

DATE: March 14, 2019

FILE: 5280-06

TO: Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: CleanBC Clean Communities Fund Application – EV Charging Stations

Purpose

To seek Board approval to apply for the CleanBC Communities Fund Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) as part of a mid-Island collaboration to support the procurement and installation of Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations for public use at Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) facilities.

Recommendations from the Chief Administrative Officer:

1. THAT the Comox Valley Regional District participate in the submission of an application for grant funding for the Comox Valley Public Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station Project through the *CleanBC Clean Communities Fund*, with the Regional District of Nanaimo as the lead applicant, and in collaboration with other mid-Island local governments.

AND FURTHER THAT the Board supports the Comox Valley Public EV Charging Station Project and commits to install eight Level 2 EV charging stations, to a maximum cost of \$40,000, to be located at Comox Valley Regional District facilities for public use.

AND FURTHER THAT, upon a successful *CleanBC Clean Communities Fund* grant application, \$40,000 be allocated to the Comox Valley EV Charging Station Project in the 2020 financial plan.

2. THAT two public Level 2 electric vehicles charging stations be included in the construction of the new Comox Valley Regional District corporate office in 2019, at a cost of approximately \$23,000;

AND FURTHER THAT costs associated with these charging stations be allocated from the contingency fund for the new Corporate Office building.

3. THAT \$9,000 of unused funds from the 2015 Community Carbon Offset fund be reallocated to support the development of the Comox Valley electric vehicles strategy.

Executive Summary

An opportunity has emerged to participate in a mid-Island collaboration to submit a grant application for funding to expand the availability of Level 2 Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations for public use. Supporting the transition to clean energy vehicles generally will be one critical part of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) in the Comox Valley.

- The *CleanBC Clean Communities Fund* includes EV charging stations as an eligible project.
- Working together with other local governments to create a mid-Island EV charging network will ensure connectivity between communities, creating more capacity for EVs to become a viable vehicle of choice for both residents and visitors – while helping to advance a more environmentally sustainable transportation network in the Comox Valley.
- The estimated cost for eight Level 2 EV chargers at CVRD facilities is \$40,000 with grant funding.
- The project would be completed in 2020 upon a successful grant application.
- There is an immediate opportunity to include two Level 2 EV chargers for public use at the new Corporate Office Building for approximately \$23,000 to be funded by the project contingency.
- There is also an opportunity for the CVRD to spearhead the development of a Comox Valley Electric Vehicle Strategy.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

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Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

City of Courtenay	✓
Regional District of Nanaimo	✓
Town of Comox	✓
Community Energy Association	✓

Background/Current Situation

The CVRD has a long-standing commitment to climate action, including joining the Partners for Climate Protection program in 2006, signing the BC Climate Action Charter in 2007 and including climate actions and targets in the Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy and Regional Growth Strategy.

In the Comox Valley, on-road transportation accounts for approximately 55 per cent of the region’s total GHG emissions. Given that transportation is the largest contributor to GHGs in the Comox Valley, developing more active transportation options as well as supporting the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) will be critical in addressing climate change.

BC Hydro, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) and the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources are leading efforts to expand the provincial EV charging network. DC Fast Chargers have recently been installed in Qualicum Beach, Buckley Bay, Courtenay and in Campbell River. At this point, these agencies do not have further plans for EV chargers in the Comox Valley.

While there are currently 2 EV chargers at CVRD facilities reserved for fleet use, the CVRD does not currently have EV chargers in place for public use. According to the PlugShare Wiki, there are approximately 12 EV charging stations for public use across the Comox Valley. The installation of eight additional Level 2 EV charging stations for public use at CVRD facilities will reduce GHG emissions by improving the viability of EVs.

CVRD staff have recently partnered with the Community Energy Association of BC (CEA) and other mid-island communities to look at increasing EV charger availability to the public. The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) will be the lead applicant for the CleanBC grant program on behalf of a number of mid-Island communities, which could include eight EV chargers at CVRD facilities should the Board support participation.

Public EV charging at the CVRD's new corporate office cannot be included in grant program due to fact that this project is already underway and will be completed prior to grant program approvals expected in late 2019. The cost to include two Level 2 chargers at the new office is approximately \$23,000 and could be funded by allocating some of the project's contingency funds.

In addition to installing EV chargers at CVRD facilities, CVRD could spearhead the development of a Comox Valley EV strategy. Developing a regional EV strategy would help to support ongoing collaboration and partnership between local governments and community partners while also helping to avoid duplication of resources. An EV Strategy would provide a more strategic approach to mapping out new EV charging station locations and identify actions required to install new chargers.

Policy Analysis

The CleanBC Communities Fund requires that a resolution endorsing the project must be approved by the appropriate authorized governing body and must be submitted within one month of the program application submission. The resolution commits the proponent to contributing its share of the eligible and ineligible costs and overages related to the project. The resolution must also identify the source of the proponent's share of the project costs, and should indicate support for the project.

Options

The Board has the following options:

1. Participate in the mid-Island collaborative *CleanBC Clean Communities Fund* grant application with eight Level 2 charging stations, proceed with including two Level 2 EV charging stations at the new corporate office, and support the development of a CVRD Electric Vehicle Strategy.
2. Do not proceed with further efforts to improve the EV charging network in the Comox Valley.
3. Direct staff to focus only on certain aspects of EV charging at this time.

In order to help make EV transportation viable in the Comox Valley, significant efforts are required to improve the availability of EV charging stations. CVRD facilities are excellent locations for EV charging and funding is available from senior governments in support of this infrastructure. As such, option 1 is recommended at this time.

Financial Factors

The estimated cost of each EV charging station assumes that CVRD will contribute ~\$6,000 per unit based on successful grant funding. This includes a small fee per unit for the CEA's services. The CEA will coordinate the application submission and partnership with local governments, and manage procurement of the equipment and installation, finalizing exact locations on sites with CVRD staff, and the deployment and flow of funds.

Successful grant applicants will be notified towards the end of 2019, requiring CVRD to commit to allocating \$40,000 towards this project in the 2020 financial plan as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: EV charging costs for 2020 Financial Plans

Function	Charging location	# of stations	CVRD	CleanBC	TOTAL
Parks (621)	Seal Bay Parking Lot	2	\$10,000	\$18,000	\$28,000
CV Exhibition Grounds (660)	CV Exhibition Grounds	2	\$10,000	\$18,000	\$28,000
Recreation Complexes (645)	CV Aquatic Centre	2	\$10,000	\$18,000	\$28,000
Recreation Complexes (645)	CV Sports Centre	2	\$10,000	\$18,000	\$28,000
TOTAL			\$40,000	\$72,000	\$112,000

It should be noted that there will be some ongoing costs associated with maintenance of these assets but staff expect this to be minor based on experience with corporate fleet chargers currently at the CVRD offices. Cost recovery, such as charging EV users to use the charging station, will be explored as part of the regional EV charging strategy.

In order to include two Level 2 EV charging stations for public use at the new Corporate Office, Board support is required to allocate approximately \$23,000 from the Corporate Office contingency fund. While there is a risk to allocating contingencies toward this project, construction has proceeded smoothly and project uncertainties have been reduced and as such staff are comfortable with this approach.

As noted above, CVRD could spearhead the development of a Comox Valley EV Strategy. A Regional EV Strategy would help identify the actions required to improve EV charging network and may also assist CVRD in grant funding. To fund the regional EV Strategy, staff recommend the reallocation of approximately \$9,000 of unused funds from the 2015 Community Carbon fund. These funds were initially set aside to purchase GHG reductions from an energy conservation project at Tree Island Yogurt, however, this project is no longer proceeding and the funds are available for CVRD to reallocate.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

This initiative supports the following goals and strategies:

Regional Growth Strategy Objective 8-B: Reduce GHG emissions created by the on-road transportation sector, and 8B-7: In order to promote the use of electric vehicles, local governments should develop incentives and infrastructure for low-emissions vehicles such as recharging, infrastructure and priority parking.

Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy high-level target of 80 per cent reduction in automobile related GHG emissions for the year 2050.

Comox Valley Sustainability Strategy Goal 4.2: Adopt high-efficiency, low emission/no-emission vehicles and alternative fuels.

Intergovernmental Factors

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) will act as the lead applicant for the *CleanBC Clean Communities Fund* application on behalf of multiple mid-island municipalities and the regional district.

In addition to the RDN, the mid-Island communities who had expressed interest in participating in the Mid-Island EV Collaborative (but are not confirmed at the time of writing this report) are:

- District of Ucluelet
- District of Tofino
- City of Port Alberni
- City of Campbell River
- Town of Comox
- City of Courtenay

Interdepartmental Involvement

This initiative is an initiative of the Community Services Branch. It is being led by the Sustainability Department, in partnership with community parks and recreation complexes.

Citizen/Public Relations

While there has been an increase in the number of electric vehicles within the Comox Valley, staff are aware that one of the barriers to wider adoption for both visitors and residents continues to be trust in a robust charging infrastructure network.

Upon notification of a successful grant application, sustainability staff will work with both the Communications and Corporate Services teams to develop a public communications and engagement strategy.