



Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

Zoom/Board Room (Hybrid) – 3008 Fifth Avenue, Port Alberni, BC

10:00 am

Regular Agenda

Watch the meeting live at: <https://www.acrd.bc.ca/events/22-10-2025/7738/?catid=0>

Register to participate via Zoom Webinar at:

https://acrd-bc-ca.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_R_5hdXJLSRWqWyTd65l7hg#/registration

- | | PAGE # |
|--|---------------|
| <p>1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u></p> <p>Recognition of Territories.</p> <p>Notice to attendees and delegates that this meeting is being recorded and livestreamed to YouTube on the Regional District Website.</p> <p>Introductions – Directors and Staff present in the Boardroom and via Zoom.</p> | |
| <p>2. <u>APPROVAL OF AGENDA</u>
<i>(motion to approve, including late items required ALL VOTE 2/3 majority vote)</i></p> | |
| <p>3. <u>DECLARATIONS</u>
<i>(conflict of interest)</i></p> | |
| <p>4. <u>MINUTES</u></p> <p>a. Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting – October 8, 2025</p> <p><i>THAT the minutes of the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting held on October 8, 2025 be adopted.</i></p> | 3-6 |
| <p>5. <u>PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS (10 minute maximum)</u></p> <p>a. Corey Cooper, Planner, Caelen Middleton, Planner, McElhanny – Development Procedures Project Update</p> | |
| <p>6. <u>CORRESPONDENCE</u></p> | |

7. REQUEST FOR DECISIONS

- a. **REQUEST FOR DECISION** **7-61**
Development Approvals Program Review – Final Report

THAT the Committee of the Whole receive the Development Approvals Program Review Report and recommend that the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors direct staff to report back to the Board on an implementation strategy as part of the 2026 workplan.

- b. **REQUEST FOR DECISION** **62-71**
Log Train Trail Allowable Uses

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors direct staff to proceed with option 1 – multi-use (including motorized) and develop the appropriate enforcement management plan, as required by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, in consultation with the Regional Parks Working Group.

8. REPORTS

9. LATE BUSINESS

10. QUESTION PERIOD

Questions/Comments from the public:

- Participating in Person in the Board Room
- Participating in the Zoom meeting
- Emailed to the ACRD at responses@acrd.bc.ca

11. ADJOURN



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025, 10:00 AM

Hybrid - Zoom/Board Room, 3008 Fifth Avenue, Port Alberni, BC

DIRECTORS

John Jack, Chairperson, Chief Councillor, Huu-ay-aht First Nations

PRESENT:

Debbie Haggard, Vice-Chair, Councillor, City of Port Alberni

Bob Beckett, Director, Electoral Area "A" (Bamfield)

Fred Boyko, Director, Electoral Area "B" (Beaufort)

Vaida Siga, Director, Electoral Area "C" (Long Beach)

Penny Cote, Director, Electoral Area "D" (Sproat Lake)

Harley Wylie, Alternate Director, Electoral Area "E" (Beaver Creek)

Mike Sparrow, Director, Electoral Area "F" (Cherry Creek)

Sharie Minions, Mayor, City of Port Alberni

Marilyn McEwen, Mayor, District of Ucluelet

Tom Stere, Councillor, District of Tofino

Moriah Cootes, Councillor, Uchucklesaht Tribe Government

Kirsten Johnsen, Member of Council, Toquaht Nation

Levana Mastrangelo, Executive Legislator, Yuuʷuʷiʷiʷath Government

REGRETS:

Susan Roth, Director, Electoral Area "E" (Beaver Creek)

STAFF PRESENT:

Daniel Sailland, Chief Administrative Officer

Cynthia Dick, General Manager of Administrative Services

Heather Zenner, Manager of Administrative Services

Teri Fong, Chief Financial Officer

The meeting can be viewed on the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District website at:

<https://www.acrd.bc.ca/events/8-10-2025/>

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

The Chairperson recognized this meeting is being held throughout the Nuuchahnulth territories.

The Chairperson reported this meeting is being recorded and livestreamed to YouTube on the Regional District website.

Introductions - Committee Members and Staff present in the Boardroom and via Zoom.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED: Director Sparrow

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

Director Minions joined the meeting at 10:02 am.

Director Mastrangelo joined the meeting at 10:06 am.

3. DECLARATIONS

4. MINUTES

a. Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting – July 23, 2025

MOVED: Director Sparrow

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT the minutes of the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting held on July 23, 2025 be adopted.

CARRIED

Director Wylie joined the meeting at 10:20 am.

Director McEwen joined the meeting at 10:33 am.

Director Johnsen left the meeting at 10:50 am.

5. PETITIONS, DELEGATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

**a. ACRD Procedure Bylaw Review – Presentation. Meeting #5
(H. Zenner)**

MOVED: Director Cote

SECONDED: Director Sparrow

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend advancing with option 4 regarding the start time of Board meetings for the Procedure Bylaw update, to remain with status quo and re-visit with the newly elected Board following the 2026 local government election.

Directors Cote, Sparrow, Cootes, Wylie, Haggard, Stere, Siga, Jack, McEwen, Beckett, Minions, Mastrangelo voted in favour of the motion.

Director Boyko voted against the motion.

CARRIED

6. CORRESPONDENCE

7. REQUEST FOR DECISIONS

8. REPORTS

Director Minions left the meeting at 11: 52 am.
Director McEwen left the meeting at 11:59 am.

a. UBCM Roundtable – Verbal Updates

MOVED: Director Sparrow
SECONDED: Director Cootes

The ACRD Board of Directors that attended the 2025 UBCM Convention held in Victoria, BC from September 22-26, 2025, conducted a roundtable to share their experiences and key takeaways from the event. Director Cote was congratulated for receiving a Long Service Award at the Convention to recognize her 20+ years of service in local government. Directors expressed concerns with the Convention luncheons and would like to discuss participation at a future date. ACRD sponsored student participant was acknowledged for his participation at the Convention and will be invited to a future meeting to share his experience with the Board. It was noted that the Board endorsed resolution for CC-130H Hercules Fleet was not included as a late resolution at the Convention and a resolution will be brought forward to the next Board of Directors meeting. Presentations from the 2025 UBCM Convention can be found at [Presentations from Clinics, Workshops & Other Sessions | Union of BC Municipalities](#).

THAT the verbal updates be received.

CARRIED

9. LATE BUSINESS

(requires 2/3 majority vote)

10. QUESTION PERIOD

Questions/Comments from the public. The General Manager of Administrative Services advised there were no questions or comments respecting an agenda topic from public:

- Participating in Person in the ACRD Board Room
- Participating in the Zoom webinar
- Submissions received by email at responses@acrd.bc.ca.

11. ADJOURN

MOVED: Director Sparrow

SECONDED: Director Cote

THAT this meeting be adjourned at 12:09pm.

CARRIED

Certified Correct:

Debbie Haggard,
Chairperson

Cynthia Dick,
General Manager of Administrative Services



To: ACRD Committee of the Whole

From: Alex Dyer, MCIP RPP, General Manager of Planning & Development

Meeting Date: October 22, 2025

Subject: Development Approvals Program Review – Final Report

Recommendation:

THAT the Committee of the Whole receive the Development Approvals Program Review Report and recommend that the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors direct staff to report back to the Board on an implementation strategy as part of the 2026 workplan.

Desired Outcome:

That the Committee of the Whole receive the Development Approvals Program Review (DAPR) report and recommend that the Board discuss options for implementing report recommendations as part of the Planning & Development Department's workplan in 2026.

Summary:

In June 2024, the ACRD received a \$150,000 grant from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Local Government Development Approvals Program to undertake the project. The project assessed the Regional District's development approval processes and delivered recommendations to improve procedures, increase efficiency, and help drive overall performance improvement in the development approval process. The ACRD issued a Request for Proposals and engaged McElhanney Ltd. to undertake the project.

The report, dated October 16, 2025, outlines a comprehensive review of the ACRD development approvals and planning framework and provides recommendations for procedure, bylaw, and structural improvements that intend to increase efficiency and improve effectiveness in the development approval process. McElhanney staff will be making a delegation to the October 22 Committee-of-the-Whole meeting to present the report findings and recommendations and to facilitate discussion with the Board of Directors.

Background:

The DAPR project assessed existing bylaws, procedures, and internal review protocols in consideration of the planning and building application workload experienced in the department. The review included consultation with Board Directors, planning and building staff, and key staff within the organization. Surveys were conducted with local developers focusing on processes and communication, and with regional government agencies focusing on potential for improved collaboration.

The report recommendations identified challenges and process bottlenecks and discussed opportunities for improvement in service delivery efficiency and transparency. Recommendations are presented in short (1-12 month), medium (12-24 month), and long-term (24-48 month) timeframes. Recommendations include opportunities for improvement in development process, communication materials, department structure, and application fees.

It is recommended that implementation of report recommendations be referred to the budget development and work planning process for 2026. Implementation would have an initial focus on short-term measures that improve public transparency in the process and procedure updates that intend to streamline approval processes.

Time Requirements – Staff & Elected Officials:

Implementation of policy and procedure updates recommended in the report would be directed by the Board and discussed as part of the Planning & Development Department’s workplan for 2026.

Financial:

This project is funded by a \$150,000 UBCM grant and the contract with McElhanney Ltd. has a project value of \$132,624.

Strategic Plan Implications:

This project aligns with Strategic Priority 1.5 to leverage grants toward creating regional and community benefit that align with the operational needs of the organization and Priority 3.3 to promote transparency in development application reviews.

Policy or Legislation:

Planning and building review processes are directed by Provincial legislation, such as the *Local Government Act*, *Community Charter*, and BC Building Code, and the ACRD’s policies and procedures for reviewing development applications are directed by Regional District bylaws.

Options Considered:

1. That the Board of Directors defer a decision on receiving the report to allow for additional discussion.

Submitted by: Alex Dyer
Alex Dyer, MCIP, RPP, General Manager of Planning & Development

Reviewed by: Cynthia Dick
Cynthia Dick, General Manager of Administrative Services

Approved by: Daniel Sailland
Daniel Sailland, MBA, Chief Administrative Officer



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Development Approvals Program Review

Findings and Recommendations Report

November 15, 2025

Prepared for the ACRD

Prepared by McElhanney Ltd.

Tyler Brown
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Campbell River, BC V9W 3A2

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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. Project Overview

The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD), established in 1966 along with most other regional districts in British Columbia, was created to facilitate regional service delivery and provide local governance to unincorporated areas. While historically these unincorporated areas were predominantly rural with limited growth, British Columbia has experienced significant population increases in recent decades, resulting in intensified development pressures and land use densities in traditionally rural settings. Vancouver Island has faced exceptional growth pressures, challenging its planning and building departments to process applications efficiently while meeting rising public expectations as communities undergo visible transformation.

The ACRD stands apart from other regional districts through its distinctive governance model that includes Treaty First Nations: the Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Yuuluʔiŋʔaḥ Government, Uchucklesaht Tribe Government, and Toquaht Nation. Although the ACRD's development approval authority extends specifically over six (6) electoral areas — 'A' (Bamfield), 'B' (Beaufort), 'C' (Long Beach), 'D' (Sproat Lake), 'E' (Beaver Creek), and 'F' (Cherry Creek) — coordination and collaboration with member municipalities and Treaty Nations remains essential for effectively serving the region's 33,521 citizens, maintaining positive interjurisdictional relationships, and preparing for continued growth. This collaborative approach will likely expand as inclusive governance initiatives with non-Treaty First Nations evolve.

The region's diverse geography and built environment, combined with its natural beauty, central location, economic opportunities and land availability have made it increasingly attractive for housing and development. An increase in development has understandably generated heightened public awareness and expectation throughout the region and produced the need to review the ACRD's development approval processes. Several key considerations must guide the revision of development procedures and communications:

- Understanding and respecting community sensitivities and adopted priorities.
- Managing increased infill pressure resulting from community desirability and provincial legislative changes while preserving the unique cultural character of ACRD communities.
- Processing development applications efficiently and effectively while safeguarding community character.
- Tailoring communication materials for appropriate audiences.
- Incorporating impacted stakeholders in the change process to ensure understanding and buy-in.
- Creating transparency to demonstrate the ACRD's commitment to facilitating housing through efficient application reviews while respecting broader community interests.



Based on the project requirements, this review aims to revise development procedures for maximum effectiveness and efficiency while honoring community expectations. Modernizing communication materials represents a critical objective, with emphasis on transparency and meaningful engagement opportunities to inform new development procedures.

1.2. Report Overview

This report presents the findings of the comprehensive review of the ACRD's development approvals processes and planning framework. Through analysis of existing bylaws, procedures, staffing resources and internal protocols, combined with consultations involving Board Directors, key managers, and members of the planning and building departments, specific challenges, bottlenecks, and opportunities for improvement within the current system have been identified.

Following internal engagement, a survey was provided for distribution to the development community and regional governmental bodies. The focus of the developer survey was to solicit feedback on development processes, communication and service delivery. The focus of the intergovernmental survey was to inquire, at a high level, if there was opportunity for improved communication between jurisdictions and areas where future collaboration could be explored.

Best practices from comparable regional districts and municipalities across British Columbia help shape the recommendations. However, while there are similarities amongst jurisdictions, local context, understanding and preferences must also be considered. This initial review aims to provide options for the ACRD to consider that borrows from best practices and is informed by local understanding. In general, efforts are well underway in both the planning and building department to foster and enable a solution-oriented internal culture that better serves both the organization and the community it represents. Further, effort has been to provide effective communication materials to support these initiatives.

Structural changes to departmental organization should occur to better support ongoing initiatives and enhance the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of the ACRD's development approvals processes. In addition, the existing communication materials could benefit from being more easily available and having a unified look and material.



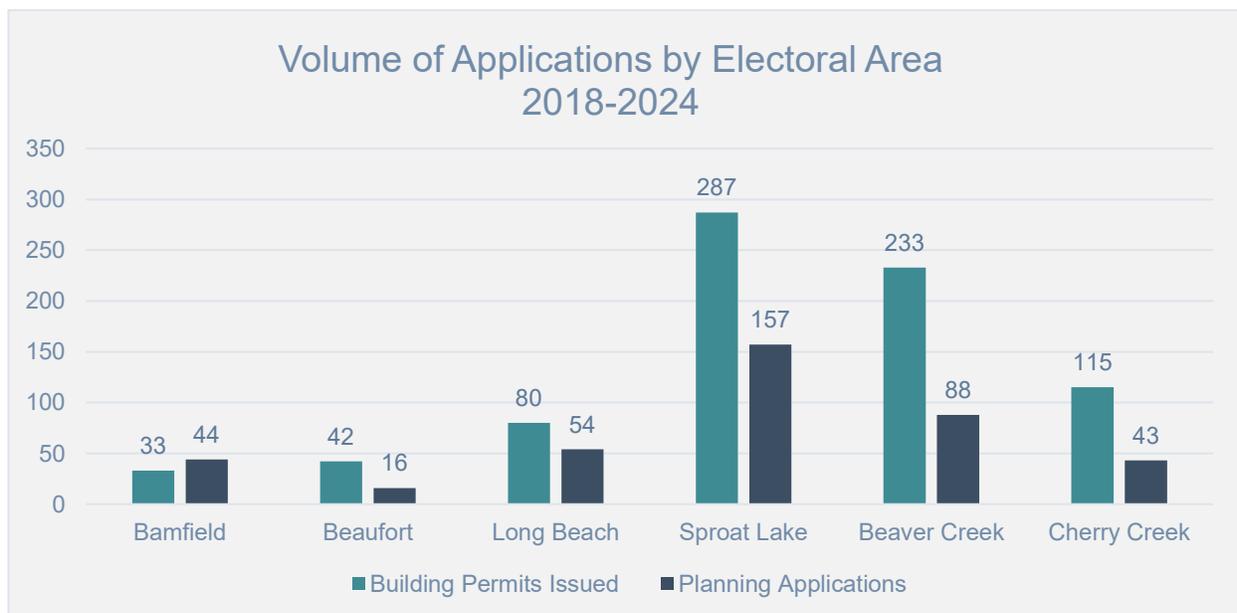
2. ACRD Development Snapshot

This section presents a comprehensive analysis, based on available data, of planning and building permit activities within the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District over recent years. The data reveals important trends in application volumes, processing times, and approval rates across various permit categories, providing valuable insights into operational demands and service delivery performance. Notably, the ACRD currently operates without formally adopted target timelines for different permit types, which creates challenges in measuring performance, managing applicant expectations, and allocating appropriate resources.

This absence of established formal benchmarks makes it difficult to objectively assess whether current processing times are reasonable or where specific improvements should be prioritized. The following analysis examines historical permit data to establish baseline performance metrics and identify potential areas for procedural enhancements that could improve efficiency and predictability in the development approvals process.

2.1. Development Application by Electoral Area

An analysis of planning and building permit application data from 2018 to 2024 reveals that the distribution of development activity across ACRD electoral areas follows similar patterns in terms of volume. Planning applications tracked include Rezoning with Zoning Atlas Amendments, Development Variance Applications, Development Permit Applications, and Temporary Use Applications. Sproat Lake consistently ranks highest in planning and building permit application submissions, followed closely by Beaver Creek, indicating these areas continue to experience the most significant development pressure within the region. Long Beach holds the third position in application volume, with Cherry Creek ranking fourth. The lowest numbers of planning applications are found in Bamfield and Beaufort, which rank fifth and sixth respectively.



The period from 2021 to 2023 marked a significant surge in development activity across the ACRD, with both planning applications and building permit submissions reaching peak levels. This increase represented a substantial escalation from the baseline activity observed in 2018 and 2019, reflecting broader regional growth pressures and potentially delayed projects from earlier pandemic-related disruptions.

2.2. Planning Application Volumes

The Electoral Areas of the ACRD experienced substantial planning application activity over the five-year study period, with Development Permits representing the most common application type, accounting for approximately one-third of all submissions. This pattern reflects the regulatory framework where Development Permits are required for construction within designated Development Permit Areas across all six (6) Electoral Areas.

Volume of Planning Applications by Type 2018-2024



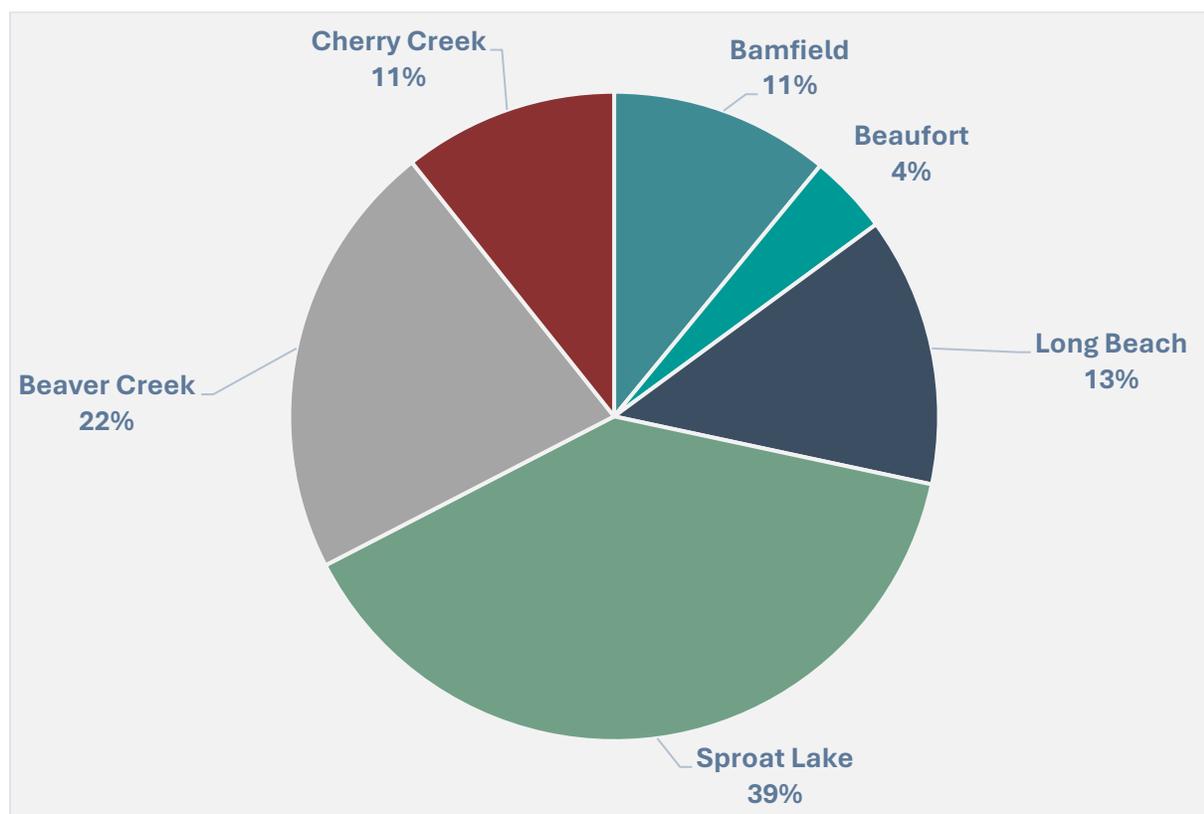
The ACRD Planning Department's responsibilities extend beyond processing development applications to include comprehensive review of Crown referrals not related to ALC or subdivision applications. Crown referrals encompass a wide range of provincial government initiatives including Crown land dispositions, lease applications, tenure modifications, resource extraction permits, infrastructure projects, and other provincial activities that may impact local communities or land use planning objectives. These referrals require careful analysis to assess potential impacts on regional planning policies, community interests, environmental considerations, and existing or planned infrastructure systems. The department's goal is to provide a response to these referrals within timeframes provided by the Crown. These responses often



require coordination with other ACRD departments to formulate appropriate positions or recommendations. Unlike development applications initiated by private applicants, Crown referrals are externally driven by provincial processes and timelines, creating additional workload pressures and requires planning staff to maintain expertise not only in local development regulations but also in provincial land use policies, resource management practices, and intergovernmental consultation processes.

It should be noted that the Planning and Building departments receive a substantial volume of development inquiries that are not tied to formal applications. Realtors, property owners, the general public, and developers regularly make inquiries via email, in-person visits, and phone calls seeking information on zoning requirements, development potential, permit processes, and regulatory compliance. Such inquiries can take up a significant amount of working time and are not captured in development or application statistics.

Planning Applications by Electoral Area 2019-2024



2.3. Planning Application Processes

Development applications within the ACRD follow distinct procedural pathways that vary significantly depending on the type of application, complexity of the proposal, and regulatory requirements involved. Each application type — whether it be a Development Permit, Development Variance Permit, Rezoning, OCP amendment, Subdivision, Temporary Use Permit or activity associated with lands within the



Agricultural Land Reserve — has specific procedural steps, review stages, consultation or referral requirements, and decision-making requirements that must be followed to ensure compliance with provincial legislation and local bylaws.

Understanding these process flows is essential for both applicants seeking to navigate the system effectively and staff working to manage applications efficiently. The following process charts illustrate the current procedural pathways for each major application type, highlighting key decision points, required approvals, public consultation stages, and potential areas where applications may experience delays or require additional information.

Development Permits

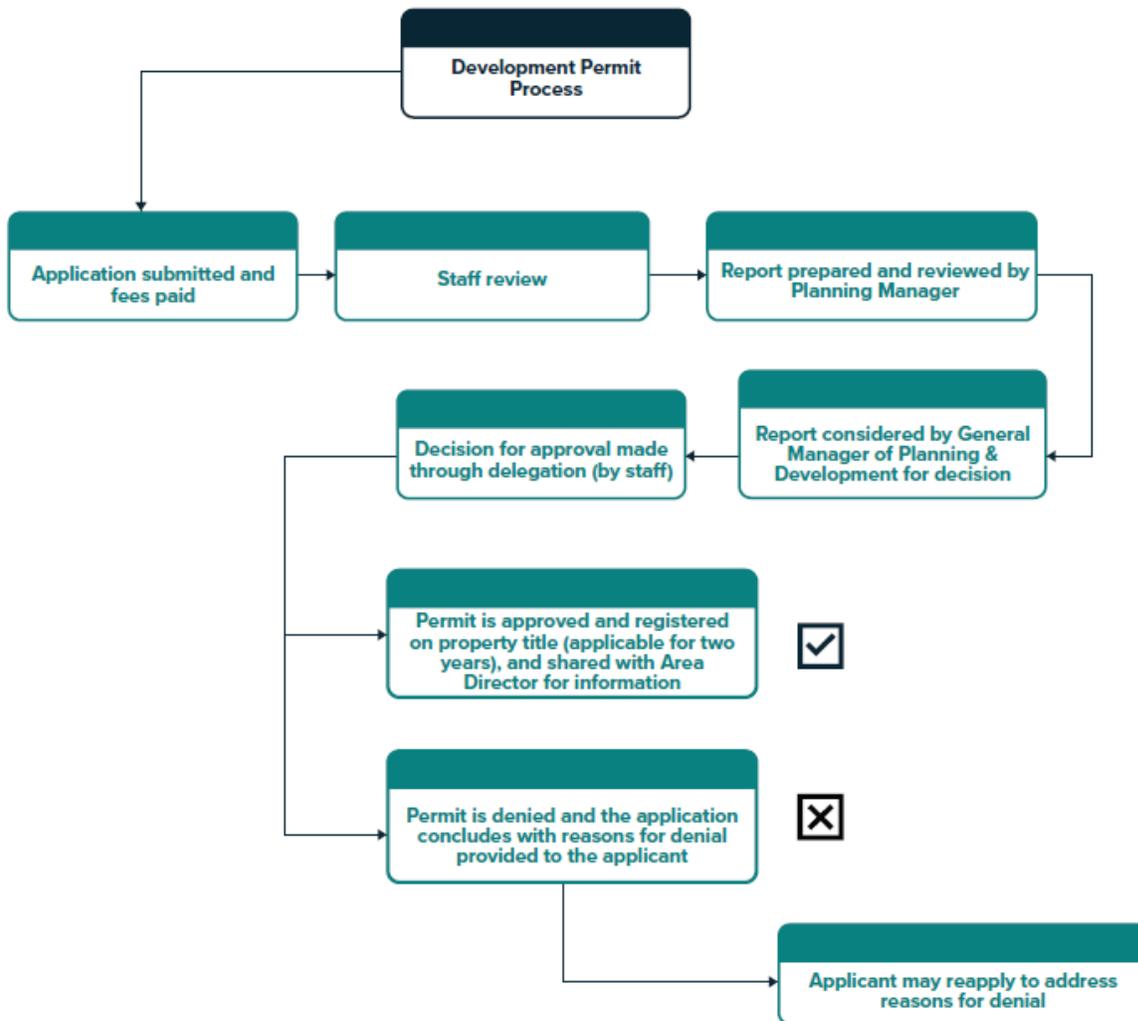
A Development Permit is a regulatory tool used by local governments in British Columbia to ensure that proposed development within designated Development Permit Areas (DPAs) complies with specific guidelines and objectives. Unlike discretionary approvals such as rezoning or variance applications, Development Permits represent a "pathway to yes" approval process, meaning that if an application demonstrates compliance with the established DPA guidelines, approval must be granted.

Applicants who submit proposals that clearly meet these predetermined criteria can expect approval, as the ACRD has limited discretion to deny applications that conform to the established guidelines. This regulatory certainty provides predictability for both applicants and the approval process, distinguishing Development Permits from other application types that involve greater discretionary decision-making by staff, committees, or the Board of Directors.

Expected Processing Time:

Applicants who submit complete and compliant proposals can expect timely decisions, with a processing goal of 1 month and a typical processing time of 2–3 months, barring unusual circumstances or incomplete submissions.





Development Variance Permits

A Development Variance Permit is a regulatory mechanism that allows property owners to seek relief from specific provisions of the Zoning Bylaw when site-specific circumstances make strict compliance difficult or impractical. Development Variance Permits are authorized under the *Local Government Act (LGA)* and provide a discretionary approval process for requests to vary zoning requirements such as building setbacks from property lines or water features, height restrictions, or other dimensional standards.

Development Variance Permits involve significant discretionary decision-making where the approving authority must consider factors such as the purpose and intent of the zoning bylaw, potential impacts on neighboring properties, site-specific constraints, and whether the variance would be consistent with the community's planning objectives. The variance process recognizes that rigid application of zoning standards may sometimes produce unreasonable hardship or prevent reasonable development due to

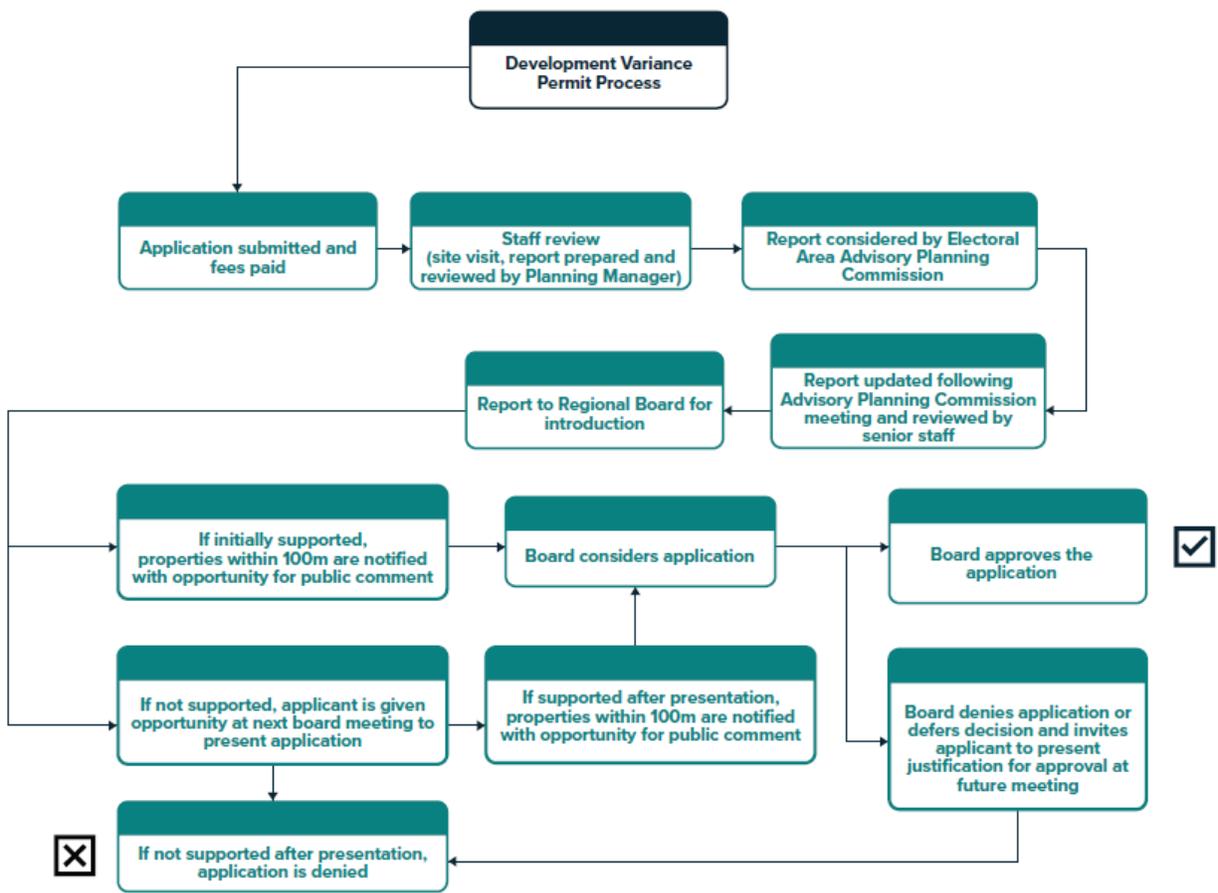


unique topographical features, existing development patterns, or other site-specific conditions. However, variances cannot be used to increase permitted density, change permitted uses, or fundamentally alter the character of zoning regulations — they are limited to providing flexibility within the existing zoning framework to address legitimate development constraints.

Expected Processing Time:

Applicants should anticipate a goal processing time of 2 – 3 months, with typical timelines ranging from 3 – 4 months, depending on the complexity of the request and the level of public or staff concern.

ACRD Development Variance Permit Process



OCP and Zoning Amendments

Official Community Plan (OCP) and zoning amendments represent discretionary land use changes that alter the long-term planning framework or permitted uses for specific properties within the ACRD. OCP amendments modify the broad policy direction, land use designations, or development objectives established in each Electoral Area's Official Community Plan, while zoning amendments change the

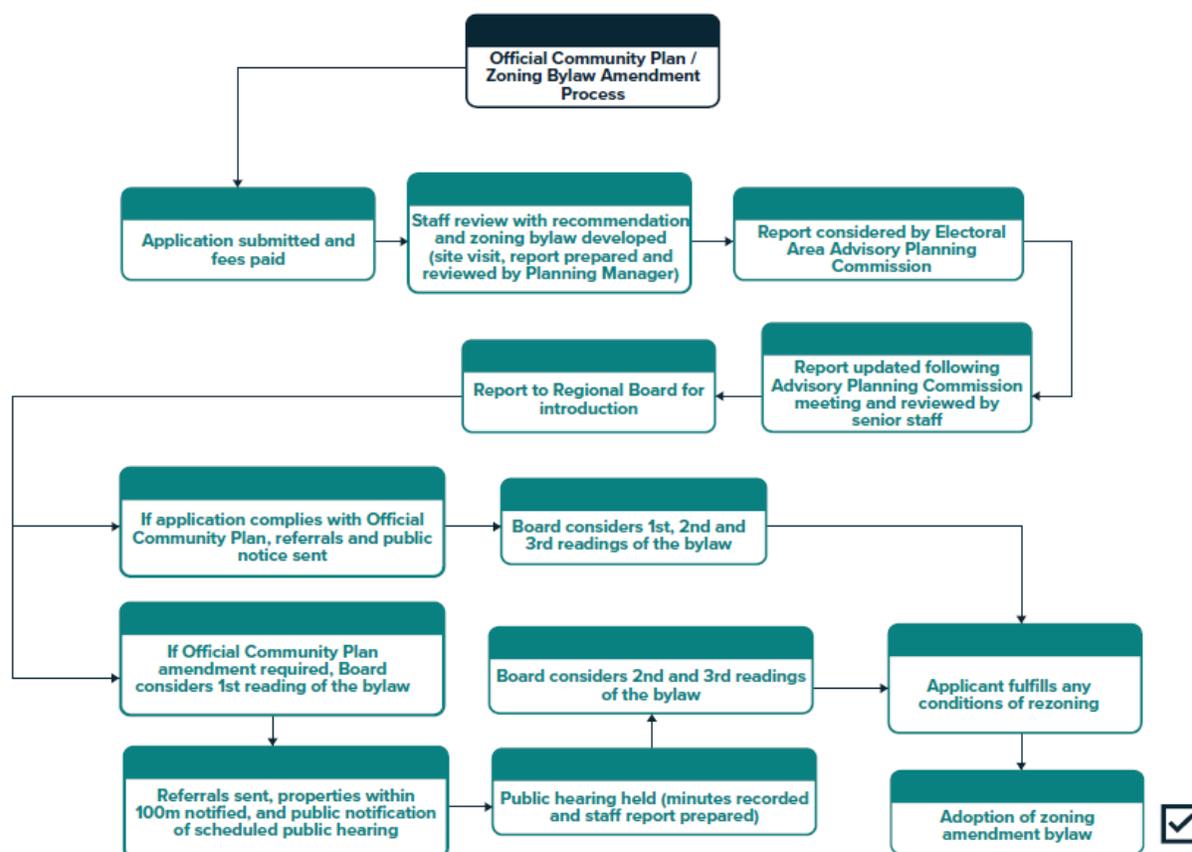
specific regulations, permitted uses, densities, or development standards applicable to a property under the Zoning Bylaw.

Both types of amendments require comprehensive evaluation of their consistency with community planning objectives, potential impacts on surrounding areas, infrastructure capacity, environmental considerations, and alignment with regional growth management strategies. Unlike Development Permits, these amendment processes are inherently discretionary and involve significant public consultation and may typically include referrals to Advisory Planning Commissions and other agencies, as well as public hearings before the Board of Directors. The approval authority must consider not only the merits of the specific proposal but also its broader implications for community development patterns, service delivery, and the achievement of planning goals outlined in the OCP.

Expected Processing Time:

- **Rezoning without an OCP amendment:** Goal of 6 months; typical processing time is 6 – 8 months.
- **Rezoning with an OCP amendment:** Goal of 6 – 9 months; typical processing time exceeds 9 months, with complex or contentious files often taking 12+ months.

OCP and Zoning Amendment Bylaw Process



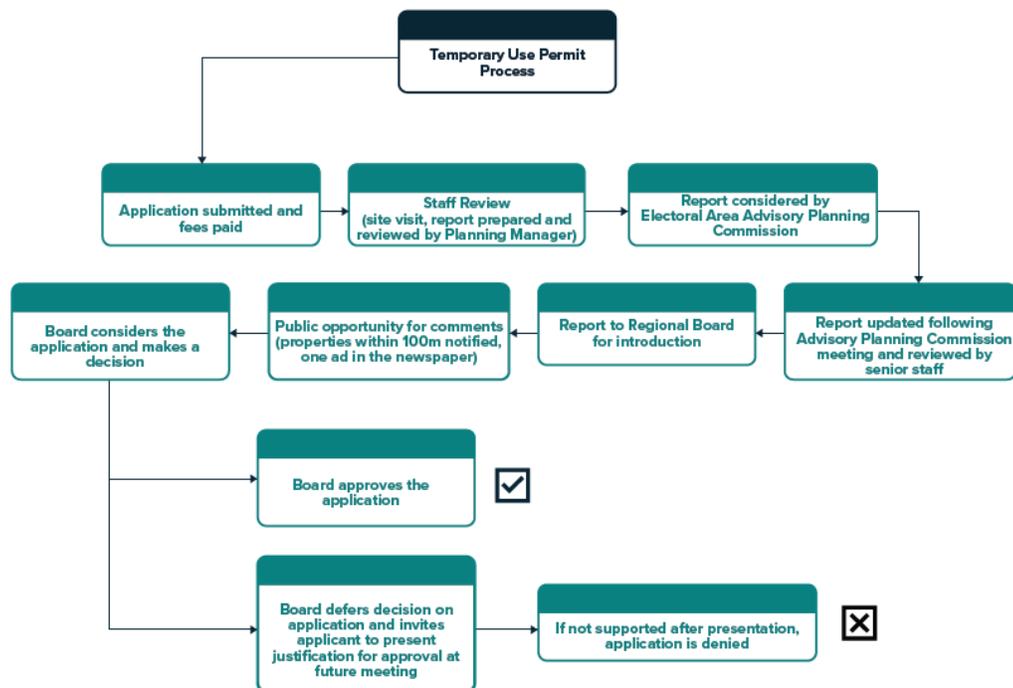
Temporary Use Permits

Temporary Use Permits (TUPs) are flexible tools that allow local governments to authorize land uses, that would otherwise not be permitted under existing zoning regulations, for a limited time period, typically up to three (3) years with the possibility of one renewal. The ACRD utilizes TUPs to address a variety of temporary land use needs, including short-term vacation rentals in areas where such uses are not normally permitted, seasonal commercial activities, interim uses during property transitions, or pilot projects to test the compatibility of new uses within established neighborhoods.

Different jurisdictions across British Columbia employ TUPs for varying purposes based on their unique community needs and planning challenges — some focus primarily on temporary commercial uses like farmers' markets or construction staging areas, while others use them extensively for housing-related initiatives such as secondary suites, temporary worker accommodation, or innovative housing forms. The discretionary nature of TUPs allows local governments to respond to emerging community needs or economic opportunities while maintaining control over the duration and conditions of approval, ensuring that temporary uses do not become permanent without proper planning review. However, the administrative complexity of TUPs, particularly the requirement for initial Board approval and potential public consultation, can make them resource-intensive for both applicants and staff.

Expected Processing Time:

Temporary Use Permits have a processing goal of 3 months, with typical processing times ranging from 3 – 5 months depending on the complexity of the application. ACRD Temporary Use Permit Process



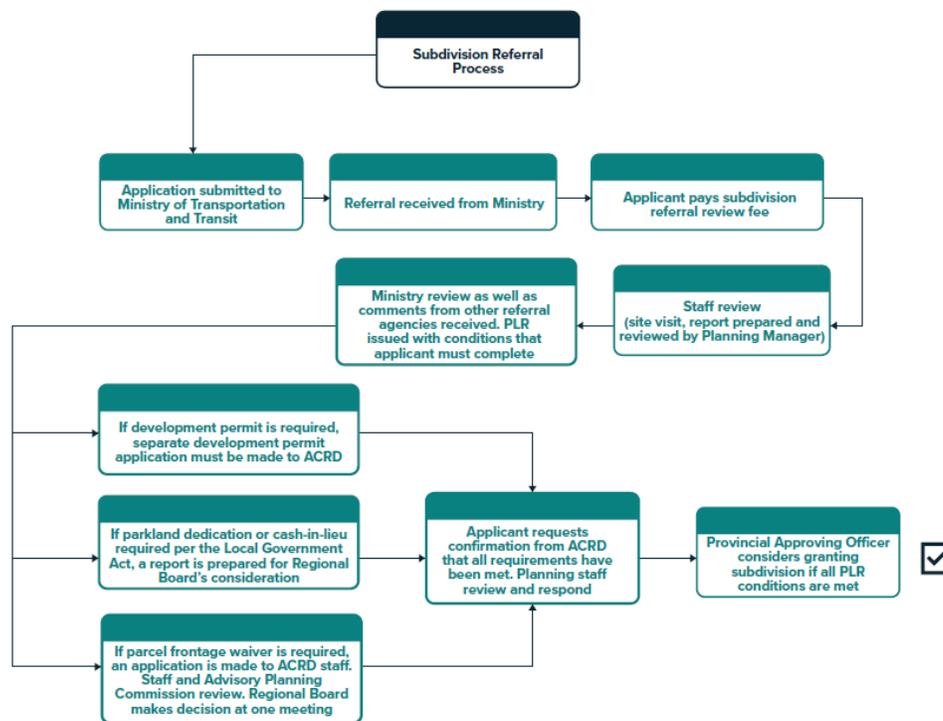
Subdivision Applications

The Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT), rather than the Regional District, serves as the primary approval authority for subdivision. This division of responsibilities reflects the provincial framework for unincorporated areas, where the ACRD maintains control over zoning and land use planning while the Province retains authority over the legal subdivision of land. When property owners wish to subdivide their land — typically to create smaller independent lots from a larger parcel — they submit their applications directly to MoTT, which then refers the proposals to the ACRD and other relevant agencies for review and comment. The ACRD's role in this process is to evaluate subdivision proposals against local zoning requirements, Official Community Plan policies, servicing considerations, and other regional planning objectives, providing recommendations to the Provincial Approving Officer (PAO) who ultimately decides whether to approve or deny the application. This referral-based system requires coordination between the ACRD and the Province to ensure that subdivision approvals align with local planning goals while meeting provincial standards for lot creation, access, and infrastructure requirements. The complexity of this process is often increased when subdivision proposals require concurrent applications for rezoning, OCP amendments, or other local approvals to facilitate the proposed lot configuration.

Expected Processing Time:

Subdivision applications and referrals have a processing goal of 1 month, with typical timelines ranging from 2 – 4 months depending on the complexity of the application and the need for concurrent local approvals.

ACRD Subdivision Review Process



Development Within the Agricultural Land Reserve

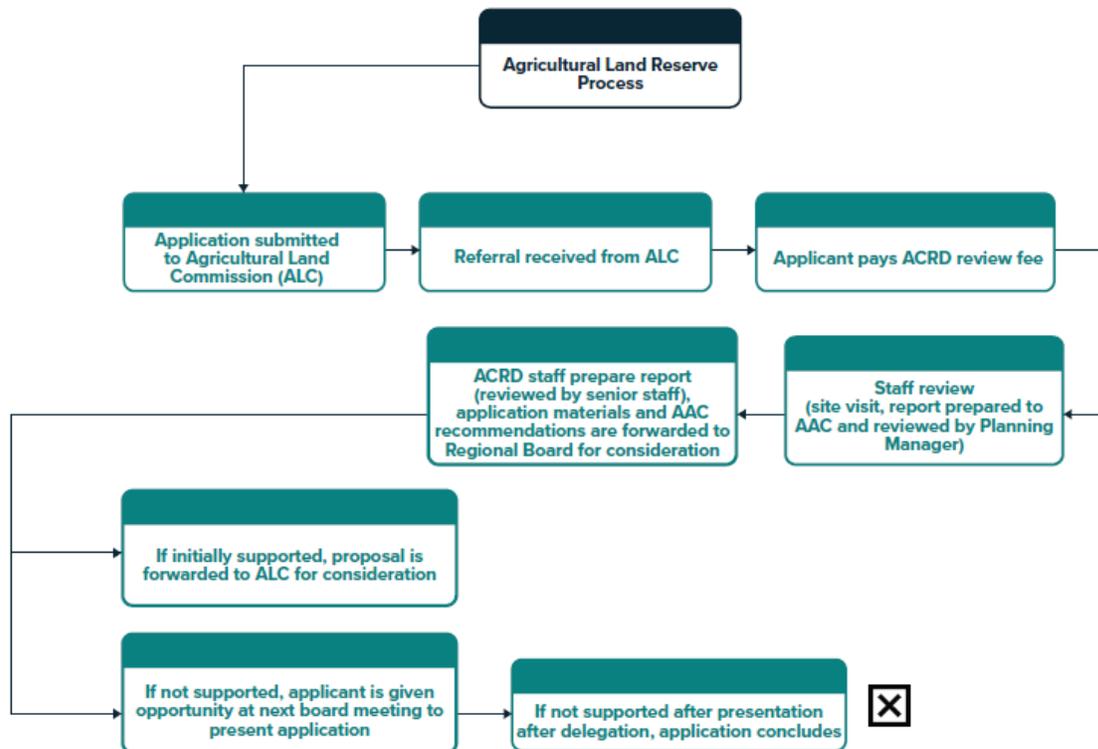
Applications for development within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) fall under a specialized category of land use where the ACRD often functions as an initial step in the approval process, with the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) holding final decision-making authority. The ACRD Board may choose to support an application, forward it to the ALC, or decline to forward it altogether. When property owners within the ALR seek to pursue non-farm uses or subdivide their agricultural land, they must apply to the ALC while simultaneously seeking a recommendation from the ACRD regarding the proposal's consistency with local planning policies and agricultural objectives.

The ACRD's review process involves evaluation against established agricultural policies, consideration of impacts on the agricultural land base, and assessment of compatibility with surrounding farm operations and community planning goals. This review is informed by input from the ACRD's Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), which provides specialized expertise on agricultural matters and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding the Regional District's position on the application. Following Board consideration, the ACRD forwards its recommendation to the ALC if it supportive of the application. If the Board is opposed, the applicant is given opportunity to seek the Board's endorsement. If the Board still does not support the proposal the application process concludes.

Expected Processing Time:

ALR referrals have a processing goal of 2 months, with a typical timeline of approximately 2 months.

ACRD Development Within the Agricultural Land Commission Process



2.4. Committee and Public Hearing Resource Requirements

The many planning applications within the ACRD require consultation with Advisory Planning Commissions (APC), the Agricultural Advisory Committee (ACC), or public hearings, creating additional resource commitments for staff and extending application processing timelines. Each of the six (6) Electoral Areas maintains its own APC to provide local input on planning matters, while the AAC offers regional expertise on agricultural land use issues. These committee touchpoints, while valuable for community input and specialized review, require significant coordination efforts including meeting scheduling, report preparation, staff attendance, and follow-up communications. Additionally, applications requiring public hearings — such as OCP amendments, rezoning applications, and certain other discretionary approvals — necessitate extensive administrative preparation including public notification, and formal hearing procedures. The frequency of these meetings and hearings directly impacts staff workload allocation and application processing capacity, as planning staff must balance their time between application review, committee support, and meeting preparation responsibilities.

2024 Committee and Public Hearing Activity

Committee/Process	Number of Meetings
Electoral Area A APC	3
Electoral Area B APC	3
Electoral Area C APC	4
Electoral Area D APC	10
Electoral Area E APC	9
Electoral Area F APC	4
Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC)	2
Public Hearings	7
Total Meetings	42

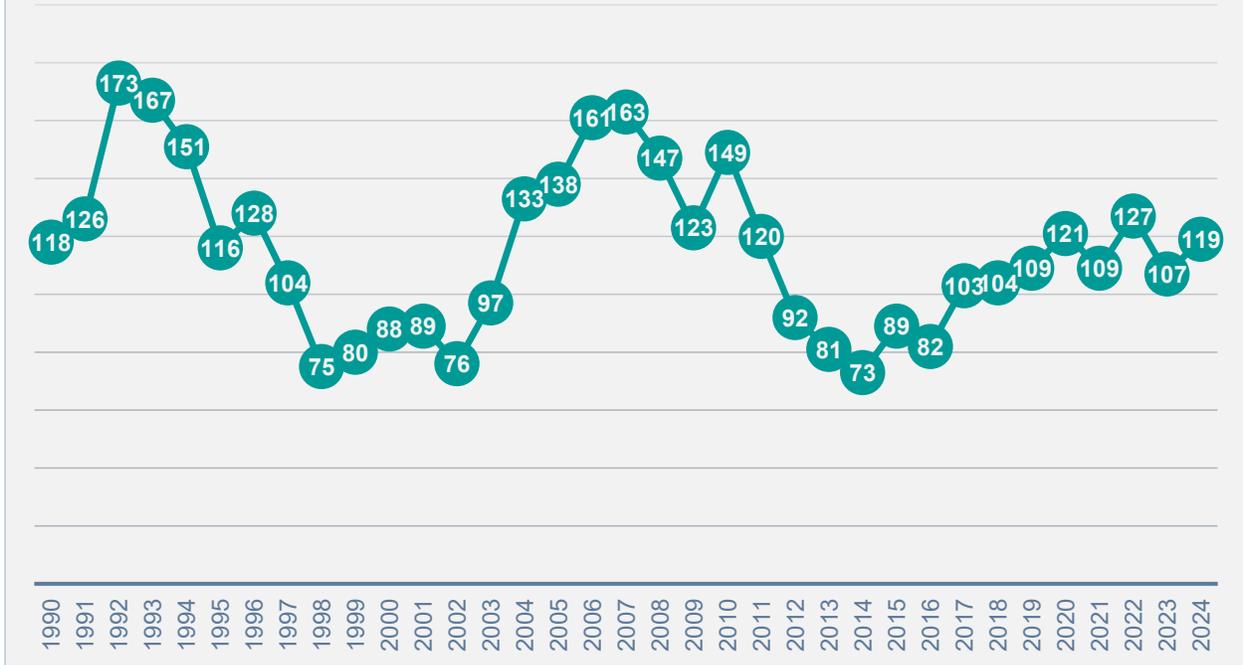
The significant variation in APC meeting frequency across Electoral Areas, ranging from three (3) meetings in Areas A and B to ten (10) meetings in Area D, reflects the differing levels of development activity and community engagement across the region. This pattern aligns with the application volume data showing higher development pressures in Sproat Lake (Area D) and Beaver Creek (Area E), requiring more frequent committee meetings to address planning matters in these active areas.

2.5. Building Permits Over Time

The years with the highest number of building permits were, 1992, 1993, 1994, 2006 and 2007, while the years with the lowest number of permits were 1998, 1999, 2002, 2013 and 2014. The fewest permits administered in a single year was 77 (2014), in contrast to the highest annual total of 173 permits (1992). Over the period analyzed, the ACRD administered an average of 112 building permits per year.



Total Permits by Year



Analysis of building permit data from 2020 to 2024 reveals that May consistently stands as the busiest month for ACRD building permit activity. The peak activity was recorded in May 2024, which saw 26 permits administered — the highest monthly total in the five-year period. In contrast, volumes reached their lowest points in July 2024 and February 2021, with only 2 permits associated to each of these months. The data also shows distinct seasonal patterns for specific building permit types, with wood stove permits concentrated primarily in February (9) and November (8), likely corresponding to installation timing before and during the heating season.



Analysis of building permit values from 2020 to 2024 demonstrates that May not only represents the busiest month for permit activity but also consistently records the highest construction values for permits issued.

Conversely, February shows the lowest construction values throughout this period, aligning with its status as one of the least active months for overall building permit activity. This correlation between permit volumes and permit values suggests a predictable seasonal pattern in both construction activity and associated administrative workload for the ACRD in relation to building permits and inspections.

The values presented do not include permit activity associated with wood stoves.



2.6. Open and Expired Permit Status

The table below provides a comprehensive overview of both active and expired building permits within the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District since 2020. This data highlights the current state of outstanding permit applications. It should be noted that there is a significant backlog of expired permits (pre-dating 2020) that have accumulated over time. Historically, the ACRD lacked a consistent protocol for following up on expired permits, resulting in many projects potentially reaching completion without final inspections or proper documentation of compliance with building codes.

Recent procedural improvements have implemented more systematic follow-up processes for newly expired permits, enhancing regulatory oversight and compliance. However, due to existing resource constraints within the Building Department, staff currently lack the capacity to address the substantial



backlog of historical expired permits while maintaining service levels for current applications. This situation presents both compliance challenges and potential liability concerns that warrant consideration in resource allocation.

Year	Open Building Permits	Expired Building Permits
2024	50	No data
2023	60	No data
2022	48	48
2021	29	26
2020	19	14
5-Year Total	217	107*

2.7. Building Permits by Building Type

Based on the analysis of inspection data from 2020 to 2024, our review of permits and average values by Electoral Area reveals distinct patterns across the ACRD. Sproat Lake consistently leads with the highest permit volume, closely followed by Beaver Creek, indicating concentrated development activity in these areas. In contrast, Beaufort shows both the lowest permit application frequency and overall value, suggesting minimal development pressure in this electoral area. Cherry Creek stands out for having the highest average value per building permit, potentially indicating larger or more complex development projects despite not having the highest overall permit count. Interestingly, despite these variations in activity levels, the average value per permit remains relatively consistent across all Electoral Areas, suggesting a certain uniformity in the scale of development projects throughout the diverse ACRD region.



Permit Numbers vs. Values By Location



*Includes wood stove in number of inspections, but not in values

*Averages used from 2020 - 2024

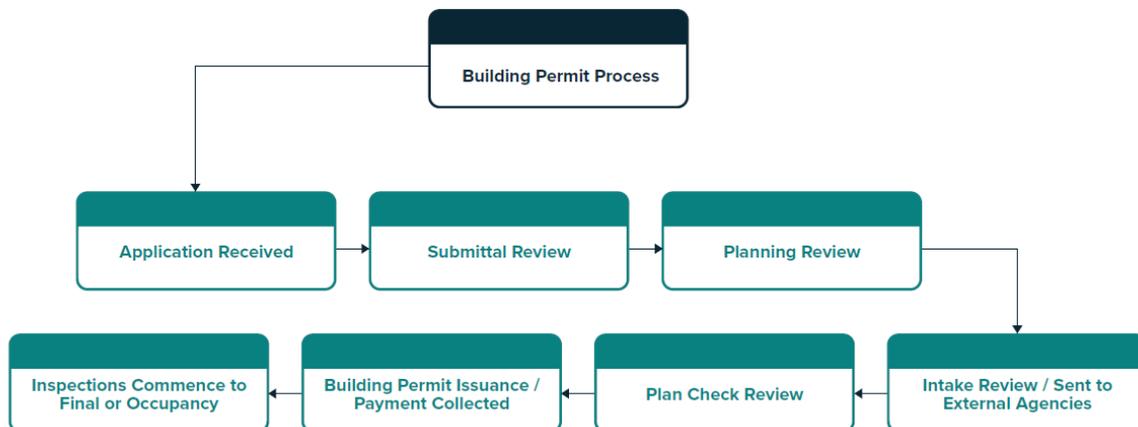
*Building Permit Fees are based on construction value

2.8. Building Permits Process

Unlike planning applications that may involve discretionary decision-making and political oversight, the building permit process represents a purely technical and apolitical review focused on ensuring compliance with the British Columbia Building Code and applicable safety standards. Building permits follow a standardized assessment pathway where applications are evaluated against objective technical criteria including structural adequacy, fire safety, accessibility requirements, and energy efficiency standards. The approval decision is based solely on whether the proposed construction meets established code requirements, with building officials exercising technical judgment rather than discretionary authority.

Expected Processing Time:

Building permit applications have a processing goal of 4 to 6 weeks.



3. Development Process and Communication Materials

As part of the development approvals review, an analysis was conducted of the ACRD's regulatory framework, including the Development Procedures and Fees Bylaw P1528, application forms, procedural guides, and supporting materials available to applicants and the public. The assessment included evaluation of bylaw provisions, fee structures, delegation authorities, application form clarity, guide comprehensiveness, and the overall accessibility of information through the ACRD's website and communication materials.

3.1. Website, Application Forms and Information Materials

The ACRD has established visual process flow charts for development approval processes with supporting documentation available through their website. The existing guides and informational materials are generally simple, effective, and reasonably accessible to the public. Each permit type (Development Permits, Development Variance Permits, Rezoning, etc.) has a dedicated guide that outlines the basic requirements and processes. The ACRD also maintains specific information for specialized applications such as Short-Term Vacation Rentals and Agricultural Land Reserve applications.

Strengths Identified:

- Comprehensive coverage of all development application types.
- Generally clear explanations of basic processes.
- Good organization of information by application type.
- Integration of Advisory Planning Commission information.
- Basic FAQs provided for certain topics.

Areas for Improvement:

1. **Application Forms:** Planning application forms lack specificity regarding information requirements, creating uncertainty for applicants and resulting in incomplete submissions.
2. **Visual Consistency:** Communication materials while informative lack consistent branding, design elements and formatting.
3. **Process Visualization:** Limited use of flowcharts, timelines, or process maps to illustrate application pathways.

Assessment & Recommendations

The ACRD's communication materials, while generally informative, would benefit from consistent visual branding and standardized formatting to improve recognition and professionalism. Process visualization represents another improvement opportunity, as the current text-heavy explanations could be



supplemented with flowcharts, timelines, and visual process maps to help applicants better understand application pathways and requirements. Finally, there is an opportunity to restructure the planning webpage to make more common information readily available, with clear links to the relevant or applicable bylaws.

The current application forms could be significantly enhanced by providing detailed, application-specific information requirements that clearly outline the documentation, studies, and supporting materials needed for each type of development proposal. Rather than generic forms with broad requirements, future iterations should include comprehensive checklists that specify technical requirements. Additionally, the ACRD could develop a library of example applications that demonstrate high-quality submissions, showing applicants exactly what constitutes complete documentation, proper formatting, and appropriate level of detail. This approach would create clearer expectations for applicants while reducing processing delays caused by incomplete or inadequate application materials.

3.2. Development Procedures and Fees Bylaw 1528 Summary

The ACRD's Development Procedures and Fees Bylaw P1528, updated in April 2025, establishes a comprehensive framework for development applications and associated procedures in accordance with Part 14 of the Local Government Act. This bylaw consolidates application procedures, fee structures, delegation authorities, and administrative processes for all development-related activities within the regional district's six (6) electoral areas.

Scope and Application Types

The bylaw applies to a comprehensive range of development activities including:

- Official Community Plan (OCP) and zoning bylaw amendments.
- Development permits and development variance permits.
- Temporary use permits and subdivision application referrals.
- Agricultural Land Commission application referrals.
- Cannabis retail store referrals and restrictive covenant matters.
- File reviews and permit term extensions.

The bylaw establishes that applications must be made by property owners or authorized agents, contain all required information, and be accompanied by appropriate fees.

Key Procedural Requirements

Application Processing

The bylaw establishes clear timelines for application management, including provisions for inactive applications that may be closed after twelve (12) months of inactivity with appropriate warning procedures. Applications cannot be resubmitted within one (1) year of refusal unless the Board agrees to reconsideration.



Delegation of Authority

The bylaw delegates certain powers to administrative staff, specifically authorizing the Chief Administrative Officer and General Manager of Planning and Development to issue development permits. Additionally, first-time one-year permit extensions may be approved by the General Manager rather than requiring Board approval.

Public Consultation Requirements

The bylaw outlines comprehensive public notification procedures including:

- Mailed notice to property owners and occupants within 100.0 meters of subject properties.
- Public hearing requirements for OCP amendments, zoning amendments, and certain permits.
- Specific timelines for public correspondence submission.
- Requirements for on-site signage for major applications.

Appeal and Review Mechanisms

The bylaw provides appeal procedures for decisions made under delegated authority, allowing applicants to appeal a CAO's decision to the Board of Directors within sixty (60) days. The bylaw also includes provisions for permit extensions and renewals with reduced fees.

Assessment & Recommendations

Bylaw 1528 represents a well-structured and comprehensive regulatory framework that aligns with current best practices in development approval administration. The delegation provisions appropriately balance administrative efficiency with oversight requirements, and the public consultation procedures ensure adequate community input opportunities. The bylaw, however, could be more readily available by having it visible on the ACRD planning webpage.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to streamline several application types. Several routine approvals currently require APC and Board involvement that could be streamlined to reduce application timeline while meeting the goals of application transparency and public engagement. Such as:

- I. Removing APC review for parcel frontage considerations as it is a straightforward consideration.
- II. Proceed with notification of Development Variance and Temporary Use Permit applications prior to the Board's consideration of the request, and have public feedback, proponent presentation and consideration of the decision in a single Board meeting.

3.3. Regulatory Framework Review

The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District's development approvals program operates within a regulatory framework established by its zoning bylaw and supporting land use regulations. The ACRD's Zoning Bylaw No. 15, originally adopted in 1973, serves as the foundation for land use decisions across the region's



diverse communities. However, significant opportunities exist to modernize this framework to better address contemporary planning challenges, particularly in areas of climate adaptation and hazard management.

Zoning Bylaw Review

The current ACRD Zoning Bylaw No. 15 would benefit from a comprehensive update for several critical reasons:

1. **Age and Currency:** The bylaw was originally adopted in 1973. Despite updates, the fundamental structure and many provisions reflect planning approaches from over 50 years ago that may not adequately address contemporary land use challenges. Further, like much of Vancouver Island, the ACRD is experiencing significant development pressure. Modern zoning approaches and best practices are better suited to balance development pressures with community preferences.
2. **Outdated Development Standards:** Many bulk and site regulations reflect development patterns from previous decades and may not align with the current needs in rural areas, current best practices for sustainable development, densification needs, or environmental protection.
3. **Stalled Update Process:** The acknowledgment that a comprehensive review was underway but stalled represents a lost opportunity to modernize the regulatory framework. Reinitiating this process, following the completion of the comprehensive OCP updates, would allow the ACRD to incorporate current planning best practices, reconcile any conflicts between zones, and ensure alignment with updated Official Community Plans.

Floodplain Bylaw

The absence of a floodplain bylaw represents a significant regulatory gap that should be addressed:

1. **Risk Management Tool:** A dedicated floodplain bylaw would provide the ACRD with enhanced tools to:
 - Define flood construction levels based on current climate projections.
 - Establish floodproofing requirements for different land and building uses.
 - Implement setbacks and elevation requirements specific to local conditions.
 - Protect riparian areas while managing flood risk.
 - Allow exemptions for accessory buildings, small additions, and renovations.
2. **Provincial Alignment:** Implementation of a floodplain bylaw would align the ACRD with provincial guidelines and local government best practices for flood management, particularly important given the region's coastal location and numerous watercourses.



3. **Integrated Approach:** A floodplain bylaw would complement the zoning bylaw by providing specialized regulations for hazard areas, allowing for more nuanced and effective land use management in areas subject to flooding.
4. **Climate Resilience:** Given increasing flood risks due to climate change, a floodplain bylaw is an essential tool for building community resilience and protecting both public safety and property values.

Assessment & Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that the ACRD:

1. Reinitiate the comprehensive zoning bylaw review process with adequate resources and community engagement to align with updated Electoral Area OCPs.
2. Develop and implement a floodplain management bylaw as a priority regulatory tool.
3. Ensure both processes are coordinated to create an integrated and modern regulatory framework for land use management.

These actions would significantly enhance the ACRD's ability to manage growth, protect environmental values and build resilience to climate change impacts.

3.4. Systems Modernization Efforts

Recent efforts to modernize the ACRD's development approval process have centered on the implementation of CityView software, which represents a significant step toward digitizing application management and improving administrative efficiency. While this software offers robust capabilities for tracking applications, managing workflow, and maintaining comprehensive digital records, the implementation has faced several challenges that limit its effectiveness. Current gaps include inconsistent adoption among staff, with some continuing to rely on parallel Excel-based tracking systems which create redundancy and potential for error. However, it was consistently noted that the transition to CityView was underway and regular use amongst all staff was improving.

To maximize the benefits of this technological investment, several improvements are recommended:

1. Ensuring comprehensive staff training and consistent usage across all departments;
2. Developing an applicant-facing portal that leverages CityView's public interface capabilities to allow real-time application status tracking;
3. Implementing online submission functionality to reduce paper-based applications;
4. Exploring instant permitting modules for standardized, low-risk applications that could be automatically approved based on pre-defined criteria; and,



5. Establishing automated notification systems to improve communication with applicants throughout the process.

Full utilization of CityView's capabilities would substantially reduce administrative overhead, improve transparency and enhance service delivery to the development community.



4. Department Structure

4.1. Staffing Resources

The ACRD's development approval processes are supported by dedicated staffing resources within both the Planning and Building Departments. Planning and Development contains three (3) exempt staff: the General Manager of Planning and Development, a planning manager for development planning and a recently added Community Projects Engagement Manager who will focus on long-term planning and other community projects that rely on high levels of engagement.

Regarding development applications and approvals, the Planning Department currently operates with 2.5 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), comprising of a Planning Assistant, Planner 1, and Planning/Technician/Bylaw Officer. This team is responsible for processing all development applications and providing developing planning services across the six (6) electoral areas.

Similarly, the Building Department functions with two (2) FTEs, amongst three (3) positions: Building & Plumbing Inspector/Building Bylaw Enforcement Officer, Building Inspector/Property Maintenance Coordinator (0.5 FTE dedicated to Building Inspection duties), and an Admin Assistant (0.6 FTE dedicated to Building Department duties). These three (3) staff manage the building permits from application to completion, conduct inspections, communicate with the public, and ensure compliance with the building codes, regulations, standards and bylaws. There are also three planning positions that report directly to the recently added Community Projects Engagement Manager and long-term planning projects, and a GIS Analyst that reports directly to the GM. These positions are focused more on policy and development support. Both planning managers' report to the General Manager of Planning and Development. In addition, one (1) Planner 2 position associated with agricultural and climate action initiative reports directly to the General Manager.

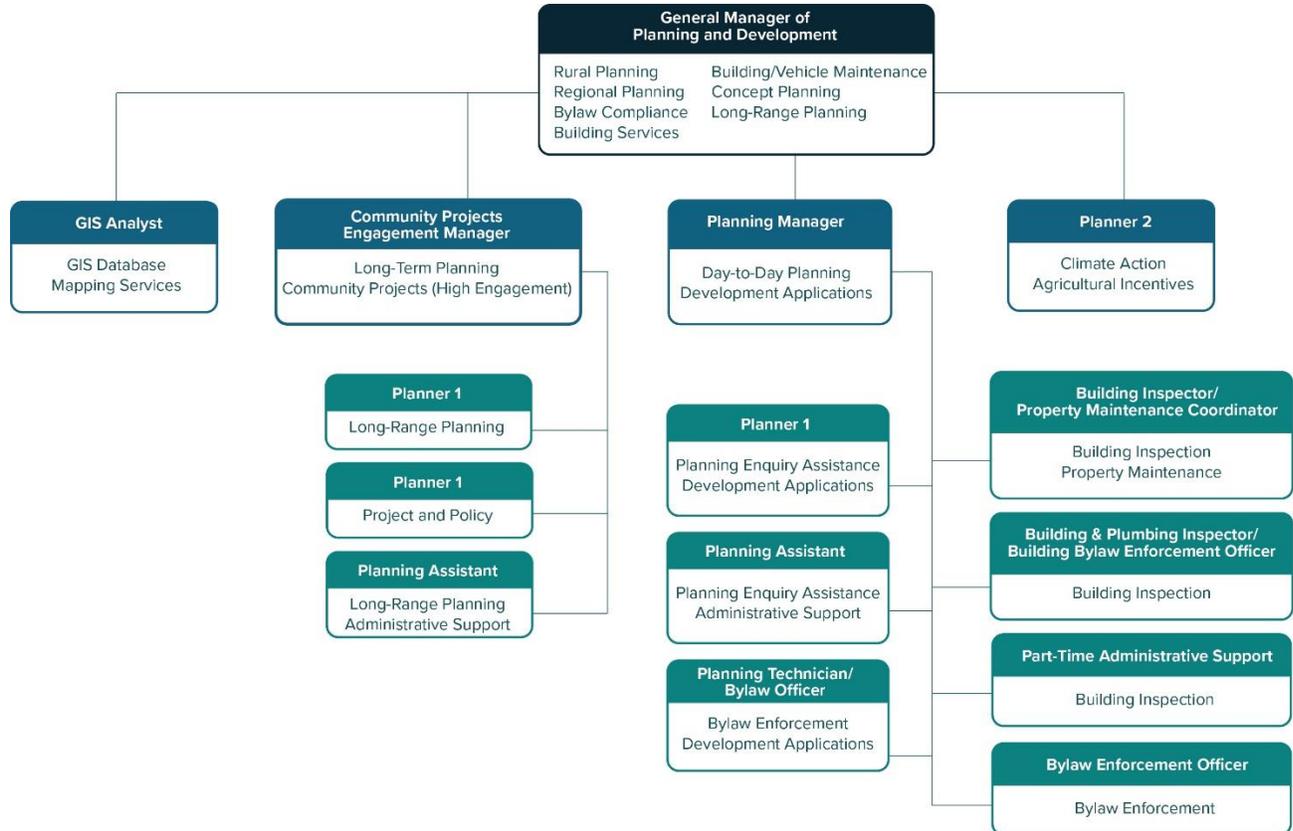
A Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) represents the workload of a full-time employee, calculated as the ratio of total hours worked by employees (both full-time and part-time) divided by the standard number of hours in a full work year. One FTE equals one employee working full-time hours (typically 35 - 40 hours per week or 1,820 - 2,080 hours annually), while multiple part-time employees may collectively constitute a single FTE.

This standardized measure allows organizations to accurately quantify staffing resources and workload capacity across departments regardless of employment arrangements.



4.2. Departmental Organizational Chart

The following organizational chart illustrates the current staffing structure and reporting relationships within the ACRD's Planning and Building Departments, providing a visual representation of how development functions are distributed across positions.



* As of August 2025.

4.3. Current Staffing Roles and Responsibilities

The Planning and Development Department's current staffing structure comprises distinct positions, each with specific roles and responsibilities that collectively support the ACRD's development approval processes, long-range planning initiatives and community engagement activities.

Collective Agreement Positions

Planning Assistant: The Planning Assistant serves as the primary front-line contact for the public; handling telephone and counter inquiries related to planning matters. This position provides administrative support for the department's activities. The role includes significant committee support responsibilities, preparing agendas and organizing documentation for up to seven (7) advisory committees and the Board of Variance, while also acting as recording secretary for Board of Variance meetings. Additionally, the Planning Assistant



assists with public hearing processes including notifications, advertisements, venue arrangements, and transcribing minutes.

Planning Technician / Bylaw Enforcement Officer: This dual role position combines land use support with bylaw enforcement responsibilities. In the planning capacity, the technician processes various development applications including development permits, subdivision referrals, and provincial referrals, while providing research and support for more complex applications such as rezoning and OCP amendments. The bylaw enforcement component involves responding to complaints and infractions, conducting investigations, preparing enforcement documentation and administering the ticketing program. This position also reviews building permits for zoning compliance, conducts site inspections, and attends committee meetings.

Planner 1: The Planner 1 position handles the full spectrum of development application processing, including researching and writing planning reports for rezoning, development variance permits, development permits, OCP amendments and ALC applications. Responsibilities include drafting bylaw amendments, referring applications to other agencies, setting up public hearings and conducting site inspections. This position also involves community plan preparation activities, building permit reviews for zoning compliance, and attendance at Board and committee meetings as required, while working under the direction of senior planning staff.

Planner 2: The Planner 2 represents a senior planning position that oversees daily processing of planning applications while providing direction to junior planning staff. Beyond standard application processing duties, this role handles all aspects of community plan preparation including research, public participation, and liaison with advisory planning commissions. The position has specialized responsibility for sustainability initiatives, agricultural planning and climate action plan implementation. The Planner 2 also represents the department on inter-agency committees and provides guidance and training to other Planning department staff members.

Building Inspector: The Building Inspector positions provide technical expertise for building and plumbing permit review and inspection services. Key responsibilities include reviewing permit applications for compliance with building codes and bylaws, conducting field inspections throughout the construction process, issuing permits and occupancy certificates while enforcing building code compliance through various enforcement measures. These positions also inspect wood-burning appliances, advise the public on building-related matters, maintain accurate inspection records and coordinate daily inspection routes for efficiency. One building inspector position includes additional responsibilities for property maintenance coordination and fleet management for ACRD facilities and vehicles.

Administrative Assistant: The Administrative Assistant position provide part-time support to the Building Department. This position provides clerical, reception and administrative support.

GIS Analyst: The GIS Analyst position was created to manage additional advanced duties required for the Geographic Information Systems, supporting the department's mapping, spatial analysis, and data management needs essential for land use planning and development application review processes.



Exempt Positions

Planning Manager: The Planning Manager reports directly to the General Manager of Planning and Development and provides comprehensive management oversight of all planning, building and bylaw enforcement operations. This role involves performing and managing complex and sensitive professional planning projects while supervising Planning Department staff and ensuring compliance with local, provincial and federal legislation. The Manager oversees specialized planning functions including large-scale development proposals and environmental studies, while providing overall management of rural planning services and regional planning initiatives.

Key responsibilities include advising the General Manager and elected officials on planning matters, serving as liaison to Advisory Planning Commissions, assigning work and ensuring staff training, and evaluating departmental operations. The position also encompasses significant administrative duties including budget preparation and administration, personnel management in a unionized environment, policy development and implementation, and ensuring exceptional customer service and regulatory compliance.

Community Project and Engagement Manager: The Community Project and Engagement Manager is a recently created management-level position that reports directly to the General Manager of Planning and Development, reflecting the ACRD's commitment to enhanced public engagement in planning processes. This role serves as the primary lead for developing and executing comprehensive community engagement strategies, organizing and facilitating public meetings, workshops, and surveys to ensure diverse community participation in planning initiatives. The position encompasses significant project management responsibilities, overseeing multi-disciplinary projects from inception to completion while coordinating with policy groups, consultants and external partners.

Key duties include overseeing the creation of long-range planning documents such as comprehensive plans and community plans, serving as the primary spokesperson for engagement projects, and conducting research and analysis on community needs and development trends. The role also involves substantial administrative responsibilities including personnel management in a unionized environment, budget preparation and administration and ensuring integration of community feedback into strategic planning documents. This position represents the ACRD's strategic focus on promoting sustainable growth, economic vitality, and quality of life through meaningful community engagement and collaborative planning processes.

General Manager of Planning and Development: The General Manager of Planning and Development (GMPD) is a senior management position that reports directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and carries broad responsibilities for the organization's planning and development functions. The role encompasses overall management of Rural Planning, Regional Planning, Building Inspection services, and Bylaw Enforcement operations while also taking a leadership role in helping the Board of Directors formulate a vision for the Regional District's future.

The position involves comprehensive human resources responsibilities for the department, including hiring, supervising, managing performance as well as overseeing contractors and consultants through the



preparation of RFPs and contracts. Additional responsibilities include periodically preparing planning reports and plans while assisting the public, leading or supporting significant initiatives as assigned by the CAO that may have far-reaching community or corporate implications involving multiple stakeholders and agencies, and drafting or supporting the development of corporate policy.

Assessment & Recommendations

The assessment of the ACRD's current staffing structure reveals both strengths and areas requiring improvement to support efficient development approval processes. The planning department's existing positions demonstrate appropriate technical expertise and professional qualifications, with clear role definitions that cover essential planning, building inspection and administrative functions.

However, several structural improvements would strengthen service delivery, including expanding the responsibilities of the Planning Technician position that combines and enhances the current Planning Assistant and Planning Technician/Bylaw Enforcement roles to provide more comprehensive public support and process minor applications to allow more senior planning staff to focus on complex planning files. The department would also benefit from implementing a formal career progression pathway from Planner 1 to Planner 2 within existing FTE allocations, to provide pathways for professional growth within the ACRD organization.

These structural enhancements in the planning department, combined with the recently created Community Project and Engagement Manager role, would create a more robust and efficient organizational framework capable of meeting current service demands while positioning the department for future growth and enhanced service delivery.

The Building Department's current workload encompasses permit processing, inspections and various administrative requirements. While a part-time admin assistant in the building department provides support for service delivery and administrative functions, the existing staffing complement presents several operational challenges as permit levels and development activity remain high. The department lacks sufficient capacity to undertake service improvement initiatives, address legacy files and permit backlogs, research emerging industry trends or maintain consistent front-counter coverage for public inquiries. Based on the existing staffing complement, the department is operating beyond capacity.

If workloads are to increase, establishing a full-time building clerk position would enhance public service delivery by ensuring dedicated and consistent front-counter support, thereby enabling building inspectors to concentrate on their core technical responsibilities. This restructuring would optimize the use of professional expertise while improving customer service standards. Additionally, the creation of a Building Supervisor position, merits consideration if workload remains high or building inspection service agreements are established with other jurisdictions.

Building permit review and inspection processes, while technical and apolitical in nature, require professional judgment and consistency in decision-making. The current organizational structure lacks a formal hierarchy for issue resolution. Implementing a supervisory structure would position the department



for managing an increased workload and provide consistent approaches across the region. Any staffing enhancements should be supported through corresponding adjustments to the building permit fee structure to ensure cost recovery.



5. Application Fees Review

A comparative analysis of development application and building permit fees across the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District and neighboring jurisdictions reveals significant variations in fee structures and amounts. This analysis examined fee schedules from the ACRD, Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), Strathcona Regional District (SRD), District of Tofino, City of Port Alberni, and District of Ucluelet to identify patterns, disparities, and opportunities for fee structure improvements.

Planning Application Fees

- **OCP Amendments:** The ACRD's fees for Official Community Plan amendments (\$1,500) are significantly lower than the CVRD (\$5,000) and Tofino (\$4,162 plus public notice fee), positioning the ACRD at the lower end of the regional fee spectrum for this complex application type.
- **Rezoning Applications:** The ACRD's tiered approach to rezoning applications (\$2,000 - \$5,000 plus per lot/hectare charges) is comparable to other jurisdictions, but it includes more detailed distinctions between residential, commercial, and other uses.
- **Temporary Use Permits:** At \$600 plus advertising costs, the ACRD's TUP fees are substantially lower than the SRD (\$3,000) and generally lower than most neighboring jurisdictions, potentially not reflecting the true administrative cost of processing.
- **Development Permits:** The ACRD's two-tier fee structure (\$300 for residential, \$1,500 for non-residential) represents one of the highest disparities between residential and non-residential rates in the region, with some jurisdictions like Port Alberni using a flat fee approach (\$600).
- **Development Variance Permits:** The ACRD's approach of charging different rates for minor vs. standard variances and residential vs. non-residential applications creates a more complex fee structure than many neighboring jurisdictions. The SRD utilizes an even more complex fee structure.

Building Permit Fees

- **Calculation Methods:** The ACRD uses a tiered value-based calculation method for building permit fees, with declining rates for higher construction values, while other jurisdictions like CVRD and SRD use a simpler percentage-based system.
- **Building Permit Rates:** The ACRD's effective rate for building permits (approximately \$7 - 10 per \$1,000 of construction value) is generally comparable to neighboring jurisdictions, though calculation methods differ.
- **Demolition Permits:** At \$30, the ACRD's demolition permit fee is significantly lower than all other jurisdictions examined, with most charging \$100 - \$250 for the same service.



Assessment & Recommendations

Cost Recovery Concerns: Several ACRD fees appear to be set lower than neighboring jurisdictions, particularly for complex application types that require significant staff time and resources. This raises questions about whether current fees achieve an appropriate cost recovery for service delivery. There are cases where the ACRD fees are higher. (i.e., Development Variance Permits for Residential & Rural, Rezoning for Commercial).

Regional Competitiveness: While applicants may positively view lower fees, they may not reflect the actual cost of service delivery, potentially subsidizing development activity through general revenue. Further, revenue, especially from building inspection, can be utilized to cover staff costs as the service is, in most cases, for those actively building.

Transparency and Predictability: Neighboring jurisdictions with simpler percentage-based building permit fee structures may offer greater transparency and predictability for applicants calculating potential costs.

Public Hearing and Notification Costs: The ACRD explicitly separates advertising and notice costs (\$500 - \$900) from base application fees, while some other jurisdictions incorporate these costs into their base fees.

To maintain relevance and cost-recovery sustainability with regards to fees, the ACRD should establish a formal policy requiring biennial fee reviews that account for inflation, changing processing costs, and regional comparisons while providing the Board opportunities to evaluate its philosophical approach to cost recovery versus general taxation for planning and building services. This review should include a detailed analysis of all application types to align fees with actual staff time, resources, and administrative costs. The fee schedule should be streamlined to reduce redundant categories and establish consistent calculation methods, improving both transparency and ease of administration — a practice successfully adopted by many comparable jurisdictions.



6. Department and Director Interviews

As part of this comprehensive review, structured interviews were conducted with Electoral Area Directors, key departmental staff involved in the development approvals process and other internal ACRD departmental staff that work closely with planning and building staff. These one-on-one discussions provided critical insights into both the political and operational perspectives on current practices.

6.1. Key Themes from Electoral Area Director Consultation

The consultation with Electoral Area Directors revealed several recurring concerns and suggestions regarding the development approval process. Director feedback highlighted the following areas of concern:

Process Frustrations

- **Extended Timelines:** Directors consistently cited excessive processing times as a primary concern raised by constituents.
- **Staffing Limitations:** Recognition that vacancies and limited staff capacity contribute to delays.
- **Enforcement Gaps:** Lack of consistent enforcement for regulation violations, particularly regarding waterfront development and short-term vacation rentals.
- **Specialized Concerns:** Certain Electoral Areas face unique challenges, such as waterfront considerations in Sproat Lake, requiring specialized knowledge and approaches.

Governance Challenges

- **Board Dynamics:** Some Directors noted challenges with Board functionality and collaboration.
- **Advisory Planning Commissions:** Directors generally value APCs for providing community voice, though effectiveness depends on appropriate appointments.
- **Staff-Director Relationship:** Concern that staff sometimes may be overly agreeable rather than providing forthright professional guidance.
- **Policy Implementation:** Several Directors expressed frustration that needed updates to bylaws (such as the zoning bylaw update) had been paused by Board decision despite containing valuable improvements.

Communication and Education Needs

- **Public Information:** Directors emphasized the need for more accessible information on the ACRD website, by making process guides easier to find and less complicated.
- **Application Status Tracking:** Dedicated support for implementing a dashboard system allowing applicants to track their application status.
- **Educational Materials:** Request for how-to guides and other resources to help applicants navigate processes.



- **Misinformation Concerns:** Multiple Directors noted challenges with community misinformation and mistrust, such as:
 - Incorrect information being spread through social media posts by the public; and
 - A lack of clear and consistent information being provided by the ACRD to the public.

Director Provided Process Improvement Suggestions

- **Short-Term Vacation Rental Process:** Directors advocated for a more effective Temporary Use Permit process specifically designed for STVRs, possibly with scalable fees based on intensity of use.
- **Communication Materials:** Desire for improved application forms and guidance materials that are easier to understand and find on the website.
- **Digital Solutions:** Support for online application submission and tracking systems.
- **Bylaw Updates:** Recognition that certain bylaws require updating, particularly the floodplain bylaw and zoning regulations.

6.2. Key Themes from Staff Consultation

The interviews with ACRD staff across various departments revealed a consistent pattern of operational challenges and process inefficiencies affecting development approvals. Planners, building inspectors, and administrative staff alike identified structural bottlenecks as a primary concern, with applications frequently delayed during supervisory review stages. Staff highlighted technological inconsistencies with parallel tracking systems creating redundancy, while communication gaps between departments impeded efficient application processing. The need for standardized operating procedures, improved document management, and enhanced administrative support emerged as recurring themes. Staff demonstrated strong awareness of these systemic issues and offered numerous practical recommendations to address them, including restructuring approval workflows, implementing consistent software adoption, improving training protocols, formalizing mentorship opportunities, and developing more easily understood application materials for the public.

Positive Aspects

- **Internal Collaboration:** Staff generally work well together and support each other across departments.
- **Public Satisfaction:** Relatively few complaints from the public about service, except regarding application timelines. It should be noted that no official complaint or suggestion for improvement method was utilized.
- **Staff Dedication:** Multiple comments acknowledged the dedication and problem-solving approach of staff.



Process Flow Issues

- **Management Review Capacity:** Several staff noted that the current application review process is heavily reliant on the Planning Manager, which can lead to delays due to their substantial workload. Application process maps indicate that the planning manager reviews all applications. This is in addition to management and administrative duties, assisting with long-range planning projects, liaising with other departments/external agencies on planning matters. As a result of the Planning Manager's workload, there can be significant delays in applications.
- **Organizational Structure Concerns:** Several staff members indicated that the General Manager of Planning & Development manages staff directly and engages in day-to-day activities while also fulfilling general manager duties, creating inefficiencies.
- **Application Quality:** Approximately 25 - 50% of applications require additional information or corrections before they can be processed, contributing to delays.

Staffing and Resource Challenges

- **Staffing Turnover:** Turnover amongst entry-level and administrative staff has resulted in loss of institutional knowledge and expertise, particularly affecting complex applications.
 - A consistent example was the high turnover rate of the Building Department admin assistant position.
- **Lack of Training:** New staff training was identified as inadequate, with limited formal mentorship opportunities.
 - This was identified as a concern in the planning department as several staff indicated a desire to take on more complicated work and grow their planning experience/skills.
- **Building Department Structure:** The lack of hierarchy within the building department (no senior inspector role) has led to inconsistent approaches between inspectors.
- **Administrative Support:** Insufficient dedicated administrative support for the Building Department was highlighted as a key issue.
 - Consistent turn over in this position resulted in individuals new to the role consistently requiring training.
 - Lack of a full FTE for this position results in administrative duties also falling to Building Inspectors.
- **Workload Distribution:** Seasonal variations in workload were noted, with summer typically busier and winter slower for development applications. This results in some staff feeling underutilized while other staff feel overburdened, at times.



- **Limited Front Counter Capacity:** Division of duties and staff capacity does not provide continuous coverage or redundancy for consistent public service elements of both the planning and building inspection departments.
 - It was noted that the current planning manager also assists with general planning inquiries and provided front-counter support.
 - It was not consistently clear which planning staff are available for application intake or providing front-counter support.

Technology and Systems Issues

- **Duplicate Systems:** Staff are maintaining parallel tracking systems (Excel spreadsheets and CityView), creating redundancy and inefficiency.
- **Inconsistent Software Adoption:** Not all staff are using CityView consistently, with some staff embracing CityView functionality more proficiently than others.
 - Important to note that this concern and the previous bullet point was also consistently reported as an area of recent improvement and attributed to “growing pains” with new software adoption.
- **Document Management:** Poor file structure and lack of version control were identified as ongoing challenges.
- **Application Tracking:** Building Permit tracking exists through CityView.

Communication Gaps

- **Internal Communication:** Interdepartmental communication for referrals was identified as problematic.
 - Inconsistent planning referrals and file folder structures was identified as an area that could use improvement.
 - Planning staff are not consistently informing finance staff on when a proponent is set to pay fees and charges associated with a planning application.
- **Public Communication:** Applicants must inquire about application status due to lack of proactive updates. File managers are not always the point of contact for applicant inquiries.
- **Inconsistent Information:** Building Inspectors sometimes convey differing interpretations to applicants, which can create confusion.
- **File Reviews:** Lack of consistent meetings to discuss projects or ongoing applications.
 - There is no process or guidance for what scale of application types warrant a larger “team approach” to the review. For more complex application types, a process should be



developed for including impact departments, such as GIS, engineering, long-range planning and corporate services.

Governance Challenges

- **Meeting Frequency:** APCs meet monthly but often with minimal applications (one or two), which staff believe is an inefficient use of APC time. It is felt that the APCs should focus on larger scale applications and policy projects rather than minor planning matters. It is felt the process could be improved by scheduling fewer, more substantive APC meetings with multiple applications rather than frequent meetings with minimal agenda items.
- **Delegation Opportunities:** Staff suggested that minor variances, frontage waivers and other routine matters could be delegated rather than requiring committee or board approval.
 - It is felt that based on the minor nature of some requests, the additional time frame associated with APC/Board meetings wasn't justified and was a source of frustration for proponents.
- **Board Focus:** The Board spends a disproportionate amount of time on minor variance discussions rather than more significant planning matters.
- **Outdated Bylaws:** Several staff mentioned outdated zoning bylaws and other regulations that create unnecessary complications.



7. Development Community Survey

A development community survey was conducted as part of the ACRD Development Approvals Program Review to gather feedback from those actively working within the regional district's development approval system. The survey received responses from 14 participants representing various roles within the development sector, including developers/builders (57%), property owners (29%), subdivision consultants, engineers and other professionals involved in the development process.

7.1. Respondent Profile

The survey respondents demonstrated varying levels of experience with ACRD processes, with 38% having undertaken 3 - 5 projects in the past three years, 38% having completed 6 - 10 projects, and 23% having worked on more than ten (10) projects. This distribution indicates feedback from both occasional and frequent users of ACRD services. The most common application types submitted were building permits (77%) and development permits (62%), followed by subdivision applications (38%), variance permits (38%) and rezoning applications (23%).

7.2. Key Findings

Building Department Performance

The Building Department received consistently positive feedback from survey respondents. A strong majority (91%) agreed that building inspection staff are responsive and provide helpful guidance, with 36% strongly agreeing with this statement. Similarly, 73% of respondents agreed that building department application requirements and documentation are clearly communicated, and 64% found building permit application forms user-friendly and easy to complete.

Planning Department Performance

Planning Department feedback was more mixed, though still generally positive in several areas. While 64% agreed that planning staff are responsive and provide helpful guidance, responses regarding application requirements communication and form usability showed room for improvement. Communication during the planning application process received moderate satisfaction, with 55% agreeing it was beneficial, clear, and timely, though 36% remained neutral on this aspect.

Process Efficiency and Timeliness

Timeline concerns emerged as a significant issue, particularly for planning applications. For building permits, 45% found the timeframe reasonable and predictable, while 36% were neutral and 27% disagreed. However, planning application timelines received more critical feedback, with 64% disagreeing that the overall timeframe was reasonable and predictable, representing the survey's most significant concern.



Overall Process Assessment

When rating overall efficiency, 40% found the process somewhat efficient, while 40% remained neutral, and 20% viewed it as somewhat or very inefficient. Consistency in decision-making was viewed more favorably, with 55% rating it as somewhat efficient and only 18% expressing concerns about inconsistency.

Comparative Assessment

When comparing ACRD processes to other jurisdictions, 45% rated the ACRD as "about the same," while 27% viewed it as somewhat or much better, and 18% considered it somewhat or much worse. This suggests the ACRD's performance is generally competitive with regional standards, though opportunities for improvement exist.

7.3. Key Themes from Written Responses

Analysis of the qualitative responses (Questions 17 - 20) reveals several consistent themes:

Positive Aspects

Staff Communication and Responsiveness: The most frequently cited positive aspect was the quality of staff interactions, particularly with building inspectors. Respondents praised face-to-face interactions, staff helpfulness, and the responsiveness of building inspection staff.

Comparison to Other Jurisdictions: Several respondents noted the ACRD performs better than other jurisdictions.

Primary Challenges

Processing Timelines: The most consistent concern across responses was the length of time for permit approvals and application reviews. Multiple respondents cited this as their primary challenge.

Email Response Times: Several developers noted delays in receiving email responses, which compounds timeline issues.

Staff Availability: Concerns about staff being frequently unavailable, leading to process delays.

Board-Staff Dynamics: One respondent noted concern about inconsistent alignment between professional staff recommendations and Board decisions, particularly regarding housing needs.

Improvement Suggestions:

Fast-Track System: Multiple respondents suggested implementing a system to fast-track applications from reputable builders/businesses versus one-time owner-builders.

Online Portal: Dedicated support for an online application portal with:

1. Clear documentation requirements by application type;



2. Application status tracking; and,
3. Updated timeline expectations.

Defined Timelines: Establishment of clear review timelines that staff must meet.

Additional Concerns:

- Lack of ACRD support for new water systems, forcing developers to navigate complex Water Utility Branch processes.
- Applicants not being able to participate in Board discussions about their applications.
- Perception that local developers avoid ACRD processes due to difficulties,

7.4. Implications for Process Improvements

The survey results align with findings from staff and director interviews, particularly regarding timeline predictability and communication challenges in planning processes. The mixed feedback on planning application timelines and communication reinforces the need for minor changes to achieve process improvements and resource allocation recommendations identified elsewhere in this review. Overall, the feedback received suggests building off positive changes and practices already underway within the planning department. Establishing and publishing clear timelines for each stage of the application review process, with regular monitoring and reporting on compliance as well as implementation of an online portal for application submission are suggestions that could easily build off existing ACRD efforts.



8. Inter-Jurisdictional Staff Survey

As part of the comprehensive Development Approvals Program Review, the ACRD conducted an inter-jurisdictional staff survey to assess the current state of collaboration and communication between the Regional District and neighboring jurisdictions, including member municipalities, adjacent regional districts, and First Nations governments. The survey sought to evaluate existing communication protocols, gauge interest in collaborative planning initiatives and shared service delivery models and identify opportunities for improved coordination on matters of mutual interest. This assessment aimed to understand how the ACRD's development approval processes interface with those of adjacent jurisdictions and to explore potential efficiencies through regional cooperation, particularly in the areas of planning policy development and building inspection services.

8.1. Survey Response Overview

The survey received responses from only five participants, representing three municipalities within the ACRD and one other jurisdiction. Respondents included planning directors/managers, building officials/inspectors, and other planning-related positions. Due to this small sample size, the results should be considered indicative rather than conclusive and do not fully represent the perspectives of all jurisdictions within and adjacent to the ACRD.

8.2. Key Findings

Despite the limited responses, several notable patterns emerged.

Communication and Protocols

Current communication effectiveness received mixed reviews, with 67% of respondents disagreeing that communication is effective, while notification regarding development applications was viewed neutrally by all respondents. The lack of clearly established consultation protocols was evident, with responses split between agreement, disagreement, and strong disagreement.

Collaborative Interest

Respondents expressed significant interest in various collaborative initiatives:

- 100% were very interested in shared GIS/mapping resources;
- 67% were somewhat interested in joint planning for boundary areas and coordinated policy development; and,
- Regular inter-jurisdictional planning meetings received varied responses.

Joint Service Delivery

Regarding building inspection services, 67% of respondents indicated they would need more information before considering joint services, while specific benefits identified included increased staff capacity, improved service levels, and better business continuity (all at 67% support).



Assessment & Recommendations

As noted, a lack of response to the survey makes it difficult to draw conclusions. However, given the unique governance structure of the ACRD, which encompasses multiple municipalities and electoral areas, there exists an opportunity to explore enhanced regional service delivery models that could benefit all jurisdictions. However, such exploration requires thoughtful and structured dialogue amongst the differing governing bodies.

Based on the survey results, it would be useful to work with other jurisdictions and governing bodies to map out communication and referral processes and identify areas in which such process can be improved.

It is recommended that the ACRD host a formal inter-jurisdictional meeting too:

1. Facilitate a structured discussion on potential collaborative opportunities for building services.
2. Assess the interest and viability of various shared service models.
3. Discuss opportunities to improve planning referrals amongst different governing bodies.



9. Recommendations

Based on the review of the ACRD's development approval processes, the following initial recommendations are organized into four key areas for implementation and divided into a near-term, middle term and long-term implementation schedule.

It should be noted that any proposed increases in staffing levels are contingent upon the successful implementation of other organizational and process improvements outlined in these recommendations and will only be pursued if building permit activity levels remain elevated or service delivery to other jurisdictions is established to justify the additional human resource investments.

9.1. Process Recommendations

The current development approval processes within the ACRD contain unnecessary complexity and redundancy in certain application streams, while lacking adequate structure and clarity in others. Staff interviews and application flow analysis identified several opportunities to streamline procedures, eliminate non-value-added steps, and create more predictable timelines. The following recommendations focus on process improvements that would reduce application processing times, create greater predictability for applicants, and more efficiently utilize staff resources without compromising the quality of application review or public input opportunities.

Near-Term (1 to 12 months)

- 1) **Streamlined Governance Process Opportunities:** Several routine approvals currently require APC and Board involvement that could be better streamlined to reduce application timeline while meeting the goals of application transparency and public engagement. Such as:
 - a) Removing APC review for parcel frontage considerations and minor development variance applications as they are straightforward considerations.
 - b) Proceed with notification of Development Variance and Temporary Use Permit applications prior to the Board's consideration of the request, and have public feedback, proponent submission, and consideration of the decision in a single Board meeting. This would reduce application processing timelines by several weeks at a minimum. From 2018 to 2024 there were 64 Temporary Use Permit applications and 78 Development Variance Permit applications.

CityView Implementation: Ensure all staff consistently use CityView as the primary application management system and discontinue parallel tracking systems. This builds off the transition work already underway and is important for creating the base system from which other digital tools can be more readily utilized, such as mobile inspection tools and a digital application portal.

- 2) **Application Target Timelines:** Establish clear target timelines for different development application types to create accountability and manage expectations. Tracking against target timelines allows the impact of any process or policy changes to be tracked. In addition, it can provide useful information to the development community as they plan projects.



Middle-Term (12 to 24 months)

- 3) **APC Meeting Efficiency:** Schedule fewer, more substantive APC meetings with multiple applications rather than frequent meetings with minimal agenda items.
- 4) **CityView Expansion:** Expand the use of CityView to finance, engineering and GIS. Task based referrals can be well utilized for tracking application status amongst departments and ensuring more timely processing of applications.
- 5) **Application Tracking System:** Implement a formalized application tracking system with status updates visible to both staff and applicants. Utilize existing software CityView.
- 6) **Comprehensive Fee Review:**
 - a) Conduct a detailed cost-recovery analysis of all application types to ensure fees accurately reflect staff time, resources, and administrative overhead, with particular attention to significantly underpriced services like demolition permits, temporary use permits, and OCP amendments. Look for more robust cost recovery through application fees, especially for building inspection.
 - b) Streamline the current complex fee schedule by reducing redundant categories and establishing more consistent calculation methods across application types, improving transparency and administrative efficiency. Many jurisdictions have moved towards easier to understand fee structures.
 - c) Establish a formal policy requiring biennial reviews and adjustments of the fee schedule to account for inflation, changing processing costs, and regional market comparisons. The Board should review its philosophy to fees for cost recovery vs general taxation for planning and building services. Informed biennial reviews help to stimulate this discussion.
 - d) Review the effectiveness of Temporary Use Permit utilization for STVRs and whether they are the most appropriate approach for regulating STVRs.
- 7) **Expired Permit Management:** Develop a systematic approach to follow up on recently expired permits while acknowledging resource limitations for addressing historical backlogs.
- 8) **Regional Collaboration Forum:** Host a formal inter-jurisdictional meeting to facilitate structured discussions on potential collaborative opportunities for building services, assess the interest and viability of various shared service models, and explore opportunities to improve planning referrals among different governing bodies.

9.2. Policy and Regulation Recommendations

The ACRD's regulatory framework for development requires modernization to address current development trends, provincial legislative changes, and evolving community needs. Through stakeholder consultations and bylaw analysis, several key policy gaps and outdated regulations were identified that create unnecessary barriers to efficient development approvals. These regulatory recommendations focus on updating core bylaws, establishing clearer delegation policies, and creating consistent standard operating



procedures to provide both applicants and staff with greater clarity and predictability in the development process.

Near-Term (1 to 12 months)

- 1) **Development Procedures Bylaw Update:** Revise the bylaw to reflect recommended process changes, particularly regarding delegation authorities.
- 2) **Temporary Use Permit Update:** Revise the temporary use permit process so that temporary use permits can be renewed by the General Manager of Planning & Development if no complaints on the use have been received. This will reduce additional Board process while also incentivizing temporary use holders to ensure they are meeting the conditions of their permit with minimal impacts to neighboring properties.
- 3) **Combine 1st and 2nd Reading of Zoning/OCP Bylaws:** Based on recent process discussions, major projects will be introduced to the EASC prior to consideration. To reduce further processing time, the Board should consider combining 1st and 2nd readings of zoning and OCP bylaws. This change will reduce overall application timelines without eliminating opportunity for public knowledge or Board discussion on development proposal.

Middle-Term (12 to 24 months)

- 4) **Floodplain Bylaw Development:** Create a floodplain bylaw with clear exemption criteria to streamline development in affected areas and clarify regulatory complexity related to floodplain considerations. A floodplain bylaw would provide a consistent and replicable approach for the Building Department to handle development within floodplain that minimizes legal risk for the ACRD.
- 5) **Board and Committee Orientation:** Establish standardized orientation procedures for Board members, APC members, and AAC members to ensure understanding of roles and responsibilities. Materials should be completed in time for the 2026 to 2030 local government term. Best practices from other jurisdictions support the idea that well-informed committee members and decision makers tend to produce more effective governance.
- 6) **Zoning Bylaw Modernization:** Following the completion of the updated OCPS, prioritize adopting the update of the outdated zoning bylaw to address current development needs and provincial legislative changes. Re-engage the process for the Board's consideration.

9.3. Communication Materials and Application Forms

While the ACRD has generally effective communication materials, simplification and design consistency improvements can be made to application forms, process documentation, and public information resources. Feedback from Electoral Area Directors highlighted concerns about public misinformation and the need for clearer guidance for applicants. The review of existing materials revealed limited use of visual aids, and gaps in explicitly stated required for complete application submissions. The following recommendations aim to enhance the clarity, accessibility, and effectiveness of all development-related communications to improve application quality and reduce processing delays.



Comments received from the developer survey indicate support for a public portal for development application submission. This suggestion matches efforts made in other jurisdictions in British Columbia and the ACRD's existing digital platform, CityView, contains such features.

Near-Term (1 to 12 months)

- 1) **Application Form Enhancement:** Redesign application forms to include detailed checklists of required documentation and clear information expectations.
- 2) **Application Review Letter:** Provide development applicants with an application review letter within four weeks of application receipt, identifying any submission deficiencies or areas where additional information is required.
- 3) **Visual Identity and Consistency:** Develop standardized templates for all development-related communications with consistent branding and formatting.
- 4) **Process Visualization:** Create visual process maps for each application type showing steps, timelines, and decision points.
- 5) **Educational Materials:** Develop plain-language guides and FAQs for common development scenarios.
- 6) **Website Reorganization:** Restructure the development process section of the website to improve navigation and information accessibility.
- 7) **Technical Information Simplification:** Translate technical requirements into accessible language without losing regulatory precision.
- 8) **Application Examples:** Provide complete sample applications to demonstrate expectations for submission quality.

Middle-Term (12 to 24 months)

- 9) **Digital Application Portal:** Implement a user-friendly online portal for application submission and status tracking.
- 10) **Public Communication Strategy:** Develop materials to better communicate development processes to the broader community to address misinformation concerns.

Long-Term (24 to 48 months)

- 11) **Status Notification System:** Implement an automated system to notify applicants of status changes and next steps in their application process utilizing addons to CityView. This can be additional functionality on top of a Digital Application Portal.

9.4. Staff Resourcing and Structural Changes

The analysis of current staffing resources, workflows, and departmental structure revealed several significant organizational challenges affecting the efficiency of development approvals. Interviews with staff consistently highlighted management bottlenecks, administrative support gaps, and the need for clearer



roles and responsibilities. The following recommendations aim to address these structural issues by optimizing human resources, establishing clear hierarchies, and ensuring appropriate expertise is available at critical decision points in the application process. Additionally, the potential for development fee updates should be explored to help offset the costs of increased staffing or improved resourcing.

It is important to note that any comprehensive structural changes should be fully reviewed and analyzed once the ACRD has achieved its full staffing complement. The organization is currently operating with reduced capacity, which may be masking underlying workflow inefficiencies or creating artificial bottlenecks that could be resolved through proper staffing levels alone. Additionally, this past spring saw the introduction of a new Community Projects Engagement Manager, which will result in a new workload distribution across the department. The full impact of this organizational addition and the resulting redistribution of responsibilities should be evaluated over a complete development cycle (1 year) before implementing major structural reforms. This phased approach will ensure that recommended changes address genuine systemic issues rather than temporary staffing gaps, and that any new organizational structure builds upon the lessons learned from the current transitional period.

Near-Term (1 to 12 months)

- 1) **Workload Distribution:** Implement a more effective workload allocation system that accounts for planning application complexity and staff expertise. Process flow charts and interviews with staff indicate that workload distribution improvements can lead to better staff utilization and reduce “pinch points” in development application reviews.
 - a) Establish the practice of having the Planning Manager complete an initial application review with the staff assigned to the file for all planning applications.
 - b) Establish regular Planning Manager and file manager meetings for the sole purpose of reviewing application workload and file status.
 - c) Utilize CityView to review planning application workloads.
- 2) **Staff Training Program:** Develop a comprehensive training program for new staff with documented procedures and mentorship opportunities. Through interviews staff consistently expressed a desire for professional growth. Informally, staff are being provided with opportunities. However, there is an opportunity to formalize growth potential within the organization through performance plans, mentorship and intentional training.

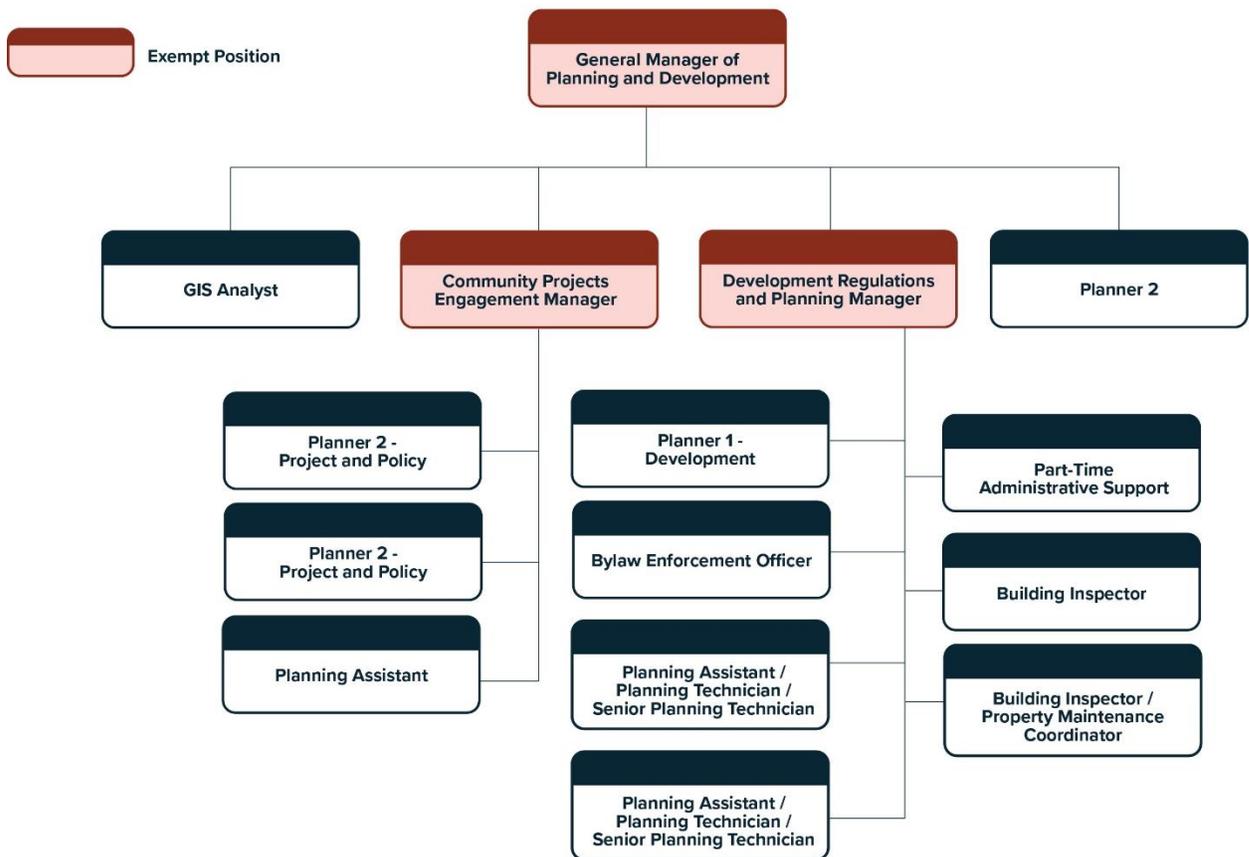
Middle-Term (12 to 24 months)

- 3) **Digital Inspection Tools:** Equip building inspectors with digital tools (tablets) for field inspections to improve effectiveness of service delivery and to interface with CityView. Due to significant geographical distances staff must cover to complete building inspections, providing inspectors with tools for submitting mobile inspection forms will significantly increase turnaround time for inspections. Further, current Building Inspector process is resulting in workload duplication to digitize paper files resulting in ineffective use of time. Similar tools are used in other jurisdictions, even in compact municipalities, as they significantly improve inspection times and improve service.



- 4) **Planning Technician Career Progression Program:** Expand the existing Planning Technician position by establishing a graduated program that allows advancement to Senior Planning Technician within the same role classification. This approach maintains the current scope of responsibilities while creating a clear career progression pathway that recognizes increased experience and competency. The role would process minor applications and include administrative responsibilities including APC schedule management and agenda creation, basic document writing and management, responding to public inquiries, and providing direct administrative support to department managers and the general manager with non-technical departmental tasks. The advantages of this structure include providing opportunities for employees to take on greater responsibilities as they gain experience, encouraging the development of new skills and tasks within the department, and creating greater redundancy to support departmental activities. This graduated system would enhance staff retention by offering professional growth opportunities while building deeper institutional knowledge and cross-training capabilities that strengthen the department's overall operational resilience.

This approach eliminates the budget increases associated with creating new positions while still addressing the need for professional development, administrative support, and departmental capacity.

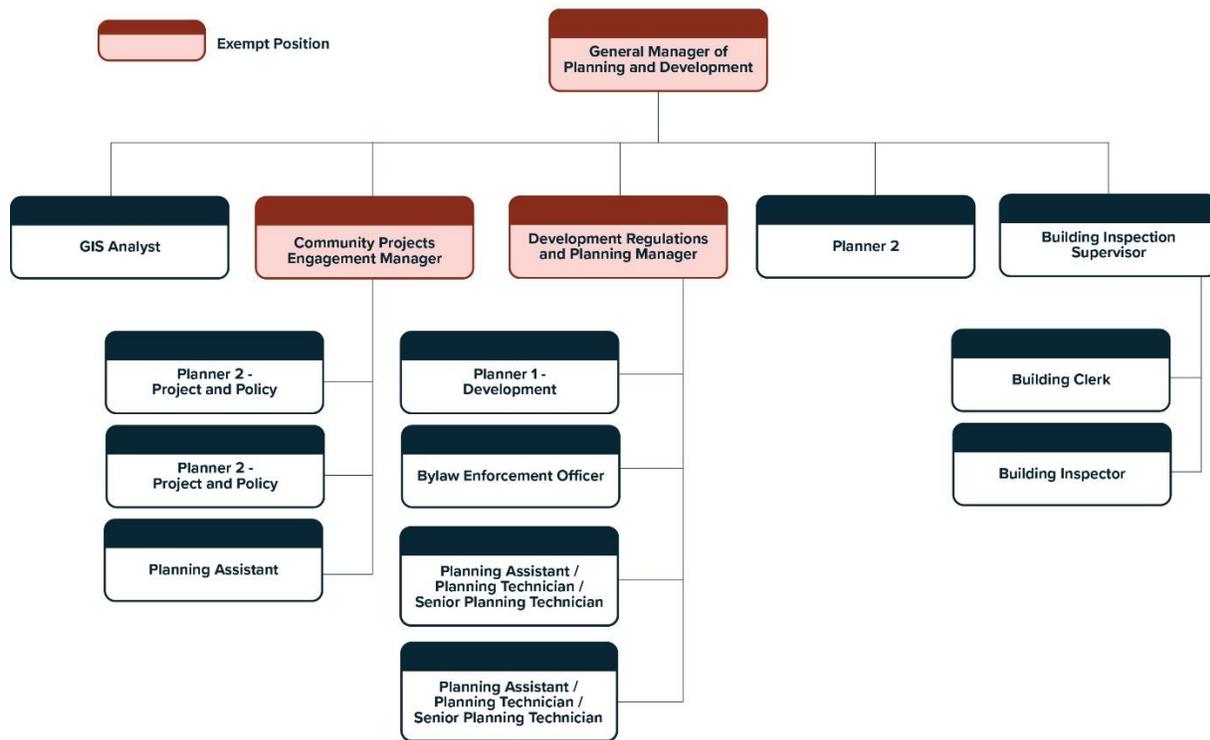


Proposed Staffing Structure Model with proposed career progression opportunities for Planning Technicians and Planners



Long-Term (24 to 48 months)

- 5) **Graduate Planner Development Program:** Establish a formal career progression pathway from Planner 1 to Planner 2 within a single FTE position, including structured professional development milestones, mentorship opportunities, and clear competency requirements for advancement, to improve staff retention and build institutional knowledge.
- 6) **Elevate the Building Inspector role to Building Inspection Supervisor** to align departmental leadership structures, enhance decision-making authority, and establish clearer accountability for building services delivery across all electoral areas. While the estimated cost is approximately \$16,000, this enhancement should be pursued only if elevated development rates are maintained and/or the ACRD has secured service agreement contracts with other jurisdictions that result in additional workload. This position elevation would be contingent upon demonstrated sustained growth in service demand and viable shared service delivery opportunities with partner governments that justify the increased management capacity and associated costs. Over time, the Building Supervisor role should be converted to a Manager of Building Services position if additional building inspectors are required due to increased workloads, as the expanded supervisory responsibilities and span of control would necessitate enhanced management authority and administrative capacity to effectively oversee a larger inspection team. In this scenario the building department would benefit from a permanent and full-time building clerk to provide administrative support.



Proposed Staffing Structure Model with Building Inspection Supervisor



9.5. Emerging Trends and Future Opportunities

As the ACRD implements improvements to its current development approval processes, it is equally important to anticipate and prepare for emerging trends that will shape regional planning and building services in the coming years. Beyond addressing immediate operational challenges, the ACRD has an opportunity to position itself as a forward-thinking organization by exploring innovative approaches to service delivery, technological integration, and regional collaboration. The following recommendations highlight key areas where the ACRD could develop strategic advantages while improving service quality and cost-effectiveness.

- 1) **AI-Enhanced Application Review:** Explore artificial intelligence tools to automate preliminary application screening, code compliance checks, and completeness reviews, allowing staff to focus on more complex analytical tasks while reducing processing time for routine applications.
- 2) **Regional Service Delivery Models:** Host a formal inter-jurisdictional meeting to facilitate structured discussions on potential collaborative opportunities for building services, assess the interest and viability of various shared service models, and explore opportunities to improve planning referrals among different governing bodies.





Platinum member



To: Committee of the Whole
From: Michael McGregor
Meeting Date: October 22, 2025
Subject: Log Train Trail Allowable Uses

Recommendation:

THAT the Committee of the Whole recommend that the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Board of Directors direct staff to proceed with option 1 – multi-use (including motorized) and develop the appropriate enforcement management plan, as required by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, in consultation with the Regional Parks Working Group.

Desired Outcome:

To obtain direction from the Committee of the Whole on next steps for the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) lease update for the Log Train Trail (LTT).

Summary:

This report provides further information on the options for allowable uses for the LTT lease with the MOTT. It outlines five options and their associated advantages and challenges.

Background:

The creation of the LTT management plan in 2023, sparked a broad community conversation about the future of the LTT, encouraging open discussion and debate. A central issue was motorized vehicle use which elicited strongly divided viewpoints. In total, over 700 individual engagements occurred across surveys, open houses, workshops and interviews with the majority consistently supporting motorized use. In the final public survey 72% of respondents supported the proposed allowable use of motorized multi use, whereas approximately 27% were not supportive.

Four potential options were brought to the Board at the end of the public engagement process and final stages of plan development. The Board provided support to pursue a motorized multi-use lease update for the LTT as described in Option 1 below. Staff have been working to implement this option and recently reported back to the Regional Parks Working Group and Board on the progress and requirements from MOTT.

At the July 2025 Board of Directors meeting there was discussion about allowing different uses within the Cherry Creek residential area of the LTT, which would represent a departure from the established LTT management plan.

In the October meeting of the Regional Parks Working Group there was significant discussion on the 5 below options, with some members in support of option #1 and other members in support of option #5. The group was unable to identify one option to provide a recommendation to the ACRD Board as it is a contentious topic and feel it requires further discussion to work through the challenges. It was agreed upon by the working group that Option #4 - Divest Trail is not supported

Following this discussion, the Regional Parks Working Group passed the following motion:

THAT the Regional Parks Working Group recommend the continued occupation of the Log Train Trail by the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, that divestiture of the trail not be considered an option, and that the Working Group continue to evaluate future options for the trail, including multi-use and/or a split-use approach.

Below are the original 4 options brought to the Board in 2023 along with an additional 5th option of a split approach for consideration.

Option #1 MULTI-USE (INCLUDING MOTORIZED) Supported by the ACRD Board of Directors on May 24th, 2023, and within subsequent management plan reports/documents.

In this option, all user groups would be allowed to use the trail. Trail and corresponding infrastructure would be designed to accommodate the most demanding user (Off-Highway Vehicle or OHV), which maintains safety and usability for all users, while protecting the ACRD from liability issues. Wayfinding and connectivity improvements would be sought out for all users and signed appropriately connecting to and along the trail corridor. User conflicts are the main concern with this option and could be addressed in a variety of ways including signage, speed controls, and community building.

In pursuit of this option on July 23rd, 2025, the ACRD Committee of the Whole passed the motion that staff not pursue a Parks Regulation Bylaw and instead inform MOTT that the ACRD proposes a communication campaign aimed at informing users and the public on clearly outlined expected standards of use. A representative of MOTT replied to that motion with the below message:

“(T)he Ministry undertook a review of the ACRD’s updated management plan, existing lease agreement and all submitted supplemental information pertaining to the renewal of the Lease Agreement for the Log Train Trail in the Port Alberni Area. We have now also read the attached Request for Decision document in consideration with Provincial Legislation and policies. The Ministry is unable to pursue the renewal of the Log Train Trail agreement with permissions for ORV use without a suitable enforcement management plan. Allowing motorized vehicle use on the public owned portions of the trail presents unreasonable risk and liability to the Province. Unfortunately, an education campaign does not provide suitable protection and assurance to our agency.”

If the ACRD wishes to continue pursuing a lease update that includes motorized multi use in line with the LTT management plan, the Province requires the development of an enforcement management plan. This would require adopting a regulatory bylaw that clearly outlines standards and establishes a

formal process for ACRD enforcement in cases of non-compliance. This is the stance of MOTT (email correspondence attached) as far as allowing the lease to be updated to allow for motorized use. If the ACRD wants the lease to permit motorized use, an enforcement management plan must be developed and adopted.

Option #2 STATUS-QUO (MAINTAIN CURRENT NON-MOTORIZED USE WITH NO ENFORCEMENT)

In this option all user groups continue to use the trail as they currently do but motorized users remain prohibited under the ACRD lease. In practice, OHVs will likely continue to use the trail, as there is no enforcement mechanism to prevent non-compliance. Wayfinding and connectivity improvements would be solely focused on non-motorized users. This offers no improvements to how OHVs access and use the trail as motorized use is excluded from signage and infrastructure planning. Non-motorized users and neighbours of the trail will likely continue to encounter motorized use with no plan on how to address the challenges. As ATVs will still access the trail, the trail surface and bridges should be designed to accommodate OHVs, as doing otherwise could create safety, environmental, and liability issues.

Option # 3 MAINTAIN CURRENT NON-MOTORIZED USE AND IMPLEMENT ENFORCEMENT

In this option motorized use would be explicitly prohibited and actively enforced. The development and formal adoption of an enforcement plan including a regulatory bylaw which establishes a process for enforcement would be required. Trail infrastructure would be designed to meet non-motorized use only. Wayfinding and connectivity improvements would be designed for non-motorized users only. It is anticipated that motorized users will still access the trail. Enforcement would be challenging and would likely result in substantial cost increases. This approach may also alienate members of the motorized community resulting in lower volunteerism for trail maintenance increasing those costs to the ACRD as well.

Option # 4 DIVEST TRAIL

In this option, the ACRD would divest all or a or a portion of the trail back to the MOTT. Since MOTT does not provide recreational trails within their service, the trail would likely be closed to recreational use. Closure would likely include decommissioning of bridges and restoration of the trail corridor. Connectivity within the broader trail network would be greatly affected as the LTT acts as a connector trail to many other trail networks.

The current lease agreement between the ACRD (Tenant) and the province (Landlord) includes the below clauses relevant to this process:

5. (q) 90 days after the expiration or cancellation of this lease, any improvements or fixtures that remain unremoved from the premises shall be absolutely forfeited to and become the property of the Landlord and the Landlord may remove them from the Premises and the Tenant shall, on demand, compensate the Landlord for all costs incurred by the Landlord respecting their removal;

10. (iii) The Tenant may terminate this Lease by giving to the Landlord 180 days notice that the Tenant no longer requires the Premises for its purposes provided that upon such termination the Tenant shall leave the Premises in a neat and tidy condition and remove from the Premises any improvements built upon the Premises if requested to do so by the Landlord.

In this scenario it is currently unknown to what extent the province would require the removal of trail infrastructure - such as bridges, gates, culverts etc. - at the ACRD's expense.

Option # 5 SPLIT APPROACH

In this option, the LTT would be divided into two distinct use zones:

- The northern section (Beaufort) would follow Option #1, operating as a multi-use trail including motorized access
- The southern section (Cherry Creek) would follow Option #3, remaining non-motorized with enforcement.

The ACRD would develop an enforcement plan that reflects this split-use model and continue to pursue an update to the lease agreement with MOTT.

If implementation of allowing motorized use is found to be successful in the northern section, transitioning the southern section to motorized would be considered in order to align with the original LTT management plan recommendations.

This approach is intended to offer flexibility and addresses concerns that have been raised. However, it also adds complexity to an enforcement plan and makes necessary public communications clearly informing users of changes regarding expectations more challenging. It also runs the risk of alienating existing Cherry Creek motorized users and could lead to increased costs to provide enforcement.

Time Requirements – Staff & Elected Officials:

It is estimated that approximately 60 hours of staff time would be required to develop a draft enforcement management plan including a drafting a regulatory bylaw, design public reporting mechanisms, and the development of public communication plan.

Once the plan is drafted it would be reviewed with impacted partners such as MOTT and RCMP then brought to the Regional Parks Working Group, prior to being brought back to the ACRD Committee of the Whole or Board of Directors.

Financial:

There are no anticipated financial costs to develop an enforcement management plan. Further financial implications related to the adoption of a regulatory bylaw would be determined once the enforcement plan is accepted by MOTT.

Strategic Plan Implications:

This supports strategy 1.1 Enhanced indoor/outdoor recreation facilities and services.

Policy or Legislation:

The Local Government Act outlines the powers and responsibilities of Regional Districts. Under Part 5 Regional Districts are empowered to provide services, including parks and recreation and to adopt bylaws necessary for delivering those services.

Submitted by: Jenny Brunn
Jenny Brunn, General Manager of Community Services

Reviewed by: Cynthia Dick
Cynthia Dick, General Manager of Administrative Services

Approved by: Daniel Sailland
Daniel Sailland, MBA, Chief Administrative Officer

From: [Schneider, Nikki MOTI:EX](#)
To: [Michael McGregor](#)
Cc: [Atchison, Derek MOTI:EX](#); [Evanoff, Ryan MOTI:EX](#); [Learn, Jessica MOTI:EX](#); [Andreychuk, Lorna MOTI:EX](#); [Michael Pearson](#)
Subject: Log Train Trail - Lease Renewal
Date: April 2, 2025 11:27:30 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the ACRD

Good Afternoon Michael,

Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to extend my apologies for the length of time it has taken MOTT to provide you with clear response regarding the Log Train Trail Lease agreement renewal. I understand that this may cause the ACRD some inconvenience and challenges.

As the Ministry has now undertaken review of the updated management plan, existing lease agreement and all submitted supplemental information.

At this time, the Ministry requires additional information before a decision can be made about motorized use on the Log Train Trail.

- The Ministry’s base language for Licence of Occupation “Permitted Uses” is as follows:
 - “**Permitted Use**” means construction and operation of a public trail and parking, including use by the public thereof, but excluding the use of motorized vehicles except for the purposes of construction and maintenance;
- For the Ministry to deviate from this position, we undertook a legal and policy review which yielded that additional information would be required. This includes:
 - **Enforcement/management plan for motorized vehicle users; specifically, to address issues of non-insured vehicles on the trail and on portions of the trail that require connection via public road dedication.**

Our team would be happy to discuss this further with you if needed. Please feel free to reach out with questions and/or to discuss setting up a meeting.

Thank you, have a great day!

Derek – please kindly add this to the eDAS file for tracking purposes.

Nikki Schneider
Operations Manager – SA2
Vancouver Island
3rd Floor, 2100 Labieux Road
Nanaimo BC V9T 6E9



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From: [Michael McGregor](#)
To: "[Schneider, Nikki MOTI:EX](#)"
Cc: "[Atchison, Derek MOTI:EX](#)"; "[Evanoff, Ryan MOTI:EX](#)"; "[Learn, Jessica MOTI:EX](#)"; "[Andreychuk, Lorna MOTI:EX](#)"; [Michael Pearson](#); [Eddie Kunderman](#)
Subject: RE: Log Train Trail - Lease Renewal
Date: June 25, 2025 4:42:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[20250625_Regional Parks_LTT Lease Update.pdf](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image007.png](#)

Hi again,

Following ACRD discussions at the Regional Parks Working Group on June 11th and the Committee of the Whole meeting today, please find attached the relevant report that was presented to ACRD board members.

To answer your previous request for more information of:

Enforcement/management plan for motorized vehicle users; specifically, to address issues of non-insured vehicles on the trail and on portions of the trail that require connection via public road dedication.

The Committee of the Whole passed a motion supporting Option 3:

That the Committee of the Whole recommend that the ACRD Board of Directors direct staff to not pursue a Parks Regulation Bylaw and inform MOTT that the ACRD proposes a communication campaign aimed at informing users and the public on clearly outlined expected standards of use.

In summary the ACRD does not intend to adopt a regulation bylaw or devote resources towards enforcement at this time. Instead the ACRD proposes developing a communication campaign to inform and educate the public of lease changes and proper user etiquette.

We have a meeting with Jessica tomorrow morning and this item is on our agenda to discuss further. If you have any additional feedback please let me know.

Thank you,



Michael McGregor

Lands and Resources Coordinator – Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

A 3008 Fifth Avenue, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 2E3

O 250.720.2700 W acrd.bc.ca

From: [Schneider, Nikki TT:EX](#)
To: [Michael McGregor](#); [Eddie Kunderman](#)
Cc: [Learn, Jessica TT:EX](#); [Atchison, Derek TT:EX](#); [Evanoff, Ryan TT:EX](#); [Michael Pearson](#); [Andreychuk, Lorna TT:EX](#)
Subject: RE: Log Train Trail - Lease Renewal
Date: July 16, 2025 10:17:27 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the ACRD

Good Morning Michael,

My apologies for the delay in providing you a response regarding the Log Train Trail.

As previously stated, the Ministry undertook a review of the ACRD's updated management plan, existing lease agreement and all submitted supplemental information pertaining to the renewal of the Lease Agreement for the Log Train Trail in the Port Alberni Area. We have now also read the attached Request for Decision document in consideration with Provincial Legislation and policies.

The Ministry is unable to pursue the renewal of the Log Train Trail agreement with permissions for ORV use without a suitable enforcement management plan. Allowing motorized vehicle use on the public owned portions of the trail presents unreasonable risk and liability to the Province. Unfortunately, an education campaign does not provide suitable protection and assurance to our agency.

I understand that this may pose challenges to the ACRD and that there may be interest in pursuing other solutions and I would be happy to participate in subsequent discussions.

Should you wish to discuss this further, I would be happy to participate in a meeting to provide additional information regarding the ministry's position and concerns.

Thank you,



Nikki Schneider

Operations Manager – SA2
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LTT Enforcement Management Plan Outline

1. Legal Framework

- Draft and adopt regulatory bylaw defining permitted and prohibited trail uses.
- Clarify enforcement authority and jurisdiction (e.g., ACRD, RCMP, MOTT).
- Establish set penalties for non-compliance.

2. Enforcement Strategy

- Create public reporting mechanisms (e.g., online form, email, web page).
- Define procedure to investigate and enforce non-compliance.
- Identify responsible enforcement personnel.

3. Signage and Communication

- Install clear signage at trailheads and transition zones indicating permitted uses and etiquette.
- Develop public communication campaign to promote awareness.
- Engage community user groups to support voluntary compliance and stewardship.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Track incidents, complaints, and enforcement actions to assess effectiveness.
- Adapt strategies based on evolving needs.

5. Budget and Resources

- Estimate costs for staff time, signage, and outreach materials.
- Identify funding sources such as grants, or partnerships.

6. Coordination and Partnerships

- Collaborate with provincial ministries, first nation governments, and law enforcement.
- Engage volunteers in monitoring, education, and reporting efforts.