

Perspectives

A REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO PUBLICATION

RDN Achieves Carbon Neutral Operations for 2012

For more than two years now, residents from across the region have been putting everything from beans to bones in their green bins. **The results have been outstanding, with almost 10,000 tonnes of household organic waste diverted away from the Cedar Road Landfill between 2011 and 2012.**

This shift in the way we manage food waste has contributed to an extended life of the landfill, and has made the RDN a top performer in the country, averaging only 165 kg of disposed waste per household in 2012. It has also made an enormous impact on greenhouse gas emission reductions in the region, allowing the Regional District of Nanaimo, the District of Lantzville, the City of Parksville, and the Town of Qualicum Beach to achieve carbon neutral operations, while also 'neutralizing' almost 45 per cent of the greenhouse gases produced by the operations of the City of Nanaimo.

What is Carbon Neutral?

An organization like a business or local government is carbon neutral when no net greenhouse gas emissions are produced as a result of its operations. Taking the Regional District of Nanaimo as an example, the RDN operates a large number of facilities including recreational facilities like the Ravensong Aquatic Centre in Qualicum Beach, wastewater treatment facilities like the Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre, as well as vehicles, buildings, pump stations and other facilities across the region.

Each facility needs energy to operate, which in turn produces greenhouse gas emissions. Neutralizing those emissions follows three basic steps:



1. Measure.

Measure the total energy consumed to deliver traditional local government services over a given year, and convert that consumption to tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e).

2. Reduce.

Reduce annual CO₂e emissions however practical by investing in efficient equipment, upgrading buildings, or otherwise reducing energy consumption across the organization.

3. Neutralize and Report.

Neutralize all remaining emissions by purchasing offsets, or with projects that result in a measurable reduction in emissions, resulting in net-zero emissions and report the results publicly.

Curbside Food Waste Collection and Carbon Neutral Operations

Curbside food waste collection is a region-wide project that results in a measurable reduction in emissions. When organic waste decomposes in a landfill, it produces methane – a very potent greenhouse gas. When it is composted properly, methane is not produced. So, for every tonne of food waste diverted away from our regional landfill to a local composting facility, a corresponding amount of emissions is avoided.

Food waste diversion for 2011 and 2012 totaled almost 10,000 tonnes for the region as a whole. Using a simple calculator developed by the provincial government, this translates to 6,790 tonnes of avoided greenhouse gas emissions. Since residents from each municipality and electoral area in the RDN participate in curbside food waste collection, these avoided emissions were shared across the region resulting in net-zero, carbon neutral operations for the Regional District of Nanaimo, the District of Lantzville, the City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach. Curbside food waste collection also neutralized almost half of the City of Nanaimo's corporate emissions, allowing the City to make significant progress toward the goal of carbon neutrality.

So here's a big thank you to every resident of the region who lugs a green bin to the end of the driveway week after week. Your efforts have kept thousands of tonnes of compostable material out of the landfill, thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere, and thousands of dollars in the region as curbside food waste collection has allowed the RDN and member municipalities to achieve carbon neutral operations for 2012 without purchasing offsets.



Beans to bones in the bin!



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Regional Growth Strategy Update

On November 22, 2011, the RDN Board adopted an updated Regional Growth Strategy following the completion of the second major review since the strategy was first adopted in 1997. **The RGS is a commitment by the RDN and its member municipalities to take action to improve the quality of life for present and future residents of the region.** The goals set out in the RGS work toward achieving a collective vision of regional sustainability.

The **2012 Annual Report: Regional Growth Strategy Implementation and Progress** is now complete and is available on the RDN Website in the Long Range Planning section. This report outlines the RGS-related projects and studies that the RDN has undertaken over the past year. These include the RDN's first-ever Agricultural Area Plan, a strategy and policy framework to guide agricultural-related decision making, the Cedar Main Street Design Project, which helps implement the RGS by supporting the development of a compact, mixed-use community within the Growth Containment Boundary in Electoral Area 'A', the Fairwinds Development Process ongoing in Electoral Area 'E', and the RDN economic development functions initiated in the northern and southern service areas.

The report also outlines several studies initiated as a result of the RGS, including the now-completed Alternative Forms of Rural Development Study, the Rural Village Centres Study, and the Industrial

Land Supply and Demand Study. Updates are also provided on the RDN's relationships with other levels of government, including First Nations, and on commitments to service delivery in the areas of climate change and energy efficiency, transportation services, parks planning, recreation programs and facilities, emergency services and drinking water and watershed protection.

Rural Village Centre Study

The Rural Village Centre Study was completed earlier this year and was received by the RDN Board of Directors in March. This study fulfills a directive in the updated 2011 Regional Growth Strategy to identify Rural Village Centres with the greatest potential to evolve into complete, compact, mixed-use centres.

While both the Regional Growth Strategy and the Official Community Plans for the study areas support higher density development in RVCs, it is clear from the study that most areas will not be able to develop into complete, compact communities without significant investment. Lack of service provision (water and sewer infrastructure), transit, commercial and community amenities, and availability of relatively cheap land with development potential for single family residential outside of RVCs all play a role in limiting the successful development of some RVCs.

The RVC Study will not directly result in any land use changes. Its purpose is to enable the RDN Board to make informed decisions about future land use and

infrastructure provision that impact local communities and the region as a whole. The study is intended as a tool to provide the RDN Board with a better understanding of the long-term implications of land use decisions on achieving the regional vision it has endorsed in both the Regional Growth Strategy and Board Strategic Plan.

If the RDN Board were

to consider changes to Rural Village Centre boundaries in its Official Community Plans and in the RGS, this would require consultation opportunities for the residents in the whole region as well as specific electoral area communities. For example, now that the RVC Study has been completed, the RDN Board is reconsidering an application for a new RVC at Deep Bay in Electoral Area 'H' within the context of the information provided by the study. In April, the Board approved a recommendation from the Electoral Area Planning Committee, a Board committee made up of RDN Electoral Area Directors, to support the application proceeding through a review process. To date, the Area 'H' Community and the wider RDN regional community have not had an opportunity



to fully discuss and understand the implications of the proposed changes put forward in the application. A public consultation process will now occur.

As per the statutory requirements for proposed RGS amendments, the Board must approve a public consultation plan. This plan will identify meaningful opportunities for the public to speak to the proposed amendments in relation to the regional sustainability goals of the RGS. At the request of the Area 'H' Director, a survey engaging the community will be included in the consultation plan.

For more information about RGS implementation please contact the RDN Long Range Planning Department at 250-390-6510, 250 954-3798, or toll-free 1-877-607-4111. Inquiries can also be sent to growthmanagement@rdn.bc.ca.

RDN Launches Secondary Suites Consultation

Following the completion of a background study on secondary suites as a form of housing in the RDN's Electoral Areas 'A', 'C', 'E', 'F', 'G', and 'H', the RDN Board approved a secondary suites consultation plan at its May 28, 2013 meeting. The purpose of the consultation plan is to lay out the framework for engaging Electoral Area residents in a conversation about secondary suites in the RDN. The intent is to find out if secondary suites are supported within the above Electoral Areas and if so what locations and forms may be considered appropriate. The results of the consultation will be presented to the Board in the fall of 2013 for further consideration.

If secondary suites are supported by Area residents and the Board, the next step will be to initiate amendments to the applicable zoning bylaws and Official Community Plans to allow secondary suites within Electoral Areas 'A', 'C', 'E', 'F', 'G', and 'H'. If the project proceeds to this phase, then additional public consultation will occur in each participating Electoral Area.

The RDN is pleased to invite Electoral Area residents, neighbourhood groups, homeowners, renters, housing providers, and other organizations whose clients and/or operations would be affected by allowing secondary suites to participate in the secondary suites consultation process. There are a number of ways to participate in the process including an online survey, informal meetings in each Electoral Area, and attendance at community events.

More information is available on the project website at www.rdnsecondarysuites.ca. If you have questions, comments, or require further assistance please contact Greg Keller, RDN Senior Planner at (250) 390-6510, (250) 954-3798, or toll free in BC at 1-877-607-4111. Alternatively, inquiries can be emailed to planning@rdn.bc.ca.

Solid Waste Management Plan Review

The RDN has started the process to review and update its Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), as required by the Ministry of Environment. In British Columbia, regional districts are mandated by the Provincial Environmental Management Act to develop these plans as long-term visions of how each regional district would like to manage municipal solid waste, including waste diversion and disposal activities. **The current RDN plan was approved by the Minister of Environment in 1988 and amended in 1996, in 2005 and in 2010.**

Under the SWMP the RDN is responsible for managing the waste generated by industries, commercial establishments, and institutions (50 per cent); demolition, land clearing and construction (20 per cent); as well as waste from the residential sector accounts (30 per cent).

Thanks to the active participation of RDN residents and businesses in all these sectors, the Solid Waste Management Plan has been extremely successful—our long-term Zero Waste vision has resulted in impressive waste diversion and disposal rates. In 2012, as a result of the full implementation of the green bin program, the region-wide disposal rate from all sectors was **350 kilograms per capita which equates to an overall waste diversion rate of 70 per cent. We are indeed making zero waste happen.**



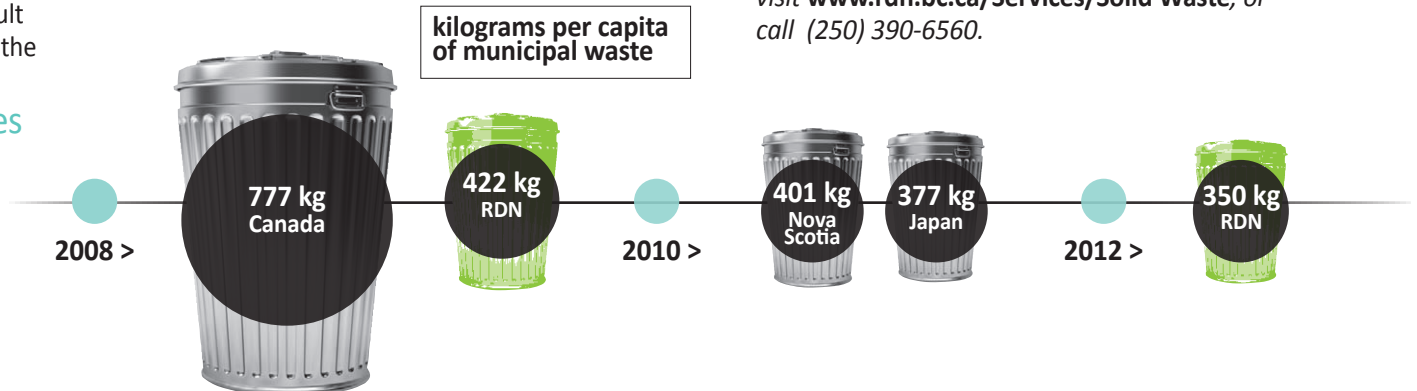
Making it Happen

To illustrate the significance of the RDN disposal rate, a recent Conference Board of Canada report on municipal waste generation among countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development ranked Canada in last place out of 17 countries. In 2008, Statistics Canada reported that Canada generated 777 kilograms per capita of municipal waste – well above the 17-country average of 578 kilograms per capita and twice as much as Japan, the top-performing country. In contrast, the RDN generated

422 kilograms per capita in 2008, dropping to 350 kilograms per capita in 2012. This is lower than Japan at 377 kilograms per capita, and lower than Nova Scotia, which reported a disposal rate of 401 kilograms per capita in 2010.

The process to review and update the SWMP is being conducted in three stages, and the end result will be a plan that will carry us forward with renewed long-term goals for solid waste management. For the remainder of 2013, the RDN will be analyzing its current solid waste management system and working to identify issues and opportunities for improvement. In 2014, staff will review the options available for meeting the region's future solid waste management needs, and select the preferred management options. **The third stage, community consultation, will start in 2015 and will give residents the opportunity to provide feedback about the selected options.** Throughout the process the RDN's Regional Solid Waste Advisory Committee will provide input on the SWMP review and update.

For more information about the SWMP Review, visit www.rdn.bc.ca/Services/Solid Waste, or call (250) 390-6560.



RDN Transit Update

With thousands more service hours added to the system and **a new fleet of state-of-the-art Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses to arrive in the spring of 2014**, Regional District of Nanaimo Transit is making big changes to make getting around the Region easier for riders.

As of March, 2013, RDN Transit expanded conventional bus service by 5,000 annual hours, and also increased handyDART service by 3,750 annual hours. **The new handyDART service hours include one extra vehicle four days per week in the Parksville-Qualicum Beach area.**

Bus service expansion includes improved service in the Parksville Qualicum Beach area and on the Route #90 Intercity Connector between the Oceanside communities and Nanaimo, more trips to Vancouver Island University and a new route along the entire length of Jinglepot Road. Another new RDN Transit route, the #25 BC Ferries, runs on weekdays with stops at the Departure Bay

Terminal, Country Club Centre and downtown Nanaimo. This route uses flexible arrival and departure times to accommodate ferry delays.

These extra service hours and new transit routes will make it much easier for residents throughout the Region to choose transit, or a combination of transit and cycling or walking, as their main mode of transportation.

Not only is RDN Transit becoming more convenient, its buses are becoming more environmentally friendly. In the Spring of 2014, 25 new CNG buses will begin operating in the Region—making RDN Transit home to BC Transit's first-ever CNG fleet.

Fueling RDN Transit buses with compressed natural gas will cost less than fueling with diesel, and will improve the efficiency of the transit system and reduce particulate and greenhouse gas emissions. The new buses will also have quieter engines and simplified emission systems. More information about this exciting new fleet will be available in early 2014.



Camping at Regional Parks

Relax by the water this summer and enjoy some mini-vacations at beautiful RDN campgrounds. Descanso Bay Regional Park and Horne Lake Regional Park offer campsites with water access, spectacular views and ample opportunities for boating, swimming, hiking and hanging around the campfire. If you can't stay the night, it's still worth getting out for the day to have a picnic, a paddle or a wander at one of these great waterfront parks.

Descanso Bay Regional Park is located at 595 Taylor Bay Road on Gabriola Island, close to the ferry terminal, and has 32 campsites on a beautiful 40-acre oceanfront property.

Next door is Cox Community Park, a popular hiking spot with over 100 acres of established forest and an excellent and well-used trail network.

Horne Lake Regional Park is located at the west end of the lake, beside Horne Lake Caves Provincial Park. To get there, take the Horne Lake Rd exit (#75) off Highway 19 and drive inland on gravel road to Horne Lake Caves Rd. Turn right and follow the north shore of the lake all the way to the park. You may meet the occasional logging truck on these roads, which are not recommended for cyclists.

During the summer, the campsite fee at Descanso Bay is \$17 per night; call 250-247-8255 for information and reservations. Campsite fees at Horne Lake range from \$20 to \$24, with shared sites going for \$40; call 250-248-1134 for information and reservations.



Moorecroft Regional Park Restoration Planting Project

The main trail and parking lot are open again at Moorecroft Regional Park in Nanoose Bay. After working throughout the spring to remove unsafe buildings from the park, RDN staff and community volunteers have planted 1000 native plants where the buildings once stood, to beautify the site and help return it to its natural state.

As outlined in the Moorecroft Regional Park Management Plan adopted in January, 2013, the Regional District of Nanaimo Recreation and Parks Department removed all buildings that were found to be unsafe in a 2011 risk management survey of the property. The report showed that most of the buildings were in poor condition and in most instances did not meet public safety and risk management requirements. Some buildings, including Kennedy Hall, were not considered to be a risk and still remain on site.

The RDN purchased the Moorecroft Regional Park property from the BC Conference of the United Church of Canada on March 2, 2011, at a cost of \$4.8 million. As a condition of sale, a conservation covenant was developed with the Nature Conservancy of Canada to ensure the protection of the Nanoose Bay property's natural habitat and ecosystems.

The Moorecroft Regional Park Management Plan guides the management of the Regional Park from 2013 to 2022. The plan is the result of the collaborative efforts of the residents of the Regional District of Nanaimo, Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose First Nation), partnering organizations, RDN staff, and the Moorecroft Regional Park Advisory Committee. *To view the final plan, visit www.rdn.bc.ca and click on **Services/Parks/Regional Parks**.*



Staff and volunteers have planted 1000 native plants at Moorecroft Regional Park.



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Benson Creek Falls Regional Park Management Plan Update

Over the next few months RDN staff will update the 10-year management plan for Benson Creek Falls Regional Park. Interested residents are invited to fill out our online park survey and come to the open house on June 22. *For more information about the project and to find out how to get involved, visit www.rdn.bc.ca/parks.*

Friends of Morden Mine

The Friends of Morden Mine, a local non-profit society, is working hard to raise funds to preserve the concrete remains of the Morden Mine head frame and tipple located in Morden Colliery Historic Provincial Park in South Wellington. **Repairs are urgently needed to these structures, the most complete aboveground coal mine remains existing on Vancouver Island.**

RDN Parks staff met with BC Parks in April to inform them of the RDN Board's interest in seeing the tipple restored and the RDN's willingness to explore possible partnership funding opportunities with the Province of BC and the Friends of Morden Mine. RDN staff are now waiting for the latest



engineering report from BC Parks and cost estimate for the tipple's restoration. Once the information is received, the RDN will continue to monitor applicable grant programs that may provide funding assistance for the restoration of this regionally significant historical structure, which is located at a trail-staging area for a portion of the Morden Colliery Regional Trail.

The society's website, www.mordenmine.com, provides information on the preservation efforts to date, as well as a listing of upcoming events and a section on how community members can help out. Anyone interested in finding out more is invited to email the Society at info@mordenmine.com.