



Message from Regional Board Chair, Clay Brander



qathet Regional Board Chair and
Electoral Area C Director, Clay Brander

Local governments are the closest and most accessible level of government to voters, and as such we have a lot more accountability to our taxpayers to ensure we are serving our region effectively. Local governments have two core functions: service delivery and governance.

Many of us are used to municipalities as a system of government, but regional districts, which are unique to B.C., are a bit more complex. Regional districts are required by the Province to offer certain services to the entire region. These services include a regional planning service, solid waste management services, and general government administration for the respective regional district and regional hospital district.

The remainder of regional, sub-regional and localized services offered are the ones our electors requested us to provide through petitions for service.

In our budgeting model, only those that

are within a service area, pay for that service. With some localized services, like the Northside Community Recreation service, only those taxpayers within that service area, pay taxes for the delivery of that service. Unlike municipalities, regional districts are unable to move tax dollars from one service to another to cover any overages or deficits.

Regional districts are constantly evaluating how to deliver high-quality services, while managing the expectations of service users in relation to affordability, and longevity. Challenges with service delivery arise when the Province increases the expectations for service delivery on local governments through a phenomenon known as downloading.

Downloading occurs when what was once a federal or provincially managed service is delegated to a lower level of government.

Downloading impacts local governments in a number of ways. More localized services result in a reduced pool of funding available to provide these services. With a reduced funding pool, these services may have to operate at a reduced level, charge more to taxpayers to operate the service at the desired level, or attempt to subsidize costs through grants and other, often temporary, funding streams.

Every service provided by the qathet Regional District (qRD) helps to ensure our community continues to thrive. It is no easy task to manage such a large operation like ours, and I credit our organization's resilience to our hardworking and capable staff. They work tirelessly to keep our vital operations going, improving, and innovating.

This is my first year serving as Chair of the qRD, and I have had the privilege and honour to serve as Electoral Area C Director since 2018.

qathet: *Working Together*

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

During my tenure thus far, I have highlighted the importance of building a sense of community in this place we call home. With this in mind, I firmly believe that community building is the shared responsibility of our elected officials, staff, and members of the public. We as an organization, and a Board, rely on you to share your opinions with us to help build the community you want, and ensure it continues to serve the needs of your family for generations to come.

I have seen the direct results of what can be done if we all pitch in to make a difference, and you can too! I encourage you to reach out to your elected officials and ask questions. Contact the qRD about ideas you have! Learn more about our governance model and read about the extensive services we offer by visiting qathet.ca.

Please contact me with any questions you have via email at cbrander@qathet.ca or via letter at #202-4675 Marine Avenue, Powell River, BC, V8A 2L2. I look forward to hearing from you!

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today!**



@qathetRD

Message from the Chief Administrative Officer, Al Radke

In June, it was two years since the provincial state of emergency due to the pandemic was lifted. Since that time, there has been the gradual easing of COVID-19 related restrictions. The most notable of late was in April when wearing masks in a hospital setting became voluntary. A great many folks have transitioned to old normal signalling that the pandemic is over.

The whole experience was a trying ordeal and a learning one, in that the pandemic was unprecedented and record breaking. Hopefully, we can now focus on tasks at hand without any distractions or inconveniences. Social activities are growing, concerts and festivals are popping up again and people are becoming more active and transitory in general.

Just last October, the electorate went to the ballot boxes to usher in new elected officials in the province-wide local general elections. The qathet Regional District Board was no different than many throughout the

province experiencing change and there are two new faces sitting at the table. Back by acclamation are Director Clay Brander – Electoral Area C, and Director Andrew Fall – Electoral Area E. Back by winning through elections are Director Mark Gisborne – Electoral Area B, Director Sandy McCormick – Electoral Area D, and Municipal Director George Doubt. New to the table are Municipal Director Cindy Elliott and Director Jason Lennox – Electoral Area A.

There was bound to be a new representative from Electoral Area A, as the previous Director, Patrick Brabazon, retired from politics. I would like to acknowledge his tenure of 20 years and thank him for his devoted service to the whole of the qathet Regional District.

Speaking of Directors and governance, they are now approximately seven months into the new four-year term. Since being sworn in they have been on a busy schedule of learning, education and orientation. It started last November with the expert

parliamentarian Eli Mina and his class on Robert's Rules and Responsible Governance. That was followed in February by the Local Government Leadership Academy offering in Nanaimo for new and returning elected officials. Not enough can be said for continued education and life-long learning to become an improved and better politician. It is an investment in one's self but more importantly a valid investment for the public.

In between training, the Board has been busy attending to day-to-day business as well as immediately immersing their feet in the waters of budgeting, strategic planning and additional learning opportunities and advocacy at the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities convention. This new Board is gaining stride and the new team is building momentum. Exciting things are on the horizon. Stay tuned!

Visit qathet.ca to learn more

9-1-1 EVOLUTION TO NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1

By Nancy Schmeister, Manager of Technical Services

qathet Regional District provides Emergency Telephone 9-1-1 service to all parts of the region with the exception of Lasqueti Island. The existing 9-1-1 system is based on 40+ year-old analogue technology with 9-1-1 call locations being identified based on the address of telephone landlines.

The system is being modernized by mandate of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, transitioning it to take advantage of current technologies. Under the modernized NG9-1-1 system, call locations will be based on the exact location of the

caller through Geographic Information System (GIS) positioning technology and will allow voice, data, photos, videos and text messages to flow seamlessly from the public to 9-1-1 dispatchers. NG9-1-1 will rely on accurate mapped data from local governments to be able to identify the exact location of any caller.

Staff will be working diligently over the coming year developing the necessary partnerships, processes and data to ensure that we are prepared for the roll out of NG9-1-1.

RESOURCE RECOVERY CENTRE UPDATE

By Tai Uhlmann, Let's Talk Trash Team

The Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) is taking shape as it enters its final phase – civil works and construction of the facility. A new access road will provide entry to the site's recycling depot, transfer station, free store, ocean plastics depot, building material diversion area and education centre. The RRC is anticipated to open in the summer of 2024.

The RRC will be a one-stop-drop hub for waste collection and diversion supporting a local circular economy. View the project's progress through video and aerial photos and learn more about the site's history at qathet.ca/resource-recovery-centre/.



PLANNING SERVICES UPDATE

By Laura Roddan, Manager of Planning Services

Parks and Trails Strategy

This project responds to the recognition that qRD parks and beach access trails are a vital asset to our community, providing valuable recreation opportunities that support the health and wellness of our residents. qRD parks and beach access trails ensure the public has access to all that nature has to offer while also protecting those resources for future generations.

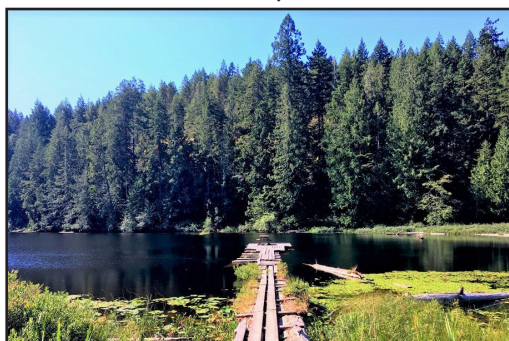
Electoral Area A, B and C Official Community Plan Amending Bylaws

This project responds to recommendations in the 2021 qathet Regional Housing Needs Report. Proposed amending bylaws intend to ensure a consistent policy approach across the region.

These bylaws relate to secondary suites and accessory dwelling units and aim to recognize the important role these forms of housing provide in meeting current and future housing needs.

Texada Island Community Watershed Zoning Update

This project responds to a legislative requirement for consistency between official community plan and zoning bylaws. Proposed Texada Island Community Watershed Zoning Bylaw No. 582 aligns land use zones and regulations with land use designations and policies set out under the Texada Island Official Community Plan. The proposed bylaw provides clear language and maps for improved bylaw interpretation that supports the protection of water quality and quantity in the Cranby Lake and Priest Lake Community Watersheds.



Above: Spectacle Lake within the Priest Lake Watershed is a water source for Van Ande, Texada Island.

Savary Island Landslide Hazard Assessment Study

This project responds to recommendations in the 2022 qathet Regional Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy. Findings from the landslide hazard assessment will provide important technical background information to inform future natural hazard area mapping and policy development for the Savary Island official community plan review and update.

Savary Island Official Community Plan (OCP) Review and Update

This project responds to public feedback received during the 2021 Let's Talk Land Use Engagement. The OCP review and update process will refresh the vision, objectives and policies to reflect the current priorities and concerns of Savary Island property owners and also provide an opportunity to explore regulatory options that could support OCP implementation.

To learn more, please visit qathet.ca/land-use or contact the Planning Department at (604) 485-2260 or email planning@qathet.ca.

OPERATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE

By Patrick Devereaux, Manager of Operational Services

Day Use Parks Update

Our day-use parks remain extremely popular, especially during the summer for weddings and gatherings. Facilities can be booked up to a year in advance. The gazebo in Craig Park, the Gathering Structure at Shelter Point Park, the Klah ah men Lund Gazebo, and the band stand at Palm Beach Park can be reserved and utilized for an event.

The Powell River Rotary Club has donated two covered structures. One was installed in June at Palm Beach Regional Park and the other will be installed in September at the Van Ande ball field.

Event bookings can be made by submitting a signed Special Event Permit application, available on our website, to operations@qathet.ca.


Staff Changes at Regional Campgrounds

There have been changes at our campground parks this year. Help us welcome Tyler and Sophia to Shelter Point Park as our new caretakers. Haywire Bay Park kicked off the camping season on May 4. Wendy will return as an interim caretaker for the rest of 2023 camping season while Morgan is away on leave.

Accessibility Upgrades Continue

The qRD continues to upgrade our regional parks for accessibility. Trails have been updated at Haywire Bay and Shelter Point, and a new access trail has been installed at Palm Beach. The new Palm Beach Trail was made possible by a grant from the Powell River Community Forest. These improved trails make it much easier for those with accessibility concerns or even those pushing strollers or buggies to navigate and enjoy our parks and trails. Access updates are planned for other parks throughout the year. Stay tuned.

New Parks, Properties and Trails Volunteer Program Launched

This program supports community organizations playing a vital part in proposing and supporting qRD regional park, trail, and property projects. Groups or individuals looking for more information can visit our website, qathet.ca/parks-and-recreation. 



Above: Students from Brooks Secondary School volunteered their time to remove invasive plant species at the Resource Recovery Centre site.

Photo courtesy of Abby McLennan, Let's Talk Trash Team.

2023 Budget Overview

By Linda Greenan, Manager of Financial Services

Five-Year Financial Plan and Annual Budget

The qathet Regional District (qRD) adopted its five-year financial plan and annual budget on February 22, 2023.

The 2023 Budget totals \$38.7 million. This includes a net operating budget for the year of \$13.9 million, total capital spending of \$20.3 million, and total debt payments and transfers to reserves of \$2.4 million. The qRD has applied for and obtained total grant funding of \$5.8 million to assist with many planned projects in 2023. The qRD has confirmed \$1,000,000 in grant funding to support the build out of the Resource Recovery Centre and \$100,000 to support Economic Development capacity building thanks to funding through the Provincial Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP). The qRD has received \$50,000 in Canada-Community Building Funding to support the development of a Risk Management

Framework to better identify, evaluate and manage the risks associated with qRD assets.

The qRD currently operates 46 services for residents of the region, which includes five Electoral Areas, a portion of the Sechelt Indian Government District, and the City of Powell River. The services can be broken down as 10 regional, 15 sub-regional or shared services, and 21 local services.

Myrtle Pond Capital Inclusion Charge

A review of options for recovering costs associated with development or expansion of the Myrtle Pond Water System was completed in 2022. A capital inclusion charge is proposed. The capital inclusion charge would provide a potential means to service lots adjacent to the water system. Public engagement is planned to take place in the fall of 2023.

To learn more, visit qathet.ca/finance or contact us at finance@qathet.ca.

BOARD ON THE ROAD RETURNS!

By Michelle Jones, Manager of Administrative Services

Since 2012, the qRD has taken the August Board meeting of each year "On the Road", by hosting the meeting in a local community facility in one of the five Electoral Areas. This practice was suspended for the last few years as we navigated various protocols associated with the pandemic.

We are happy to be bringing the "Board On the Road" back this year, as it allows our entire Board to visit and connect with a local community and its members.

This year's meeting will be hosted at the Judith Fisher Centre on Lasqueti Island on August 23, 2023 starting at 1 pm. The Centre has internet access which will allow the meeting to be livestreamed through the qathet Regional District portal. We hope you will join us virtually or in person!

FIRESMART PROGRAM CONTINUES

By Ryan Thoms, Manager of Emergency Services

For thousands of years, wildfires have been an inherent component of our coastal forest habitat. The risk of wildfires increases when we construct our homes near wooded areas. By adhering to a few straightforward FireSmart principles, the danger of wildfires may be decreased with careful preparation.

Free FireSmart Assessments Available

Residential property owners are encouraged to request a free FireSmart assessment for their property. Property owners may be eligible for a rebate of up to \$1,000 for any FireSmart improvements made. The FireSmart Program has helped over 300 residential property owners throughout all residential areas of the qRD with free FireSmart property advice and has provided over \$25,000 in rebates.

FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program

The FireSmart Canada Neighbourhood Recognition Program was created by FireSmart Canada to formally acknowledge communities that have taken significant measures to lessen their vulnerability to wildfire. Neighbourhood cooperation is key to FireSmart's overall effectiveness to prevent property loss in the event of a wildfire. Over 100 communities in British Columbia have received official recognition from FireSmart Canada as being prepared in the case of a wildfire. Become a neighbourhood champion today!

Want to learn more?

To learn more visit qathet.ca/regional-firesmart-program or contact the Regional FireSmart Coordinator, Marc Albert, directly at firesmartpr@gmail.com.

Contact Us

qathet Regional District
#202 - 4675 Marine Avenue
Powell River, BC V8A 2L2

Hours of Operation

8:30am - 4:30pm
Closed 12:00pm - 1:00pm
Monday to Friday

Contact

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