



Public feedback

Draft RDCK Climate Action Plan

Public engagement

The RDCK sought public feedback on the draft RDCK Climate Action Plan from April to October 2023. Thank you to everyone who participated and shared their thoughts about the draft Climate Action Plan.

How many people participated?

Residents had opportunities to provide feedback through a series of 20 open houses, a survey, dialogue circle conversations, emails, letters, webinars, an online discussion board and Community Ambassador outreach at community events. Approximately 3,234 participants attended the various engagement opportunities, although some attended multiple events.

How much feedback was provided?

We received 3,518 comments from residents through the engagement process, including 80 pages of [transcribed notes](#) from the Open Houses. We also received a submission with 954 signatures from residents recognizing that the draft RDCK Climate Actions plan is "an effective and important tool to make the transition to sustainability in our communities."

How did RDCK interpret the feedback?

All written feedback has been transcribed and coded according to theme and, where applicable, the corresponding action listed in the draft Climate Action Plan.

What were the key themes?

The key themes that emerged from the engagement process are as follows:

- **Engagement process – 550 comments** Residents wanted more input into the engagement process and advocated for a referendum (190), for town halls (100) and for more opportunity to be heard. The comments include dialogue between those opposed to the engagement model along with those in support.
- **Transit and active transportation – 351 comments (127 on transit, 113 on active transportation and 111 on active low carbon transportation)** Residents want to see additional transit routes, increased transit frequency, secure places to store bikes at bus stops, safer road infrastructure to allow for more biking and walking, more transit access for rural communities, and more trails.

- **Right to choose – 324 comments** Some residents interpreted the Climate Action Plan as a list of mandatory changes the RDCK was requiring of them. Residents want the freedom to choose what makes sense for their families and lives. They are opposed to having any changes imposed on them, such as water metering, water conservation, mandatory retrofits, etc.
- **Clear and direct communication – 244 comments** Residents said the Climate Action Plan documents were too complex. They stressed the need for simpler language, definitions and terminology within the Climate Action Plan. They wanted more notification about the Climate Action Plan and the engagement opportunities.
- **Affordability – 198 comments** Residents are concerned about the cost of living. They want the RDCK to be efficient and to keep costs down. Some examples of costs they find excessive are related to home building and the cost to purchase EVs.
- **Emergency preparedness – 191 comments (98 on fire mitigation, 56 on emergency planning and 37 on empowering residents)** Residents want the RDCK to do more to prevent wildfires and to work with the Province to put fires out when they start rather than allowing them to grow. Residents also want to be empowered to take action to stop wildfires from impacting their homes and communities and want the RDCK to support them with training.
- **Support for farmers – 189 comments** Residents expressed strong interest in supporting farmers and strengthening food systems. For instance, they would like farmers to have access to the water they need for their crops. Residents were very clear that any support for farmers must be voluntary.
- **Looking for local solutions – 188 comments** Residents would like the Climate Action Plan address the wants and needs of individual areas, while considering rural perspectives. Participants emphasized the heightened sense of environmental consciousness and sustainability that comes with living rurally. Residents talked about rural challenges (such as unreliable electricity and difficulty accessing public transit) and emphasized a desire to maintain their self-sufficiency.
- **Step code and retrofits – 177 comments** Residents are concerned about costs related to building homes, especially when those costs are due to increasing regulations. There was strong opposition to the possibility of the RDCK implementing new Step Code regulations before being mandated by the Province to do so. Some residents misunderstood that retrofits are voluntary, not mandated.
- **Water protection and conservation – 170 comments** Residents expressed support for increased conservation education and incentives, although some residents want any conservation to be voluntary. Residents are concerned about water metering (43) and misunderstood that the RDCK is not able to meter private water systems. Residents also expressed concern for protecting lakes, streams and rivers (53).
- **Electric vehicles – 164 comments** Residents have numerous concerns with electric vehicles. They voiced concerns about the Province banning sales of new gas vehicles. They are concerned about EV costs, grid capacity to support them, EV battery costs and disposal, as well as usefulness/efficiency in cold, rural mountainous terrain. Some residents misunderstood that they will still be able to drive their gas vehicles and that the Provincial regulations are specifically regarding the sale of new vehicles.

- **Discussion of climate science – 149 comments** While the reasons for why the climate is changing vary amongst residents, many participants acknowledged the reality of a changing climate and want the RDCK to continue its course of action, while others do not.
- **Renewable energy – 136 comments** Residents shared thoughts on alternative technical solutions (39). The vast majority of their thoughts on renewable energy were captured in other topics noted here, including grid resilience, affordability and having the freedom to choose.
- **External forces – 129 comments** Some residents are concerned that the RDCK is being unduly influenced or controlled by external forces, such as the Provincial and Federal government, the United Nations and the World Economic Forum. The majority of these comments (78) are narratives of malevolent forces damaging the environment and harming people.
- **Grid resilience – 106 comments** Residents cautioned against an over-reliance on electricity. They are concerned about the impact increased demand for electricity (such as for charging electric vehicles) will have on the reliability of their power supply, especially in rural areas.

Due to challenges with coding functionality, the numbers of comments reported have shifted slightly from those in the February 15, 2024 board report. The most up-to-date numbers are reflected above.

Additional themes that emerged

- **Need for increased resilience** – A place of common ground emerged around the concept of adaptation/disaster mitigation as a focal point for immediate and collective action. Residents would like to see more wildfire mitigation efforts, more water protection and regulations for logging on private land.
- **Interest to work together** - Participants expressed concerns ranging from anxiety about climate change impacts to losing personal freedom. Yet, amid these concerns, there was a desire to actively shape positive change and contribute to a way forward.
- **Shared values** – Participants expressed the importance of clean water supply, local agriculture, freedom, clean air, protection from natural disasters, grid resilience and enhanced public transit.

RDCK Climate Action Public Engagement Timeline

- RDCK Climate Actions Pathway Webinars - July 10-24, 2023
 - Recordings: [RDCK Climate Actions Pathways Webinar Series](#)
- Community Dialogue Circles - August 8-24, 2023
 - [What We Heard in the Dialogue Circles](#)
- Climate Action Open Houses - August 24 - October 25, 2023
 - [Feedback from the Open Houses](#)
- Compiling Feedback - November 1, 2023 - February 1, 2024
 - See above for feedback results

- Board Report on Draft Climate Action Plan and Engagement Process Results - February 15, 2024
- Board Report that Includes Revised Climate Action Drafts - April 18, 2024
- Board Direction that Staff Provide Business Cases for Priority Climate Actions - April 18, 2024

Climate action documents

- Here is the [draft Climate Action Plan](#) and [workbook](#) that were the basis for the public engagement process.
- Here is [RDCK Ideas for Climate Action](#), which is the new climate action document that came out of the engagement process.

More information

- [Climate Action](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Climate Action History](#)
- [Local Government Climate Action Partnership](#)