

Appendix B: Information as requested at March 4th COW Budget Meeting

Position: Climate Mitigation and Response Public Education and Communications

Department(s) supported: Community Engagement, Climate Action, Engineering and Emergency Program

Strategic Priorities supported:

- Champion Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Preparedness
- Invest in Active Transportation and Infrastructure
- Foster a Community of Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility
- Demonstrate Organizational Effectiveness

Strategic Goals supported:

- Build strong relationships through collaboration and engagement with community members, service providers, and government agencies to advance community interests.
- Deliver excellent, accessible and responsive customer service for our diverse community.
- Ensure a resilient community that is supported and prepared for extreme events through public education, planning and response.
- Reduce GHG emissions by continuing to demonstrate climate leadership and apply a climate lens to decision making and initiatives.
- Improve the active transportation network to foster a complete community where people live, work and play.
- Prioritize infrastructure investment renewal and upgrades that consider climate adaptation and mitigation, and future growth.
- Support community inclusion, equity, accessibility and diversity through improvements to services and the built environment.

Value to the community: The Climate Communications Coordinator would support inclusive community outreach and education by providing information and tools to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The position would facilitate communications, education, engagement, and outreach to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for a changing climate through:

- Ensuring a lens of accessibility and inclusion is applied and diverse audiences are engaged and informed of emergency preparedness, climate adaptation and mitigation and active transportation.¹
- Embedding skills, such as an accessibility lens, into programs and staff thinking in a sustained way.
- Ensure vulnerable populations most at risk of impacts of climate are informed and have tools, as well as the District has communications strategies to reach them during emergencies.
- Promoting the many initiatives the District has invested in, both:

¹ [Inclusive community engagement: 10 good practices \(citizenlab.co\)](https://citizenlab.co)

- **underway** (ie, active transportation infrastructure, capital projects to contribute to reduction in greenhouse gases, rebate programs, bike skills courses, road safety campaigns, education on possible programs like electric kick scooters, etc.), and
- **upcoming** as per District plans (see page 3).
- Strategically engaging with the community to help vulnerable populations prepare for extreme-weather events.
- Developing relationships with partners and strategic communications plans in a manner that can be sustained if the position is not renewed in future years.
- Providing local, relevant education about the community's GHG emissions and how to reduce them together.
- Proactive communications regarding active transportation projects and direction.

Value to the organization:

- Being able to complete the Strategic Implementation Plan relies on the funding of the Workforce Plan, including the Climate Communication position to support the Climate Action Specialist, the Emergency Program Manager, the Engineering, Planning & Development and the Community Engagement departments;
- Raise the profile of progress and opportunities related to the District's Active Transportation Plan, EV and E-Bike Strategy, Climate Leadership Plan, Heat Response Plan, and other plans, resulting in more successful programs.
- Work with subject matter experts on understanding goals, audiences, tactics, develop key messaging, and support implementation.
- Assess projects, initiatives and materials to determine efficacy.
- Alleviate pressure on communications staff, freeing up space for large special projects such as Parks & Trails Master Plan, Wayfinding implementation, housing legislation, and business as usual.
- Foster relationships with various community stakeholders to build and cultivate a network of partnerships to advance climate action.
- Coordinate logistics for events including creating needed communications material
- Ensure all corporate policies, processes and branding is followed.

Need:

Many new initiatives, services and programs require strategic communications, media relations, community promotion, public education, event planning and graphic design support. The District's recently adopted Accessibility Plan (provincially legislated) requires the District to apply an accessibility lens to all engagement and communication, which supports the Strategic Plan priority to *Foster a Community of Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility*.

Implications of not funding the position:

Being able to complete the Strategic Implementation Plan relies on the funding of the Workforce Plan, including this position to support the Climate Action Specialist, the Emergency Program Manager, the Engineering and the Community Engagement departments. If it's not filled, there are implications to these positions' workplans, including:

- **Emergency Program:** Risk to success of emergency preparedness campaigns, leading to risks to community including vulnerable populations especially in extreme heat and missed opportunities for community engagement. Investing in a dedicated communications position within emergency management is essential for enhancing preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, as well as safeguarding the well-being and resilience of communities facing crisis situations.
- **Climate:** Less-than possible uptake on District climate action programs, minimal public education and engagement around efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **ATP:** Reduced communications around active transportation education leading to lack of awareness of Council’s commitment to ATP, misinformation in the community, and community advocacy for work already underway. Possibly being ineligible to apply for active transportation grants that require promotion and education programs associated with the requested works.
- **District Communications:** Overall reduced communications resources and oversight to spread resources across all departments; risk to less time being proactive and mitigating issues and misinformation.

Funding Model

The position would be funded by the LGCAP annual grant funding (\$145,000) received by the District to advance climate action (temporary two-year term). If the funding is renewed, the position could be extended, or it could continue with funding from the Climate Leadership Reserve.

The LGCAP funding, since implementation in 2023, needs to be spent and reported on annually. Not utilizing the funding could risk continuation of the program and/or receipt by the District. In addition to the proposed position, the grant funding is being used to fund climate related SIP projects.

Recent District Priorities Requiring Engagement

Several recent priorities require community engagement:

PLAN/INITIATIVE	DIRECTION FROM PLAN
Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to engage communications in a climate change risk and vulnerability assessment to identify areas most at risk within the District, to prioritize action items, and to inform the development of a community-wide Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. • Focus on vulnerable populations
FireSmart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Awareness Campaigns • Community Engagement activities – promoting neighbourhood meetings, workshops and community events • Facilitate assessments and communicate community findings
Extreme Heat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public awareness • Create clear and concise messaging related to heat safety • Strategies on ensuring these messages are accessible to diverse audiences such as vulnerable population through outreach

Emergency Communications Program <i>Legislated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategy to reach vulnerable populations • Establishing communication protocols, preparing messaging templates
Climate Leadership Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connect community members with existing provincial, utility or other programs by raising awareness through marketing, social media, and community events • incorporate climate-related communications, emergency preparedness and disaster planning, and promotion of local food systems into public outreach materials and activities • showcase various renewable energy projects that are visible to the community as a means to raise awareness, support local capacity building opportunities and encourage community members to uptake renewable energy • Work with residents and local businesses to achieve 100% organic waste diversion from residential and commercial sources. • Implementation and promotion of an enhanced building retrofit program, building on the heat pump financing program.
Active Transportation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of ATP, funding, projects • Public engagement in infrastructure design • Public education (with Police Service) around road safety including speed limits, distracted driving, specific places of concern • Promotion of new and existing infrastructure, including bus stops, bike lanes, crosswalks, park and rides, new signs and markings, etc • Support with signage and mapping • Education and awareness initiatives are important and cost-effective measures to enable residents to feel more safe and comfortable walking and cycling throughout Central Saanich. These initiatives include hosting promotional events and supporting programs that teach safety focused skills and awareness of road safety for all users with messaging that targets motorists and cyclists to ensure everyone is aware of common road-use etiquette and related laws. • Several initiatives have been identified to help support investments in infrastructure, and require communications support (initiatives: bike parking, school travel, bike skills programs: Capital Bike, Go By Bike Week, e-bike charging facilities, drive and cyclist etiquette)
E-Vehicle and E-Bike Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase general EV, EV charging, and e-bike knowledge in the community through informational sessions, “ride and drives,” and other opportunities for exhibiting the technologies. Partner with such organizations as Emotive, PluginBC, local EV or e-bike clubs, businesses who have adopted

	<p>EVs in their fleets, and strata associations in order to showcase EVs, e-bikes, EV fleets, and EV retrofits in existing buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop Central Saanich “Active and Electric Transportation” webpage and the Districts social media with information and links to available incentives and resources. Explore using testimonials, contests, the District’s quarterly newsletter, and paid social media ads to build the EV and e-bike audience in the District • Consider raising the profile of the municipal EV fleet using vehicle graphics • Explore showcasing renewable energy and electric mobility technology through an EV or e-bike demonstration project, such as a solar powered charging station • Support developments in the legality of alternative electric mobility technologies such as e-scooters, e-skateboards, etc. • communicate relevant metrics related to EVs and EBs including: number of EVs registered in the District, number of charging stations, charging stations/capita, and proportion of District neighbourhoods with access to public charging • Promote existing provincial incentives for the installation of EV charging in MURBs and workplaces • Connect residents and stratas with online educational resources regarding the installation of EV charging in existing buildings, such as the free BC EV Advisor service • Create case studies specific to Vancouver Island to show range of EVs for island travel
<p>Keating Parking Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop travel map for Keating Business District: show the nearby transit stops and routes, in tandem with active transportation infrastructure and any available public parking can have a positive impact to trip planning. The District could then distribute that map to businesses of the KBD, as well as post it on the District’s website for the public to access. • The culture around both public and private parking supplies needs to change to improve overall parking management. The District will utilize signage, time restrictions, and parking enforcement to communicate the expectations around public parking and will regularly communicate with private businesses about parking challenges—and solutions—in the KBD.
<p>Official Community Plan Legislated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community disaster preparedness through public awareness and education, including emergency notification and communications systems. • Improve fire risk awareness in the community by promoting FireSmart principles and practices and continue to enhance fire flow infrastructure. • The District’s leadership and supportive role in advancing climate adaptation and mitigation measures is recognized through partnership with the local business community.

<p>Accessibility Plan <i>Legislated</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review accessibility of emergency notification systems and make improvements to their accessibility. For example, are the notifications communicated in plain language? Is information disseminated in a variety of formats? Do people require access to digital technology to receive notifications? • Implement a public education campaign about accessibility and emergency response, including how residents with disabilities can access emergency services and how neighbours can support fellow residents with disabilities in the event of an emergency, and about the importance of visual and auditory alarms in key spaces. Also important is educating the public about what role residents with disabilities play in their own emergency preparedness.
<p>Parks Master Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See ATP directions as they relate to needs for trail signage and mapping
<p>Age-Friendly Community Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize road safety initiatives and educational opportunities with partner agencies to increase awareness and education targeted at older adults who drive, take transit, walk, and bike (or use other modes, e.g., wheelchairs, scooters, e-bikes)