



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CVRD wins award for regional approach to citizen engagement

Today, the [Cowichan Valley Regional District](#) (CVRD) was awarded the [Union of BC Municipalities](#) (UBCM) Community Excellence Award, *Best Practices in Organizational Development & Improvements*, for their region-wide approach to citizen engagement.

Since January 2017, the CVRD and its member municipalities ([City of Duncan](#), [Town of Ladysmith](#), [Town of Lake Cowichan](#) and [Municipality of North Cowichan](#)) have used PlaceSpeak for engaging with residents in the region. From dog bylaws to housing affordability, residents only have to sign up once to be notified of new consultations from the CVRD and their municipality, on an ongoing basis. PlaceSpeak's unique geo-verification technology also empowers governments to consult exclusively with residents within their jurisdiction and spatially segments the feedback data collected, allowing for nuanced comparison of public opinion across different communities.

By breaking down silos between the two levels of government, PlaceSpeak provides a safe, secure and convenient single stop for residents to have their say on issues that matter to their community.

"The CVRD is proud of the partnership with our member municipalities and PlaceSpeak in providing Cowichan Valley residents with an innovative and convenient opportunity to engage with their local governments on important community initiatives and decisions. We are also proud to have received recognition of our efforts by the UBCM Community Excellence Award program," said Brian Carruthers, CVRD Chief Administrative Officer.

Introducing PlaceSpeak has simplified the citizen engagement process while reaching a more diverse audience. Since PlaceSpeak was launched, over 1,000 residents have registered. On average, topics receive over 1,500 views and 200 comments. By supplementing in-person events such as open houses or town halls, the CVRD has been able to engage significantly more people on initiatives happening in the region.

"The Cowichan Valley Regional District has shown real leadership in engaging with residents online using PlaceSpeak", says CEO, Colleen Hardwick. "We have been encouraging a citizen-centered approach to engagement, which enables multiple public sector organizations to interact with residents within their jurisdictional boundaries, and this has been very well



implemented by not only the CVRD but its member local governments. We applaud their willingness to innovate!"

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About PlaceSpeak:

[PlaceSpeak](#) is a pioneering location-based citizen engagement platform that solves the problem of how to consult online with people within specific geographical boundaries. Developed with the support of the National Research Council of Canada (NRC-IRAP), PlaceSpeak has expanded across Canada, into the USA, UK and Australia. By connecting participants to their physical location, PlaceSpeak ensures that the feedback collected is relevant and defensible for informed decision-making. Its unique geo-verification technology has been featured in Forbes and Government Technology.

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