

**Cowichan Valley Regional District
Regional Parks & Trails Master Plan Update
First Nations & Public Engagement Plan**

October 18, 2024

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1 Purpose of the Document

The purpose of this Engagement and Communications (E&C) Plan is to ensure an organized, transparent, efficient, and appropriate approach to meaningfully engaging local First Nations, residents, other levels of government, and interest groups (including parks and trails user and advocacy groups, landowners, etc.) in the review and update of the CVRD's 2007 Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan.

This E&C plan details how those who are interested in or affected by the Master Plan can be involved in informing its review and update. More specifically, the E&C plan:

- Outlines the goals of the engagement process,
- Identifies the target audiences for engagement and articulates the “promise to the public” for each audience, as well as the approach to engagement with First Nations,
- Details the engagement tools / tactics and timelines that will be applied throughout the planning process, and
- Articulates the roles and responsibilities of the CVRD and the RC Strategies team in implementing the engagement and communications program.

The following sections outline the general engagement and communications plan. Detailed facilitation guides, survey, interactive webmap, open house panels, and promotional materials will be developed and reviewed by the CVRD upon approval of the E&C plan.

2 First Nations Engagement

There are ten First Nations with reserves in the CVRD:

- Cowichan Tribes
- Ditidaht First Nation
- Halalt First Nation
- Lyackson First Nation
- Malahat Nation
- Pauquachin First Nation
- Pacheedaht First Nation
- Penelakut Tribe
- Stz'uminus Nation
- Ts'uubaa-asatx Nation

First Nations are rights-holders and may have significant interests that relate to regional parks and trails acquisition and management. Recognizing this, the 10 First Nations with reserves in the region will be engaged through a government to government engagement process that will be run parallel to broader engagement with the public and interested parties.

The goals of the First Nations engagement process are to:

- Provide an overview of the 2007 RPTMP and how it has guided the establishment and management of the regional parks & trails system to date, and request feedback on the content of the current plan.
- Seek input on how this planning process, the plan, and implementation of the plan could support the CVRD Board's strategic priority of Reconciliation through strengthening cooperation, collaboration, and relationship-building.
- Seek understanding of First Nations interests in relation to regional parks and trails management.
- Seek feedback on the 2007 plan's remaining acquisition priorities and directions for future parkland acquisition planning.

2.1 First Nation's Engagement Process & Tactics

The CVRD will engage with each Nation independently rather than establishing a separate formal committee structure representing each of the 10 First Nations. It is anticipated that the preferred engagement process might vary for each Nation. The CVRD staff and the Consulting Team will remain flexible to engage with each Nation in their preferred way while remaining aligned and within the scope, schedule and budget for the project as set by the CVRD Board. It is anticipated that the engagement steps will generally include:

Notification Letter

A project notification letter, backgrounder, and a request for feedback on how best to engage was sent to the 10 First Nations in May, 2024. Upon start up of the project, and prior to the launch of the public engagement process, a second notification letter will be distributed to all 10 First Nations who have not yet responded. The follow up letter will notify each Nation about the project and ask each Nation to identify whether the project is of interest to the Nation and, if so, how the Nation would like to engage in the process. The project overview / backgrounder that is appended to the notification letters introduce the regional parks and trails program and system, the 2007 master plan, and provide essential information about the master plan update purpose and process.

Meeting 1 – Introduction, Interest, Priorities & Opportunities

Meeting 1 will focus on providing an overview of the regional parks and trails program and 2007 plan and exploring the Nation's:

- Interests in regional parks and trails
- Feedback on the 2007 Master Plan and how it could / should be updated to recognize First Nation's interests, values and truth and reconciliation
- Perspectives on regional parks and trails land acquisition and priorities, and
- Ideas for how coordination, cooperation, collaboration, and/or relationship-building between First Nations and the CVRD can be strengthened through the regional parks and trails program.

Meeting 2 - Draft Plan

Meeting 2 will specifically focus on receiving Nation input on the draft updated master plan. Nation's will be asked to identify factual errors in the content, missing content, or content that should be refined to better reflect the interests of First Nations.

In addition to the formal process outlined above, each Nation will be informed of the public engagement process and encouraged to also promote the broader public engagement opportunities to their members.

Capacity Funding

The CVRD does not have a policy or funding program in place for First Nations' capacity funding. The project budget includes some funds to support engagement where requested from the Nations.

2.2 Roles & Responsibilities

Table 1 outlines the roles and responsibilities between RCS and the CVRD and the expected communications approach for First Nations engagement.

| Responsibilities <i>RCS – consulting team</i> <i>CVRD – Project Manager</i> | Communications |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD to prepare & send project notification letter. • RCS to prepare FN correspondence. • RCS to facilitate meetings, document, and analyze input. • CVRD staff to attend all FN meetings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD (government to government) to send correspondence to FNs. |

3 Public Engagement Process

3.1 Alignment with Best Practices in Public Engagement

Aligned with the CVRD's *Public Engagement Policy* (2019), this engagement plan has been developed in accordance with the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) best practices and core values (Figure 1). IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation has been applied to ensure the engagement tools and tactics that are proposed are aligned with the "promise to the public" for each stage of the planning process.

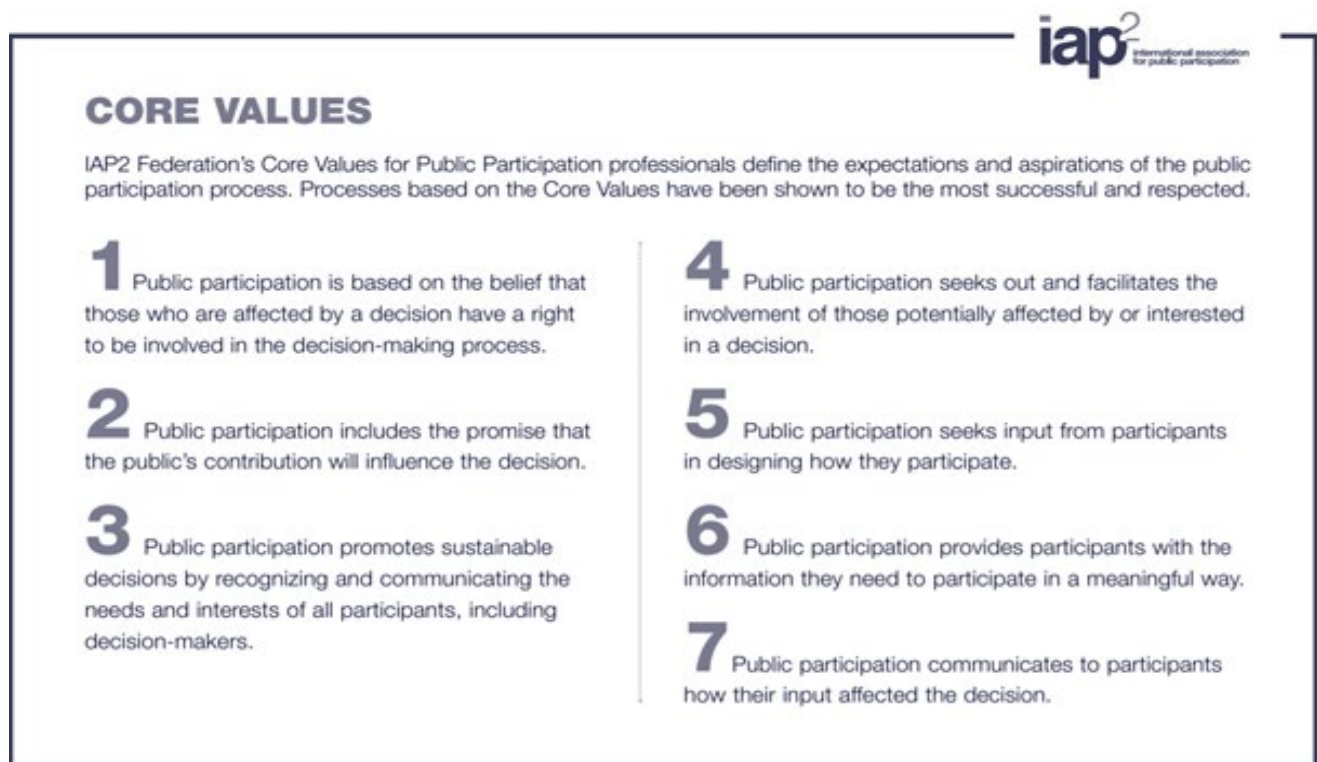


Figure 1 IAP2 Core Values

IAP2 SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

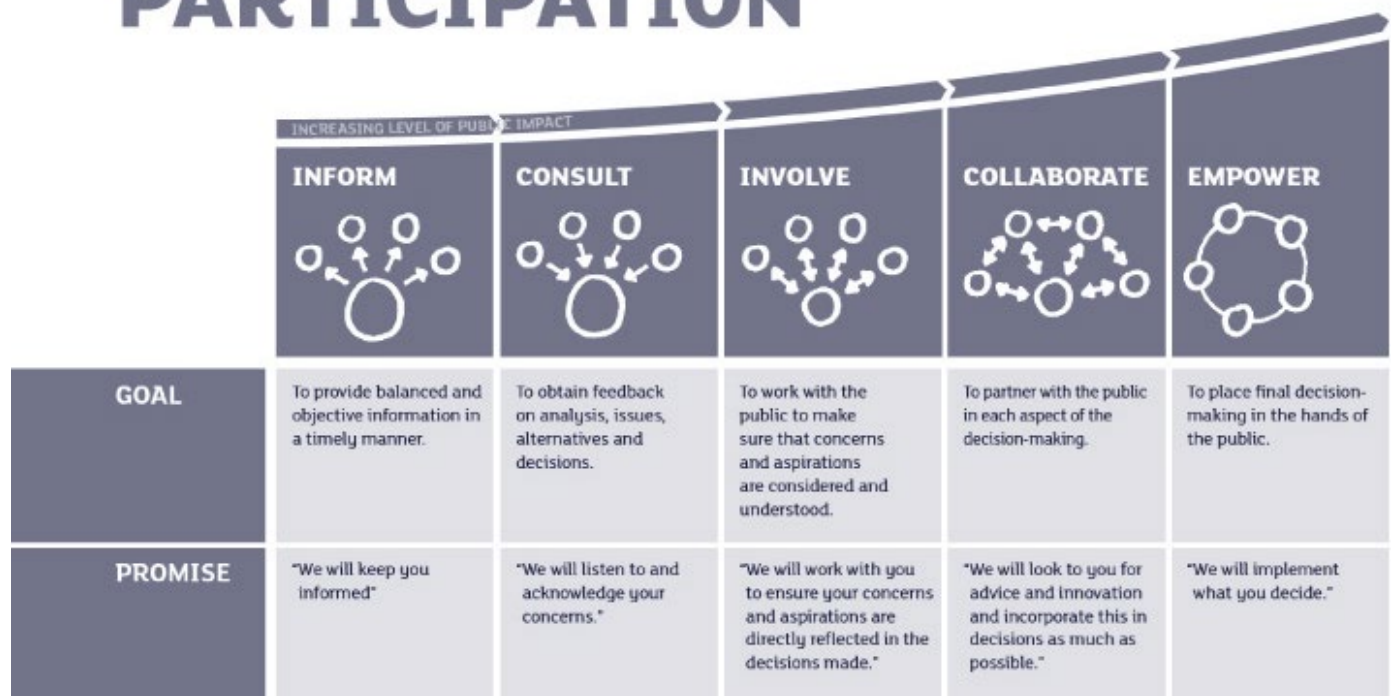


Figure 2 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation & "Promise to the Public"

3.2 Public Engagement Goals & Levels of Engagement

Two stages of engagement will be held throughout the planning process. The goals of each stage of engagement are outlined in the table below. In addition, and in accordance with IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation, the level of participation and the ensuing "promise to the public" for each engagement audience has also been identified in the table below.

| Engagement Goals | Targeted Communities of Interest | Levels of Engagement | Promise |
|--|--|----------------------|---|
| Stage 1 Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the project and generate interest in helping inform the Master Plan update. Evaluate the relevancy of the current key foundations from the 2007 Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan (e.g. vision, principles, strategies) and inform updating. Review and update the roles and priorities of the regional parks system. Review and update the most important regional parks and trails system management issues that the master plan should address. Evaluate relevance of the remaining acquisition priorities in the 2007 plan and identify any additional acquisition priorities as well as points for further discussion, cooperation, or collaboration in acquisition processes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan Advisory Group | Involve | Involve: We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD Staff (parks & trail staff, environmental services, GIS, strategic initiatives, community services, transit, communications & engagement) | Collaborate | Collaborate: We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipalities (staff) in the CVRD (Duncan, Ladysmith, Lake Cowichan, North Cowichan) | Consult | Consult: We will listen to you and work to address your concerns to |

| | | | |
|---|---|----------------|----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and update the community demands, needs, and trends that have emerged since the 2007 plan and need to be updated. Identify priorities / opportunities to improve the quantity, diversity, connectivity, quality, accessibility, and management of the regional parks and trails system and related assets. Evaluate support for funding additions to the regional parks system through the Regional Parkland Acquisition Fund. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial Government (staff) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment & Climate Change (RSTBC, BC Parks) | Consult | the extent possible. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD Residents & Parks & Trail Users | Consult | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interested Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation & Trails Clubs / Organizations (including youth and other specific cohorts) Accessibility / Adaptive Recreation Organization(s) / Representative(s) Conservation / Environmental Organizations Tourism DMO / Operators / Event Organizers / Local Businesses Vancouver Island University Seniors Organization(s) Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Organizations | Consult | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large Landowners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mosaic Forest Management Island Corridor Foundation | Consult | |

| Engagement Goals | Targeted Communities of Interest | Levels of Engagement | Promise |
|--|---|----------------------|---------|
| Stage 2 Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive feedback on key elements of the draft updated Master Plan. | <p><i>* All communities of interest will be re-engaged and at the same IAP2 levels as stage 1.</i></p> <p><i>*Specific details and tactics pertaining to each community of interest will be further refined prior to Stage 2 (taking into account what worked well during Stage 1).</i></p> | | |

3.3 Public Engagement Work Plans

3.3.1 Stage 1 Work Plan

The following table outlines the engagement tactics, timelines, roles, and responsibilities between RCS and the CVRD as well as planned communication tactics for the **Stage 1 engagement**. Details regarding each engagement tactic are presented in the respective Appendices.

| Engagement Tactics | Target Organizations, Individuals, Group(s), and Government Partners | Targeted Timeframe | Targets (# Sessions / Responses) | Venue / Platform | Responsibilities <i>RCS – consulting team CVRD – Project Manager (Working Group, and all other project staff)</i> | Communications |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Advisory Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As selected by CVRD. | Duration of the Project | 6 meetings | In-Person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCS to develop meeting agendas, support meeting facilitation, record facilitated input. . CVRD to review meeting agendas, record minutes. CVRD to distribute meeting invites, agendas & minutes. CVRD to book venues & refreshments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD to email AG members directly. |
| Interviews with CVRD Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD Staff | Nov 12 – Dec 6 | Up to 5 | Teams / Zoom Virtual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD to provide list of staff to engage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCS to email / communicate directly with each individual. |

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| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCS to prepare interview guide, CVRD to approve guide. CVRD to provide email introduction to RCS. RCS to schedule meetings with each individual. RCS to facilitate meeting, document, and analyze input. | |
| Plan Your Cowichan Website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All | Project Duration | N/A | Engagement HQ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD to set up, post RCS generated content & administer page RCS to draft page content CVRD to provide input results to RCS for analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> URL to project page included in all project correspondence CVRD to promote through social media, email and print channels |
| Online Public Survey <i>(open convenience sample, not coded)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD residents Park & trail users Interested Parties | Nov 12 – Dec 6 | 500 Responses | Alchemer -survey link via Plan Your Cowichan project page | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCS to develop survey, program, launch, analyze and summarize data CVRD review and provide feedback on & approve survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD to host link on CVRD's <i>Plan Your Cowichan</i> platform CVRD to develop poster for distribution at parks, trail heads & community venues CVRD to draft & design newspaper / newsletter ad |

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| | | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to draft email notice to send to interested parties • CVRD to print & install posters throughout community / parks / trails. • CVRD to distribute email and poster to partner and community organizations • CVRD to draft & distribute notices through social media • CVRD to print / distribute newspaper ad / newsletter to local papers • CVRD to develop and distribute news release to local media |
| Open Houses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD residents • Park & trail users • Interested Parties | November 23 & 24 | 4 events over 2 consecutive days (3 hours each) in north, south, east, west of CVRD | Location TBD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to develop & design open house content (panels, etc.) and lead event facilitation • CVRD to approve open house panels and content • CVRD to print open house materials • CVRD to book venues and coordinate related logistics (refreshments, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD to develop and design open house promotional materials and promote events (social media, advertisements) |

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|--|---|----------------|---------------------|---|---|---|
| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD to attend to support facilitation. • RCS to summarize findings and feedback as part of overall engagement process | |
| Online Interactive Crowdsourcing Mapping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD residents • Park & Trail Users, Interested Parties | Nov 12 – Dec 6 | 150 pins | RCS contractor's crowdsourcing tool fielded via Plan Your Cowichan site | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to develop site content, analyze and report results. • CVRD to approve site content. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • URL will be included in all communications with the online survey as noted above. |
| Virtual Interviews (1-2 participants / interview) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • Ministry of Environment & Climate Change (RSTBC, BC Parks) • Mosaiv / Island Corridor Foundation • VIU | Nov 12 – Dec 6 | 14 virtual meetings | Teams / Zoom virtual interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to organize, facilitate and summarize input. • CVRD to approve facilitation guide. • CVRD to identify interviewee contacts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to draft notice / invite email. • CVRD to distribute invite email so interviewees recognizes contact. • RCS to follow up and book meetings. |
| Online Interview Surveys | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation / Environmental Organizations • Recreation / Trail Organizations • Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Organizations • Tourism (Tourism Cowichan / 4VI) | Nov 12 – Dec 6 | 30 surveys | Alchemer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to develop survey, program, launch, analyze and summarize data • CVRD review and provide feedback on & approve survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email invite to interest groups. |



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3.3.2 Stage 2 Work Plan

The following table outlines the anticipated engagement tactics for the **Stage 2 engagement**. As previously noted, some flexibility is suggested for Stage 2 based on learnings from the Stage 1 engagement (what worked well, what didn't, etc.). As such, this table will be revisited and updated as Stage 2 engagement planning occurs which is tentatively planned to occur in April 2025.

| Engagement Tactics | Target Organizations, Individuals, Group(s), and Government Partners | Targeted Timeframe | Targets (# Sessions / Responses) | Venue / Platform | Responsibilities RCS – consulting team CVRD – Project Manager (Working Group, and all other project staff) | Communications |
|----------------------|--|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--|---|
| Online Public Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD Residents Parks & Trails Users | May 2025 | 500 responses | Alchemer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCS to develop survey, program, launch, analyze and summarize data CVRD review and provide feedback on & approve survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CVRD to host link on CVRD's <i>Plan Your Cowichan</i> platform CVRD to develop poster for distribution at parks, trail heads & community venues CVRD to draft & design newspaper / newsletter ad RCS to draft email notice to send to interested parties CVRD to print & install posters throughout community / parks / trails. |

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|---|---|----------|--------------|-----------------|---|---|
| | | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD to distribute email and poster to partner and community organizations • CVRD to draft & distribute notices through social media • CVRD to print / distribute newspaper ad / newsletter to local papers • CVRD to develop and distribute news release to local media |
| Online Survey – Interested Parties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff • Adjacent Regional District staff • Provincial Government staff • Conservation / Environmental Organizations • Recreation / Trail Organizations • Tourism • Large Landowners • Seniors Organization(s) • Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Organizations | May 2025 | 20 responses | Alchemer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to develop survey, program, launch, analyze and summarize data. • RCS to develop materials on the draft Master Plan to accompany survey. • CVRD to post draft Master Plan and summary materials on the Plan Your Cowichan platform along with the survey link. • CVRD review and provide feedback on and approve survey. • CVRD to distribute survey to the list of organized user and interest groups engaged through Stage 1. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD to distribute email communicate to accompany survey (direct call to action as survey link will be emailed to group representatives / contacts). |
| ArcGIS Story Map | All | May 2025 | N/A | ESRI Story Maps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to develop story map. • CVRD to approve updated content. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued promotion along with other project engagement and communications. |

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|-------------|-----|----------|---|--------------|--|---|
| Open Houses | All | May 2025 | 4 events over 2 consecutive days (3 hours each) in north, south, east, west of CVRD | Location TBD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCS to develop & design open house content (panels, etc.) and lead event facilitation • CVRD to approve open house panels and content • CVRD to print open house materials • CVRD to book venues and coordinate related logistics (refreshments, etc.) • CVRD to attend to support facilitation. • RCS to summarize findings and feedback as part of overall engagement process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVRD to develop and design open house promotional materials and promote events (social media, advertisements) |
|-------------|-----|----------|---|--------------|--|---|

