

# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT 2025 BUSINESS PLAN

Committee of the Whole

# DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Manages public facing communication channels including website, social media platforms, online engagement platform
- Provides communication and engagement strategy and planning support to departments
- Stakeholder and community engagement
- Media relations, issues management
- Emergency and crisis communication
- Prepare graphics and print materials
- Supports Mayor and CAO – writing speeches, promotion, Council Matters recap emails
- Liaises with information partners (CVRD, VIHA, SD79, etc.)
- Develops communication and engagement policies, plans, procedures, forms, and templates



# CORE BUSINESS

The Communications and Public Engagement Department's core business is organized into four key areas:



Public  
communications  
and messaging



Public  
engagement



Emergency and  
crisis  
communications



Brand  
management

# STAFFING LEVELS

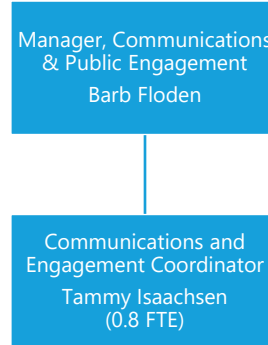
2

Total positions  
as of  
July 1, 2024

- 1 Full-Time, Permanent
- 1 Part-Time, Permanent

(Exempt 2; CUPE 0)

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## Northcowichan.ca

- North Cowichan's "single point of truth"
  - Communications is responsible for the front end of the website, ensuring content is up-to-date, structure adjustments, staff training, reviewing analytics, and accessibility functionality

## Public engagement

- ConnectNorthCowichan.ca is our digital engagement platform
  - For any project that could benefit from input from the general public (IAP2 spectrum) as part of the decision-making process

## Communications and engagement plan development and support

- Work with departments and consultants to develop and implement
- Support project managers (varying levels of support)

# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## **Social media**

- Manages social media channels and oversees other departments' use
- Posts corporate content

## **News releases and media relations**

- Messaging and support for spokespersons

## **E-newsletter**

- Information out to residents/subscribers

# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT – KEY FACTS

Website	Views	Mobile	Desktop
Northcowichan.ca	230.5K	57.2%	39.5%

Digital engagement	Visits	Contributions	Engagement rate
ConnectNorthCowichan.ca	230.5K	57.2%	7.5%

Email subscriptions	Lists	Emails sent
	5	22,173

Social media	Reach	%	Interactions	%	Followers
Facebook	230.5K	+55.6%	14.9K	+1.7%	7,300
Instagram	7.4K	-45.1%	1.1K	+100%	2,400

# COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## **Crisis and emergency communications**

- CVRD is typically the lead for emergencies in partnership with us/other municipalities

## **Inter-agency collaboration (communication focused)**

- Regional district, other municipalities/First Nations, CDHRP/VIHA, CVRD, Rowing Canada, SD79, etc.

## **Internal communications**

- Work closely with HR, CAO office on internal messaging
- Staff are ambassadors both at work and at home

# 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishments	Strategic Alignment
Launch of new northcowichan.ca website	Service
Development of communications and engagement resources for staff	Service
Development of a North Cowichan Crisis Communication Plan	Service
Launch of the #WaterConnectsUs cross-department campaign, aimed at increasing understanding of water conservation measures, asset management and the need to update utility infrastructure, and water supply and availability	Service & Environment



# CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

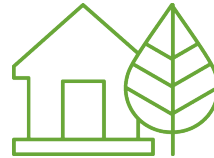
# CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES

## Communications and Public Engagement



### PRIORITY 1:

Frame North Cowichan messaging through a climate emergency and environmental sustainability lens



### PRIORITY 2:

Prioritize digital and electronic communications tactics and channels



### PRIORITY 3:

Support staff working remotely to reduce GHG emissions

# 2025 BUSINESS PLAN

# 2025 KEY DELIVERABLES

Actions/Projects	Strategic Alignment
Support the ongoing Municipal Forest Reserve review and support the upcoming development of a co-management plan	Engagement & Service

# 2025 KEY DELIVERABLES

Actions/Projects	Strategic Alignment
Improve <b>subscription email channels</b> and processes	Service
Continue ongoing <b>website</b> improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convert PDF forms and applications to webforms</li><li>• Work with departments, services areas, and programs on continued adjustments and improvements on website content, appearance, accessibility, and functionality</li></ul>	Service
Develop a <b>framework document and toolkit</b> to support staff who conduct or lead public engagement	Service
North Cowichan <b>gateway signage and banners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of gateway signs and a banner program (pending direction from Council)</li></ul>	Service

# 2025 KEY DELIVERABLES

Actions/Projects	Strategic Alignment
<p><b>Planning and Building Department</b> communications and engagement support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building Bylaw</li><li>• Amenity Cost Charges Bylaw</li><li>• Development Cost Charges (DCC) Bylaw</li><li>• Subdivision Bylaw</li><li>• Zoning Bylaw</li><li>• Building Fees Bylaw</li><li>• Affordable housing and Bill 44-related projects</li><li>• Bell McKinnon Local Area Plan (build out)</li></ul>	Service

# 2025 KEY DELIVERABLES

Actions/Projects	Strategic Alignment
<p><b>Engineering Department</b> communications and engagement support for significant capital projects including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outfall relocation</li><li>• Hyprescon water main replacement</li><li>• Genoa Bay Road reconstruction</li><li>• Active transportation improvements (including Canada Ave)</li><li>• Herd Road bridge replacement</li><li>• Infrastructure upgrades in support of the new Cowichan District Hospital</li><li>• Other major road, water, and sewer works</li></ul>	Service

# 2025 KEY DELIVERABLES

Actions/Projects	Strategic Alignment
<p><b>People and Culture Department</b> communications and engagement support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruitment strategy</li><li>• Employee engagement strategy and survey</li></ul>	Service

# 2025 KEY DELIVERABLES

Actions/Projects	Strategic Alignment
<p>Communications and engagement support for <b>cross-departmental programs</b> and initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water conservation communications strategy</li><li>• Climate change and related environmental programs and initiatives</li><li>• Safer Community Plan</li><li>• Asset management</li></ul>	Service

# CAPITAL BUDGET – ENHANCED SERVICE REQUESTS

Actions/Projects	Budget	Rationale
Banner program	\$10,000	Per Council direction on November 20
Gateway signs (preliminary design)	\$50,000	Per Council direction on November 20
Gateway signs (overpass option)	\$136,000	Per Council direction on November 20

# OPERATING BUDGET – ENHANCED SERVICE REQUESTS NET NEW STAFFING REQUEST

Position	Rationale	Implications of Deferment	Projects Deferred	Budget Impact
<p><b>Communications Coordinator (TFT, 2 years)</b></p>	<p>In addition to general work volume needs, this position will specifically support several high profile and high impact capital projects through ongoing communications and engagement with residents, businesses, and partners who are impacted or affected by the project's work.</p> <p>This position will also support the increased need for communications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Fire Department, in particular around fire prevention, community relations, and internally amongst members and halls</li> <li>• A significant number of engagement projects for Planning and Building</li> <li>• A potential improvement to support internal communications</li> </ul>	<p>The public, businesses, and interested and affected parties would not receive the necessary level of information and responsiveness related to significant capital and asset management projects. Without a dedicated role to this work, communications for this and other critical capital projects will not be as frequent or as responsive.</p> <p>Support for other programs and departments will continue with their current level of communications service and support, and needed or expected improvements will not be addressed through this additional resourcing.</p> <p>Support for the Hyprescon and other large capital projects would require prioritization by existing Communications and Engagement Department staff, which would necessitate the displacement for current communications and public engagement efforts.</p> <p>Other engagement projects, in particular for Planning and Building, would require contracted communications and engagement consultant(s).</p>		<p>\$89,107 (All in)</p>

# OPERATING BUDGET

	2024 Budget	2025 Budget	\$ Change	% Change	2024 YTD	Supplementals	\$ Change
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
Communications and Engagement	\$ 374,401	\$ 381,909	\$7,508	2%	\$322,043	\$281,107	\$ 292,615
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$374,401</b>	<b>\$381,909</b>	<b>7,508</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>\$322,043</b>	<b>\$281,107</b>	<b>\$292,615</b>