
August 25, 2026

An Open Letter to the Community

The Bella Coola Valley Official Community Plan and our efforts to engage the Nuxalk Nation

To the residents of the Central Coast Regional District,

The Board of Directors of the Central Coast Regional District (CCRD) is writing to inform our community that the Bella Coola Valley Official Community Plan (OCP) has been adopted, and to share an honest account of our efforts to engage, involve, and listen to the Nuxalk Nation throughout this work.

We are aware the Nuxalk Nation has raised concerns publicly about our consultation on the OCP. We take those concerns seriously. A summary timeline of our engagement is included below so our community has the full picture.

It's also important for our community to understand the land base this Plan covers. The entire planning area lies within the unceded ancestral territory of the Nuxalk Nation, though the OCP itself does not extend to Nuxalk's Reserve lands, over which the CCRD has no jurisdiction. Across the remaining lands, the CCRD's authority varies: on fee simple, privately held parcels the CCRD generally leads land use decisions, working alongside partners such as the Agricultural Land Commission, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Nuxalk Nation; on unceded Crown land, the Province and the Nation hold far greater influence over decision-making than the CCRD does. Even where the Plan's boundaries do not apply, such as on Reserve lands, the CCRD and the Nation share vital resources, including parks and water servicing, and Nuxalk's input on these and other shared matters remains essential.

It's also worth being clear about what this Plan can and cannot do. An Official Community Plan is a tool for local land use planning. It cannot legally declare, alter, or extinguish underlying Aboriginal title, which remains protected under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*. Advancing this OCP does not change that legal reality and does not affect the Nation's underlying rights and title in this territory.

Since 2022, CCRD staff have worked steadily to bring the Nuxalk Nation into this process, through leadership changes, elections, workshops, and presentations to Chief and Council, culminating in a community open house planned jointly with Nuxalk staff. In June 2025, the Hereditary Chiefs declined to take part in the session planned for them and declared the OCP process null and void. We respected that decision. Our community should also know it followed more than two years of sustained outreach.

The Board then formally referred the draft OCP to the Nation, with a 30-day review period that was extended twice at the Nation's request and extended further still through a difficult period for the community following a bear attack in November 2025. In March 2026, the CCRD invited the Nation

once more to submit comments. None were received, and to date the CCRD has received nothing from the Nation regarding the referral.

The CCRD has met its consultation obligations, and the Nation and the Stataitmc do not hold a veto over the OCP update. Even so, meeting that obligation is not the same as building the relationship we want with the Nuxalk Nation, and our Board remains committed to both.

The public hearing on the OCP took place, and we thank the Nuxalk members and community members who came forward to share their views. Following that hearing, the Board voted to adopt the Bella Coola Valley Official Community Plan. We moved forward because our community could not wait indefinitely for a plan it needs now. Adopting the OCP is not the end of our relationship with the Nuxalk Nation. It is one chapter in a much longer story, and the CCRD remains committed to reconciliation, to finding better ways of working together, and to hoping the Nation continues to engage with us on this and the many shared priorities ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kennedy", written over the printed name "Chair Kennedy".

Chair Kennedy

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Central Coast Regional District

Timeline at a Glance

A summary of key milestones in the Bella Coola Valley OCP update and our engagement with the Nuxalk Nation.

Date	Milestone
~1999	The current Bella Coola Valley OCP is adopted.
2010 onward	CCRD strategic plans repeatedly identify the need for an OCP update.
2022	Formal OCP update process begins.
Apr 2022	CCRD staff learn informally that some Nuxalk staff feel the Nation would not want to collaborate on a community plan. This is described at the time as an informal impression only, not an official position of Nuxalk leadership.
Apr 2023	CCRD invites Nuxalk leadership to an in-person OCP engagement session. Staff meet with the Chief to discuss the OCP.
Sep 2023	Following a Nuxalk election, CCRD follows up to request a meeting. The Nation advises that a new CAO will start in October and recommends reconnecting then.
Oct 2023	CCRD holds a virtual meeting with the Nation's newly appointed CAO to provide an overview of the OCP project. No follow-up is received afterward.
Sep 2024	CCRD renews contact with the Nation's newly appointed CAO regarding the OCP.
Oct 2024	CCRD requests a formal presentation to Nuxalk Chief and Council.
Nov 2024 – Jan 2025	CCRD follows up to schedule the Chief and Council presentation. A date of February 25, 2025 is confirmed.
Feb 25, 2025	In-person presentation delivered to Nuxalk Chief and Council. Council requests that the CCRD engage with the Stataitmc and Nuxalk community.
Mar 2025	CCRD shares the draft OCP with the Nation's CAO for review and seeks guidance on engaging the Stataitmc (Hereditary Chiefs).
Apr 2025	Virtual presentation delivered to the Nuxalk management team.
Apr 24, 2025	Board resolves to hold engagement sessions with the Nuxalk Nation and the Hereditary Chiefs (Stataitmc), at the request of Chief and Council.
Apr – May 2025	CCRD and Nuxalk staff, including the Nation's Ancestral Lineage Department, coordinate the location, format, dates, and materials for a community open house and a separate Stataitmc engagement session.
Jun 3, 2025	Community open house held at Nuxalk Hall. The Hereditary Chiefs briefly attend and read out a letter declining to participate, declaring the OCP process null and void.
Oct 1, 2025	Draft OCP formally referred to the Nation, with a 30-day review period.
Oct – Nov 2025	Two extensions granted to the Nation, at its request.
Nov 20, 2025	A bear attack in the community results in hospitalizations. CCRD extends the deadline further out of respect for what the community is facing.
Jan 2026	CCRD's CAO meets with Nation staff for an update on the referral.
Mar 2026	CCRD extends a final invitation to submit comments. None are received.
Jul 2026	First reading of the OCP bylaw; referral to the Agricultural Land Commission.
Aug 2026	Public hearing held. Nuxalk members and community members speak.
Aug 20, 2026	The CCRD Board formally adopts the Bella Coola Valley Official Community Plan.