and documents, all in one place. This change will also allow viewers to watch from anywhere and offers the ability to adjust their screen options to accommodate for low bandwidth internet connections.

Within the meeting portal, and in addition to the video platform, the public will be able to search for documents in our online library, view upcoming and past meetings using the calendar, and review agendas and minutes within the meeting area.

Individuals can subscribe to the meeting type that interests them and be notified anytime an agenda is released or updated. As an additional feature, the public can track the way Directors vote on specific resolutions.

The qRD is committed to providing information to the public as easily and conveniently as possible, and appreciates all the public feedback that lead to this significant improvement.

To access the qRD Portal, visit [qathetrd.civicweb.net](https://qathetrd.civicweb.net)

## 2022 BUDGET AND FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

*Manager of Financial Services, Linda Greenan*

The 2022 budget will operate on a total of \$29 million dollars. This represents a net operating budget for the year of \$12.6 million, total capital spending of \$14.3 million and total debt payments and transfers to reserves of \$2.2 million. The qRD has applied for and obtained total grant funding of \$4.1 million to assist with many planned projects.

The qRD follows a conservative budgeting approach by incorporating risk mitigation into our budget planning process. This includes planning for any inflationary increases, supply chain shortages and rising construction costs. The qRD plans to use reserve funds to stabilize annual requisitions and offset future borrowing costs, while continuing to apply for grant funding to help manage these risks.

The qRD's provincially mandated Five-Year Financial Plan details the projected costs of the Board's strategic goals, identified to effectively meet the community's needs. The goal is to provide a straightforward document for everyone to see a comprehensive break down of the services they are paying for, and what the qRD Board and staff are doing to sustain or improve them.

Each of the 46 services that the qRD provides has a separate identifiable budget. Each service budget sets out the revenues and total costs for providing that service. The separation of service budgets means that residents of the five Electoral Areas and the member municipality, the City of Powell River, only pay for the services in which they participate.



## RESULTS OF SOLID WASTE COMPOSITION STUDY

The Let's Talk Trash Team, on behalf of the qathet Regional District (qRD), undertook a two-season waste composition study to measure the types of waste going to landfill from our region.

These studies provide a baseline for qRD staff to assess the effectiveness of current programs and to make recommendations to further increase diversion opportunities.

The study looked at 76 categories of waste from Residential Municipal Solid Waste (curbside), Self-Haul Solid Waste; Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional (ICI) Solid Waste; Self-Haul Construction, Demolition, and Renovation (C&D) Solid Waste; and Commercial C&D waste. A separate one-time study was also done to get a snapshot of self-haul waste from Lasqueti Island residents.

The data indicates that the largest components of the waste stream by weight in 2021 were Organics (25%), followed by Wood and Wood Products (23%), Plastic (10%), C&D (10%), Paper (9%), Household Hygiene (7%), Multi-Material non-donatable items (5%), and Other Materials (3%), which contained multi-material items that were considered donatable.

To learn more, visit [qathet.ca/solid-waste-management-plan](https://qathet.ca/solid-waste-management-plan)

## SHORELINE CLEAN UP EFFORT COLLECTS TONNES AND CREATES JOBS

Last summer, the qathet region was involved in the first ever provincially funded shoreline cleanup effort. Let's Talk Trash collaborated with Tla'amin Nation, the Ocean Legacy Foundation and Fishing for Plastic to target six project areas through the region. The cleanup efforts resulted in collecting a total of 36,901 kg, or 36.91 tonnes, of material.

Through the qathet Regional District's Ocean Plastic Depot, 42 per cent of the material collected was diverted for recycling and 3 percent was diverted for reuse. A total of 73 jobs were created through this initiative that completed 36 field days of shoreline cleanup work.

### Want to help collect marine debris?

Contact Let's Talk Trash for an Ocean Plastic Depot orientation.

### Spot an illegal dumpsite?

Contact [info@LetsTalkTrash.ca](mailto:info@LetsTalkTrash.ca). Free disposal vouchers are available by filling out an application available at [qathet.ca](https://qathet.ca)

## REGIONAL PARK AND TRAIL ACCESSIBILITY UPGRADES

*Manager of Operational Services, Patrick Devereaux*

Over the last year, as part of the qathet Regional District's (qRD) annual winter maintenance, Operational Services staff made upgrades to improve accessibility at our parks and properties.

At Haywire Bay Regional Park, improvements were made to the day use area, the gazebo, and the trail to the east beach. These improvements were made with consultation from accessibility advocates, David, Michael, and Margaret Hodgins.

Improvements at Shelter Point Regional Park on the 'Nature Trail' included the removal of a narrow bridge with a step. This bridge was impassable by anyone in a wheelchair. This structure was replaced by a large culvert and a level, wide path was installed in its place.

In all the major parks, the qRD has installed additional eight foot long picnic tables that are wheelchair accessible.

The addition of accessible washrooms and parking at our Community Services Office rounds out our latest improvements.

These upgrades help those confined to wheelchairs, those that may have mobility challenges and those pushing strollers to be able to enjoy our parks and properties to the fullest.

## IMPROVED FUNCTIONALITY AND UPDATED IMAGES ADDED TO IMAP SOFTWARE

*Manager of Technical Services, Nancy Schmeister*

Users of the qRD's online mapping software will see faster and more accurate updates to the property boundary layer in the map thanks to new additions from ParcelMapBC. ParcelMapBC was developed by the Land Title Survey Authority and is considered to be the current, complete and trusted mapped representation of public and private land parcels.

The online map will soon feature new aerial imagery. The new 2022 imagery will cover all of Savary Island, Texada Island, Electoral Areas B and C and up to the junction of the Powell River and the Daniels River in Electoral Area A. New imagery is captured every five years.

## NEW SHELTER POINT PARK GATHERING STRUCTURE

Shelter Point Park on Texada Island is now home to a new gathering structure.



The design is based on conceptual drawings supplied to the qathet Regional District by Tla'amin Nation and features a large covered seating area with benches and a fire pit.

## RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTRE BUILD OUT TAKES SHAPE

The landfill closure and the detailed design of the new facility are complete. In September 2021 the qathet Regional District won the Excellence in Asset Management award from the Union of BC Municipalities, recognizing its innovative stormwater runoff design at the Resource Recovery Centre.

Choosing this natural asset solution instead of the proposed engineered solution saved taxpayers \$700,000.

In 2022 and 2023, the project team will be working on facility construction.

To learn more about the project, visit [qathet.ca/resource-recovery-centre](https://qathet.ca/resource-recovery-centre)

## Fire Protection and Emergency Services Update

*Manager of Emergency Services, Ryan Thoms*

qathet Regional District (qRD) operates four volunteer fire departments, also known as fire protection services: Northside Volunteer Fire Department, Savary Island Volunteer Fire Department, Lasqueti Island Volunteer Fire Department, and Malaspina Volunteer Fire Department.

The qRD collects property taxes for these fire departments and provides financial and administrative oversight for fire department operations. Our volunteer fire department Chiefs lead the day-to-day operations of their fire departments.

There are a total of 131 individuals volunteering in their communities as fire fighters, medical first responders, and other critical supporting roles. These volunteers are paged from their regular work and family lives to respond to emergencies on a 24/7 basis. Many of our volunteers have provided considerable years of service to their respective volunteer fire departments.

For more information, please visit [qathet.ca/fire-protection-services](http://qathet.ca/fire-protection-services)

### New Firehall and Onsite Training Facility in Lund, BC

Construction of the Northside Volunteer Fire Department satellite fire hall located at Roots Way and Highway 101 in Lund is complete. A regional fire training facility next door is nearing completion. This will allow local fire departments to receive and provide training to firefighters and recruits closer to home.

### Evacuation Supplies Containers Installed

A new emergency evacuation supplies container was installed at the Kelly Creek Community School. Five evacuation supplies containers are now deployed in the region.

Containers are also located at the Lund Community Centre, Salish Centre, the City of Powell River Recreation Complex, and the Texada Community Hall. These containers provide a small stockpile of basic provisions, such as blankets and first aid supplies. These will support evacuees at key community facilities in the event of an emergency.

## PLANNING SERVICES UPDATE

*Manager of Planning Services, Laura Roddan*

### Let's Talk Land Use Engagement

This April, the qathet Regional District Board accepted the Let's Talk Land Use Engagement Final Report. The Report presents findings from a comprehensive engagement process in Electoral Areas A, B and C designed to gauge the level of support for additional land use regulations. Participation rates were high with 286 people attending the engagement sessions and 954 people completing the survey.

Over 20 per cent of respondents shared concern for the protection of drinking water supply, environmental impacts on watercourses, land use conflicts, coastal areas at risk, and changes in drainage patterns. Despite these concerns, the majority of survey respondents did not support additional land use regulations. The notable exception was Savary Island, where a clear majority of residents indicated existing regulations are inadequate to manage land use conflicts, protect drinking water or coastal areas at risk.

### Regional Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy

The qathet Regional District in partnership with the Tla'amin Nation and City of Powell River, is exploring options adapting to rising sea levels, coastal erosion and flooding due to climate change.

Public feedback gathered between April and June, 2022, will help inform the development of a Regional Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy later this fall. Thank you to those who participated!

The project builds on previous regional coastal flood risk mapping and is supported by funding from the Union of BC Municipalities. To learn more visit [qathet.ca/regional-coastal-flood-adaptation-strategy](http://qathet.ca/regional-coastal-flood-adaptation-strategy)

## VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS IMPLEMENT PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM TO MANAGE CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS RELATED ILLNESS AND INJURIES

*Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator, Melanie Thoms*

The qathet Regional District (qRD) has implemented a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Peer Support program to address occupational mental health stresses and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among our volunteer firefighters, who regularly attend fires, motor vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, and other challenging incidents.

In March of 2021, the qRD hosted a three day training course on group crisis intervention and assisting individuals in crisis. This specialized

crisis intervention training equips individuals with the knowledge and tools to provide several types of support and crisis interventions to other volunteer firefighters.

The qRD has since implemented the CISM program for all regional fire departments and is currently evaluating the program's effectiveness.

Having CISM trained members at the various fire departments in our region allows for peer support and crisis intervention between and among departments, if needed or requested.

### Contact Us

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### Hours of Operation

8:30am – 4:30pm  
Closed 12:00pm – 1:00pm  
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