



REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS (RFSQ) No. 25-045

DATE: September 25, 2025

Project Title: Rural Onsite Subdivision Servicing Study

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) invites qualified and experienced firms to submit Statements of Qualifications to support a study that will identify areas within the region's electoral areas with appropriate conditions for onsite servicing for water, septic disposal, and drainage management.

The study will guide the RDN in a project to consider potential changes in minimum parcel size from 2.0 hectares to 1.0 hectare in rural residential areas. On July 22, 2025, the RDN Board passed the following motion:

That staff prepare a report that provides a comparison between the cost for a region-wide project to reduce the minimum parcel size in Rural Residential areas versus servicing studies through the regular Official Community Plan review processes.

Prior to the commencement of a study, the RDN Board will be asked to provide direction on whether a regional study or specific electoral area study should occur at this time. Depending on the scale of the project, as directed by the RDN Board, the work contemplated includes:

- Compilation of aquifer characteristics and relative stress from current reports prepared through the RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection service and Province of BC to identify aquifers or locations that can accommodate additional development.
- Assessment of septic disposal capability in the region and ability of different soils in different areas to accommodate septic density of one dwelling unit per hectare and secondary suite.
- An assessment of the ability of different soils in different areas to infiltrate rainwater from of one dwelling unit per hectare and secondary suite.
- Combine currently documented aquifer, soils, drainage, geohazards, and floodplain areas to identify areas suitable for further development. Specific recommendations should be provided on areas suitable for a density up to one dwelling unit and secondary suite per 1.0 hectare and identify areas for which further development is not appropriate.
- For Rural and Rural Residential designated areas within Official Community Plans (OCPs), the study should identify areas where a 1.0 hectare minimum parcel size is appropriate for onsite servicing conditions and recommended minimum parcel sizes for areas with inappropriate onsite servicing conditions for further subdivision. In areas

with inappropriate conditions, the study should also provide recommendations for existing dwellings within building stratas.

The study may also be more broadly applied to inform other land use decisions on appropriate locations for higher rural density. The analysis of soils for septic capability and drainage will not include the approximate 64% of the RDN designated as Private Managed Forest Land (PMFL). Given the nature of aquifers, aquifer information may include land designated PMFL and the municipalities within the RDN.

A. Intent

This Request for Statements of Qualifications (RFSQ) is issued to determine the most qualified and experienced service provider that can meet the Regional District of Nanaimo's requirements, expectations, and timeline.

The Regional District of Nanaimo will review submissions received in response to this RFSQ and enter discussions with the top-ranked Respondent to negotiate the terms, scope, timeline, and cost based on the actual scope of work required (the Work). Should these negotiations fail to result in a contract for the Work, the Regional District of Nanaimo may then elect to negotiate with the next highest ranked service provider and so on until an agreement is reached or the process cancelled.

To report back on RDN Board direction, the Respondent will need to identify the cost for the Work at a region wide and an electoral area scale. While this RFSQ assumes a region-wide scale project, prior to commencement the RDN Board may direct any study occur at the individual electoral area scale in support of Official Community Plan development.

In any event, the Regional District of Nanaimo shall not be bound to enter a contract with any Respondent to this RFSQ and, at its sole discretion, may elect to collapse this process.

B. Background

The RDN is a federation of four municipalities and seven unincorporated electoral areas on central Vancouver Island. The RDN provides local governance and services to the electoral areas including planning, building inspection, fire protection, community parks, community water and wastewater treatment. Highways and subdivision approval authority within the unincorporated electoral areas is the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) and the Provincial Approving Officer (PAO). The RDN is a referral agency to MOTT for subdivision, and ensures subdivision applications comply with zoning, subdivision regulations, and development permits.

The RDN administers two zoning bylaws to regulate land use and subdivision within the electoral areas: "Regional District of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw No. 2500, 2024" within Electoral

Area A, C, E, G, and H and "Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area 'F' Zoning and Subdivision Bylaw No. 1285, 2002" within Electoral Area F. Under these zoning bylaws, most rural and rural residential zoned properties have a 2.0 hectare minimum parcel size for each parcel created through subdivision.

Despite the 2.0 hectare minimum parcel size, under rural and rural residential zoning each parcel greater than 2.0 hectares may have two principal dwelling units, each with a secondary suite. Where each dwelling is constructed concurrently and not previously occupied, the dwellings may be registered as a strata lot under Section 241 of the *Strata Property Act* (known as a building strata). Rather than a subdivision of land where property lines define the boundaries of the lot, this form of strata is defined by the exterior walls of the building and the land is shown as common property. Unlike other forms of subdivision, building strata lots are not approved by a Provincial Approving Officer (PAO) with respect to long term servicing or protection from hazards.

Building strata tenure is an unintended form of development in rural areas and a source of potential impacts on the environment. Building strata also creates challenges for the RDN in administering zoning and uncertainty for property owners. A change from a 2.0 hectare to a 1.0 hectare minimum parcel size within areas having more suitable conditions for the proposed density will provide property owners with the ability to formally subdivide into standard lots under the *Land Title Act* or *Bare Land Strata Regulations*, and therefore a more predictable form of tenure.

While the subdivision approval process considers the long-term potable water and septic disposal areas for an individual subdivision application, the process for individual small subdivision applications cannot easily consider cumulative impacts on the existing community, such as over withdrawal of groundwater, ability of soils to accommodate septic density, or drainage from proposed parcels. Prior to proceeding with changes to minimum parcel size policy or zoning regulations, identifying the cumulative effects and suitable areas through studies of aquifer characteristics and soil conditions for on-site septic and drainage for one dwelling unit (plus a secondary suites) per hectare is needed.

The RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) service has prepared background studies on aquifer characteristics and groundwater budgeting that will be incorporated into this study proposed in this RFSQ. DWWP maintains a list of studies that may be included within arural servicing study: <https://rdn.bc.ca/dwwp-reports>. For each of the six water regions, DWWP has conceptual water budget models and relative stress assessments. For French Creek and Nanoose, a refined numerical groundwater model was prepared and then applied scenarios to observe the impacts of climate change, land cover change, and water demand on water levels and relative aquifer stress (with a similar water budget model currently in progress for the Cedar-Yellowpoint-Cassidy area). DWWP has also developed proposed watershed performance targets for rainwater management specific to the French Creek water region through hydrologic modelling, which may be applied to other areas as interim targets until additional hydrological modelling can recommend locally specific rainwater management. The

proposed servicing study will incorporate the outcome of water budget analyses as well as performance targets for rainwater management.

The RDN has also completed mapping on geotechnical and flooding hazards in the region which will affect where additional development may be possible and should be incorporated into final recommendations of the study. This mapping includes:

- [Coastal Floodplain Mapping Project – 2021](#)
- [Englishman River Floodplain Mapping Project – 2021](#)
- [Little Qualicum River Floodplain Mapping Project – 2022](#)
- [Nanaimo River Floodplain Mapping Project - 2023](#)
- Geohazard Assessment and Risk Prioritization Study – Expected Completion Fall 2025

C. Contemplated Scope of Work and Timeline

The contemplated scope of work will develop a study and mapping of areas within the RDN electoral areas (excluding Electoral Area B) that are appropriate for development considering impacts to aquifers and ability of soils to accommodate septic density or drainage. The following table lists the components of a study and builds upon existing work (as noted in Section B, above) undertaken by the RDN to better understand and protect aquifers and avoid risk.

Component	Tasks	Deliverables/Outcomes
Groundwater	<p>Consult with RDN DWWP, Island Health, RDN Planning and MOTT staff on areas of concern for groundwater quantity and quality.</p> <p>Apply existing DWWP conceptual or numerical groundwater flow models to compare available water to demand under higher density scenarios.</p> <p>Prepare mapping identifying different areas where aquifers may and may not be able accommodate (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite).</p> <p>Identify concerns with water quality within specific aquifers and treatment options.</p> <p>Recommend aquifers that cannot support (1) one dwelling unit per hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite) and identify risk to</p>	<p>Report and map on appropriate aquifer and locations within the region for increased rural density, which includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping that identifies areas with sufficient water quantity and quality for one (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite). • Mapping that identifies areas with insufficient water quantity and quality for one (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite). • Provide recommendations for areas with insufficient water supply or quality, including drafting regulation examples for incorporation into zoning, subdivision regulations or development permit areas. Different recommendations may

Component	Tasks	Deliverables/Outcomes
	<p>existing residents.</p> <p>Recommend measures to apply at the time of subdivision where aquifers have insufficient water for one (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare, and all accessory uses, specifically with respect to rural and rural residential designated lands. This may include water conservation, aquifer recharge measures, or treatment systems.</p>	<p>apply to lands that are vacant or have existing dwellings.</p>
Onsite Septic Disposal	<p>Consult with Island Health and MOTT on Subdivision Regulations for wastewater disposal and local areas of concern.</p> <p>Prepare mapping based on soils with suitable conditions for septic disposal for one (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite) under Island Health Subdivision Regulations.</p> <p>Recommend measures in locations in areas with poor conditions to mitigate risk of contamination.</p>	<p>Report and map of soils (not including PMFL lands) within the region appropriate for increased septic density, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of soils that comply with criteria in Island Health Subdivision Regulations for one (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite) and rating onsite wastewater disposal potential. • Recommendations for areas with poor soils and risk for high septic density, which may include zoning subdivision servicing regulations or development permit areas to protect groundwater. Depending on risk, this may apply to the subdivision of existing developed areas rather than potential development.
Drainage / Rainwater Management	<p>Complete mapping to compare soil, topography, and vegetation cover for drainage in the region. Impervious surfaces may be considered where appropriate.</p> <p>Identify how DWWP watershed performance rainwater targets (completed within the French Creek water region) can be achieved for one (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite) in areas with poor drainage.</p>	<p>Report and map on soils (not including PMFL lands) with appropriate conditions to infiltrate drainage from increased density, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map showing drainage conditions for soils, topography, and vegetation cover within the region and relative ratings. Impervious surfaces may be considered where appropriate. • Recommendations to apply watershed performance targets to

Component	Tasks	Deliverables/Outcomes
	Recommend measures to implement rainwater management targets.	densities of one (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite) for areas with poor drainage, which may include zoning subdivision servicing regulations or development permit areas to protect groundwater.
Final Report	<p>Compile all analysis, mapping and recommendations into a comprehensive report.</p> <p>Incorporate previous RDN hazard mapping to present an overall map with areas appropriate for additional development.</p>	Final comprehensive servicing report for the electoral areas of the RDN to identify areas appropriate and inappropriate for densities of one (1) dwelling unit per 1.0 hectare and accessory uses (including secondary suite), including mapping and recommendations.

Proposed Timeline

Selection of Successful Vendor	October 2025
RDN Board Decision on Regional or Electoral Area Study	December 2025
Project Initiation	January 2026
Research Existing Information Sources and Agency Interviews	Winter 2026
Apply Conceptual Models and Prepare Mapping for RDN review	Spring 2026
Draft Servicing Report and Recommendations for Review	Summer 2026
Submission of Final Report	Fall 2026

D. Statement of Qualifications and Evaluation

The statement of qualifications should be no longer than five (5) single sided pages in length (not including cover page, cover letter and appendices).

Please include the following:

- The qualifications, ability, and experience of your firm in delivering similar projects. Include three references from the past five years for servicing projects your firm has completed, preferably in a regional district context. Provide short descriptions of similar projects and assignments completed by both the Firm and nominated Project Manager.
- Qualifications and areas expertise of the firm, Project Manager, and project team. Please include CV/Resume of the Project Manager and project team and explain how this individual will provide value for the RDN. Describe your Firm's approach to work.

- A list of sub-consultants, including their company and staff experience related to their role.
- A statement of your firm's ability to complete the work within the timeframe described.
- A statement of your firm's approach to advancing equity and sustainability in corporate operations and service provisions, including any certifications in this regard.

Statements of Qualifications (the "SOQ") will be evaluated by the Regional District of Nanaimo on a consensus basis and assigned a score out of 100 based on the above evaluation criteria. Any or all SOQs will not necessarily be accepted.

E. Submission Date & Time

Statements of Qualifications should be received on or before 3:00:00 p.m. local time on the 10th day of October, 2025. The RDN at its sole discretion, reserves the right to accept late submissions.

F. Questions and Submissions

Questions and submissions should be directed to:

Stephen Boogaards, Senior Planner
Development and Emergency Services
sboogaards@rdn.bc.ca
250-390-6524

G. Additional Information

If the RDN determines that additional information is required, the RDN will post an Addendum on the RDN (www.rdn.bc.ca/current-bid-opportunities) and the new BC Bid (www.bcbid.gov.bc.ca/) websites. It is the sole responsibility of interested vendors to check for additional information prior to submitting their response.
