BOARD REPORT

TO:	Chair and Directors	**File No:**	Policy A-73

SUBJECT: Electronic Submissions Policy

DESCRIPTION: Report from Jennifer Sham, Assistant Deputy Corporate Officer, dated July 8, 2019.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT: the Board endorse the "Electronic Submissions Policy A-73" and approve its inclusion into the CSRD Policy Manual, this 18th day of July, 2019.

SHORT SUMMARY:

The Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) currently accepts Alternative Approval Process (AAP) Elector Response Forms in the paper format only and in accordance with provincial legislation. If local governments wish to have the ability to accept electronic submissions; however, the province recommends[1] that a formal policy document be adopted to allow it.

VOTING:	Unweighted Corporate	☒	LGA Part 14 (Unweighted)	☐	Weighted Corporate	☐	Stakeholder *(Weighted)*	☐

BACKGROUND:

Current provincial legislations (Community Charter and Local Government Act) do not consider electronic submissions regarding the Alternative Approval Process or Local Area Service Petitions. If a local government wishes to accept electronic submissions, a formal policy is recommended by the province. The CSRD recognizes the convenience of email submissions and wishes to adopt a formal policy as suggested by the province.

POLICY:

There is currently no policy regarding accepting electronic submissions for either the AAP or Local Service Area petitions.

FINANCIAL:

There are no additional financial implications associated with this policy. The additional emails created for an AAP and for Local Service Area petitions do not have additional costs associated with them as the cost is included in the CSRD's data/internet usage plan.

KEY ISSUES/CONCEPTS:

Staff are proposing dedicated email addresses for electronic submissions of Elector Response Forms associated with AAPs and for Local Service Area petitions. These emails will be monitored by a number of staff to ensure the submissions are received as corporate mail, regardless of staff absences.

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[1] https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/governance-powers/alternative_approval_process_guide.pdf

The rationale for accepting the submissions in only two common formats (.pdf or .jpeg) is for the convenience of staff to reduce issues with opening attachments using installed programs at the CSRD office. Emails with zip files attached are often flagged as potentially dangerous emails and may be quarantined through the CSRD spam filter. Dropbox, OneDrive, and other cloud-sharing access links are not ideal due to possible security issues, possibility of incorrect share links, and possible privacy issues. Both of the acceptable formats (.pdf and .jpeg) are easily sent via email using either mobile (take clear photos of the completed form) or desktop (using a scanner) options.

Based on an informal survey of staff, fax/facsimiles are rarely used by the public to submit documents. Staff are recommending that faxes not be accepted for the following reasons: 1) staff believe this is an older form of technology that is not widely used by the public; 2) although there are dedicated telephone lines to the fax machines at the CSRD office, only one fax can be received at any given time; 3) aside from one dedicated fax machine, faxes are received through two multi-purpose photocopiers located on both floors of the building. Any staff member accessing those photocopiers will have access to the submissions, increasing the possibility of submissions not being counted due to human error; and, 4) often the quality of faxes received are poor and illegible. Contacting the sender can be challenging, especially if the sender's fax number is also a dedicated fax line.

IMPLEMENTATION:

If approved, AAP Elector Response Forms and Local Service Area petition forms will include reference to Policy A-73 and instructions on how to submit electronic forms to a specific email address. All staff who will be receiving both the paper and electronic versions of the submissions will be given instructions on how to receive AAP and Local Service Area submissions.

COMMUNICATIONS:

If approved, this policy will be included in the CSRD Policy Manual and on the CSRD website.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:
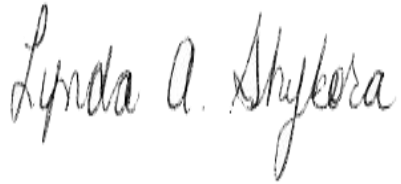
That the Board endorse the staff recommendation.

BOARD'S OPTIONS:

1. *Endorse the Recommendation.*
2. *Deny the Recommendation.*
3. *Defer.*
4. *Any other action deemed appropriate by the Board.*

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2019-07-18_Board_CA_Policy_A-73_Electronic_submissions.docx
Attachments:	- Policy A-73.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jul 8, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Lynda Shykora - Jul 8, 2019 - 2:25 PM

Charles Hamilton - Jul 8, 2019 - 2:28 PM