



REPORT

To: Electoral Area Directors Committee

Report Number: CS-EADC-005

From: David Sturgeon, Protective Service Manager

Date: January 21, 2021

Subject: Investigation of Rural Addressing Options for the PRRD

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Electoral Area Directors Committee recommend that the Regional Board authorize a cost benefit analysis to be conducted to examine and compare options associated with mandatory addressing and signage within those areas that are in an established fire protection boundary; further, that the report be provided to a future Electoral Area Directors Committee.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

On September 14th 2020 the PRRD hosted a Regional Fire Chiefs meeting. On the agenda was a request from the Pouce Coupe Fire Chief for mandatory civic address signage in the rural fire protection areas. The Fire Departments have often found that many properties either:

- a) have no address sign posted at the entrance to their property, or
- b) property owners utilize various “graphic” designs that are not visible in the dark or positioned at the property in an area that is not immediately visible to emergency responders.

Building Numbering Extended Service Establishment Bylaw #1188, 1998 gives the authority to the PRRD to provide addressing for buildings within the Electoral Areas but does not speak to making it mandatory. Policy “911 Emergency Service Rural Addressing” indicates that the PRRD considered making addressing mandatory in anticipation of implementing the 9-1-1 service to the residents on June 4, 2001 but determined that the geography of the PRRD was too large to carry out inspections of all properties. Instead the PRRD sent out a mailers and advertised information about the importance of address signs asking owners to voluntarily post them. The Policy also states that staff were to review the Policy one calendar year after implementation of 9-1-1 service and to report back to the Board - it is unclear what if anything happened after that initial campaign.

Since the Regional Fire Chiefs meeting the PRRD has received two requests (one to the Regional Board from the Pouce Coupe Fire Chief and the other to the GM of Community Services from the Taylor Fire Chief). Both request that the PRRD implement a mandatory standard for all residents to adhere to, which is consistent with the discussion at the Fire Chiefs meeting where majority of the departments noted that they are struggling with the same issues and would like to support the call for a policy from the PRRD.

Although the request came from the fire departments several other agencies also rely on this information including the BC Ambulance Service, RCMP and Search and Rescue to locate where they need to respond to, in order to provide their critical services. Other services that require addresses are utility providers as well as Canada Post who is moving forward with using civic addressing instead of rural route addressing.

Next Generation 911 (NG911) has been mandated by the Canadian Radio and Television Commission to be implemented Canada wide by March 20th, 2024. NG911 will allow individuals to text 911 messages, pictures and videos of an emergency event to the 911 call talking centers and dispatch agencies. It will help responding agencies understand what is happening at the scene before they arrive and in doing so they can adapt their response prior to attending the scene. With the implementation of NG911, addressing will be a key driver in the way that the location of the incident will be determined by the dispatcher and ultimately passed on to the responding agency through mapping on the computer aided dispatch service (CAD). The GIS data that each municipality or regional district is responsible for maintaining will be instrumental in how effectively the system will work and they will also be required to upload any new data into the system within 72 hours of a new address or change to an existing address. Once NG911 is fully implemented when a call comes into the 911 center, a map display will instantly be available to the 911 dispatch staff showing the user's location and additional information such as the nearest access point for emergency responders.

In majority of regional districts in BC addressing appears to be adopted as mandatory but implementation of installing the signs ranges from being voluntary, with the specification provided by the regional district. In all cases new building permits or planning development approvals include a separate fee that covers the cost of addressing a new building and provides the sign and post to the resident for them to install.

Some large provinces that already have mandatory addressing include Ontario and Alberta. In Alberta most counties provided the address, the sign and the post including installation by utilizing contractors or summer students for the installation portion.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Electoral Areas Directors Committee recommend that the Regional Board authorize a cost benefit analysis be conducted to examine and compare options associated with mandatory addressing and signage in all electoral areas of the Peace River Regional District; further, that a the report be brought back to a future Electoral Area Directors Committee meeting.
2. That the Electoral Areas Directors Committee recommend that the Regional Board authorize a cost benefit analysis be conducted to examine and compare options associated with mandatory addressing and signage in those areas that are within an official community plan; further that the report be brought back to a future Electoral Area Directors Committee meeting.
3. That the Electoral Area Directors Committee provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- ☒ Responsive Service Delivery
 - ☒ Enhance Emergency Planning and Response Capacity
- ☒ Advocacy
 - ☒ Emergency Response Capacity for Local Governments

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

The cost benefit analysis would include the financial costs as well as staff time needed for each option:

- a) All of the electoral areas of the Peace River Regional District
- b) Only those areas that are within an official community plan area
- c) Only those areas that are within an established fire protection boundary.

Once the costs, timelines and benefits of each options is understood, then EADC can make a recommendation to the Board on how to proceed.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time. In the future once the cost benefit analysis is complete and direction is provided from the Regional Board a policy can be drafted along with additional public education to support the policy.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

The implementation of a PRRD region wide bylaw mandating a mandatory 911 address for all properties will aid in preparation for the movement towards NG911.

Attachments:

1. Taylor Request
2. Pouce Coupe Request
3. Building Numbering Extended Service Establishment Bylaw #1188, 1998