

TERMS OF REFERENCE

North Cowichan Mill Closure Response Working Group

Approved by the Mayor: January 16, 2026
Amended by the Mayor:

MANDATE

The North Cowichan Mill Closure Response Working Group (“the Working Group”) is a standing committee of Council, established by the Mayor pursuant to section 141 of the [Community Charter](#).

The mandate of the Working Group is to provide advice and recommendations to the Mayor and Council regarding municipal, intergovernmental and community responses to the permanent closure of the Crofton pulp mill, the temporary curtailment of the Chemainus sawmill, and other disruptions within the local forest industry.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Working Group will focus on:

- Supporting affected workers, families, and local businesses through advocacy and coordination with senior governments;
- Identifying and mitigating risks to the municipal tax base and local economy arising from forest sector disruptions;

Improving community preparedness and resilience in the event of further mill curtailments or closures in the region.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Working Group exists to support the Mayor and Council by:

- Advocating to provincial and federal governments for income, retraining, and transition supports for affected workers and families, as well as transition funding and fiscal support for North Cowichan to address the loss of industrial tax base.
- Advising Mayor and Council on potential response options should additional mill curtailments or closures occur.
- Assessing the broader economic, social, and community impacts of forest sector disruption and identifying short-, medium-, and long-term strategies to strengthen economic resilience, workforce retention, and transition planning.

The Working Group is advisory in nature and does not exercise decision-making authority on behalf of Council.

MEMBERSHIP

The Working Group shall consist of three (3) voting members of Council appointed by the Mayor and six (6) advisors representing the following sectors and levels of government:

- Two (2) representatives from forestry or forest products companies with operations or demonstrated investment interest in the Cowichan region

- Two (2) forestry workers impacted by mill closures
- Member of Parliament for Cowichan-Malahat-Langford
- Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Cowichan Valley

The Mayor may invite additional non-voting participants or technical advisors to attend meetings as required.

APPOINTMENT AND TERM

Members shall be appointed by the Mayor for a term to coincide with the Council term, or as otherwise determined by the Mayor.

The Working Group may be dissolved or reconstituted at the discretion of the Mayor.

CHAIR

The Mayor shall preside at meetings as Chair of the Working Group. In the absence of the Mayor, a Council member designated by the Mayor shall act as Chair.

STAFF SUPPORT

The Chief Administrative Officer shall serve as staff liaison to the Working Group.

MEETINGS

The Working Group shall meet monthly, or at the call of the Chair. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the [Council and Committee Procedure Bylaw](#) and the [Council Advisory Body Policy](#).

Any member of the Working Group may request, through the Chair, that an item be placed on the agenda. With the approval of the Chair, urgent or time-sensitive matters may be forwarded directly to Council for consideration.

Meetings shall be open to the public unless closed in accordance with the *Community Charter*.

REPORTING

The Working Group shall report regularly to the Mayor and Council through written reports and presentations.

The Working Group shall provide:

- An initial status update within three (3) months of establishment; and
- Ongoing recommendations as circumstances evolve.

REMUNERATION AND BUDGET

Working Group members serve as volunteers and receive no remuneration beyond that received by Council Members under [Council Remuneration Bylaw No. 3709](#), as amended from time to time.

A budget of up to \$5,000 is allocated for the duration of the Working Group, to support meeting costs, professional or technical advice, facilitation, research, community engagement, and reimbursable expenses.

Expenses incurred in the course of Working Group duties may be reimbursed, subject to pre-approval by the Chief Financial Officer or the Chief Administrative Officer, as appropriate.

CONDUCT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Members shall act in the public interest and comply with all applicable municipal policies, including conflict of interest and confidentiality requirements.