

**DATE:** June 8, 2021**FILE:** 5330-20/Saratoga**TO:** Chair and Directors  
Electoral Areas Services Committee**FROM:** Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer**R. Dyson****RE: Saratoga Drainage Plan – Ecological Accounting Process**

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**Purpose**

To provide an update on implementation of the Saratoga Miracle Beach Master Drainage Plan through application of an ecological accounting process (EAP).

**Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

None. This report is for information only.

**Executive Summary**

The Saratoga Beach area is one of three rural settlement nodes designated in the Regional Growth Strategy and is thus anticipated to experience increased development in the coming years, if community servicing is provided. Due to its proximity to the Oyster River and the presence of multiple smaller water courses, the Saratoga Beach neighborhood often experiences seasonal flooding.

In December 2019, a Master Drainage Plan for the Saratoga Miracle Beach area was presented to the Electoral Areas Services Committee ([link](#)). This plan investigated anticipated rainwater/drainage impacts from increased development, and provided recommendations for mitigation that can be applied to future land use decisions and policy development work for the area. The plan anticipates that mitigation will require a blend of private (i.e. on-lot rain gardens) and public (i.e. detention ponds in open spaces and linear rain gardens within road rights-of-way) drainage facilities. Implementation of public rainwater infrastructure beyond that currently provided by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (i.e. roadside ditches) would require the establishment of a local service area to fund ongoing operation and maintenance.

Much of the drainage function within the Saratoga Beach area is currently provided by natural assets such as streams, ponds and wetlands, located on both private and public lands. To identify the value of these assets to support local service area implementation, an ecological accounting process (EAP) analysis is proposed. The EAP has been developed by the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC (PWS), and has been used for projects in the Town of Comox, Capital Regional District, Cowichan Valley Regional District, and [Regional District of Nanaimo](#).

The EAP report will support the following objectives:

- Identify ecological assets needing protection, including social, ecological and financial values;
- Quantify riparian areas as measurable natural assets that support stream health, to inform details for development permit area definitions;
- Describe and quantify social, ecological and financial aspects of stream systems as essential natural assets; and

- Inform public education about ecological, social and financial values of stream systems in the Saratoga neighborhood.

The EAP will be supported by a project team, to consist of representatives from PWS and the Comox Valley Regional District, with potential input from the stewardship sector (i.e. Comox Valley Land Trust/Conservation Partnership), Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the K'ómoks First Nation. The EAP could inform further work towards a local service area for drainage and/or rainwater focused land use planning policy and tools; broader consultation would take place at that time.

A draft technical report is scheduled to be complete by September and will be presented to the committee with recommendations for next steps.

The EAP program is jointly funded by PWS, the Real Estate Foundation, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Union of BC Municipalities and collaborating local governments.

A \$10,000 local government contribution is required to enable the EAP demonstration application for Saratoga. The adopted 2021-2025 budget for the Liquid Waste Management Planning Service, function 340, includes Community Works Funds allocated for implementation of rainwater management initiatives for the electoral areas. The 2021 work plan for the function includes the following activities for rainwater management:

- An Ecological Accounting Protocol (EAP) demonstration application for Saratoga Beach;
- A service structure options analysis;
- Improved regulatory tools; and
- Development of public education materials.

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Concurrence:

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