

October 7, 2025

Proposed Borrowing for the Purchase of the Former French Creek School and Parkland – Have Your Say

Resident electors and non-resident property electors of Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Electoral Area F have the opportunity to decide through a referendum if the RDN can borrow up to \$824,000, plus interest, repayable over a period of no more than ten years, to purchase the former French Creek School site. The property located at 2350 Alberni Highway, Coombs is 3.7-hectares (9.15 acre) and would be purchased by Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks and Halls Local Service for community use. General voting day is Saturday, October 25, 2025, with advanced voting days on October 15 and October 22.

Voters will be asked: "Are you in favour of the Regional District of Nanaimo adopting "Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks and Halls Local Service Property Purchase Loan Authorization Bylaw No. 1929, 2025", which will authorize the Regional District of Nanaimo to borrow up to eight hundred and twenty-four thousand dollars (\$824,000), plus interest, repayable over a period of no more than ten (10) years, to finance the purchase of a 3.7 hectare (9.15 acre) property located at 2350 Alberni Highway, Coombs, (known as French Creek School) for use by the Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks and Halls Local Service?"

Additional Drop-In Information Session

Thursday, October 9

Meadowood Community Hall
1830 Galvin Place, Qualicum Beach
4 – 7 p.m.

This is an in-person, drop-in format, there will not be a presentation. There will be information boards with details about the referendum and the property. RDN staff will be present to answer any questions.

Voting Information and Key Dates

Advanced Voting Days

Dates: October 15 and 22

Time: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Location: Coombs Fairgrounds, 1014 Ford Road, Coombs

General Voting Day

Date: October 25

Time: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Location: Coombs Fairgrounds, 1014 Ford Road, Coombs

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An Alternate Process to Vote Using Mail Ballots

Due to the ongoing postal strike, mail ballot packages for voting in the French Creek School and Parkland Purchase Referendum can no longer be sent via mail. The RDN has made available four mail ballot package pick up and drop off locations. In-person voting remains unaffected.

A public notice was posted on the RDN website at rdn.bc.ca/notice-2025-10-03-0 with instructions on how to apply for, receive and submit a mail ballot during the postal strike. More information can also be found at rdn.bc.ca/2025French-Creek-School-Mail-ballot-voting. Please email vote@rdn.bc.ca or call 250-390-4111 if you have any questions regarding mail ballot voting.

For more information on the referendum, including the three ways to vote, who can vote and voting locations, visit rdn.bc.ca/2025French-Creek-School-Mail-ballot-voting.

Background Information

On April 8, 2025, the RDN Board passed a resolution in camera to purchase the former French Creek School site, a 3.7-hectare (9.15 acre) property located at 2350 Alberni Highway, Coombs, from Qualicum School District (SD69) for \$1,300,000. Part of the purchase would be funded through long-term borrowing which requires elector approval.

On May 27, the RDN Board approved the resolutions required to proceed to referendum to obtain the assent of the electors of the Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks and Halls Local Service Area for borrowing up to \$824,000, plus interest, repayable over a period of no more than ten years, to purchase the property for Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks and Halls Local Service use. A resolution to forward the required loan authorization bylaw to the Inspector of Municipalities for approval was approved. Ministerial approval was received for the bylaw, which allowed the RDN to proceed with the referendum.

The purchase of the property is included in the approved 2025-2029 Financial Plan. If the long-term borrowing through a referendum is approved by the electors, the purchase would be funded through \$376,000 of Electoral Area 'F' Community Parks and Halls reserve funds, \$120,000 of Community Works Funds and long-term borrowing of up to \$824,000 plus interest. In addition to the \$1.3 million purchase price, the funding also includes \$20,000 in closing costs to support this purchase.

If the referendum is successful, future use of the property will be determined after public engagement. The property includes a building once used as French Creek Community School, a gymnasium and a field and playground currently used as the French Creek School Community Park.

For more information on the proposed purchase and to sign up for online project updates, visit getinvolved.rdn.ca/french-creek-school-and-parkland-purchase-referendum.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

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