

Terms of Reference
Boundary Bay
Living Dike Roundtable
February 24, 2023

1. What is the “Living Dike”?

The Living Dike is a nature-based approach to climate change adaptation being piloted in Boundary Bay, British Columbia. Boundary Bay is within territories that have been used and occupied by Semiahmoo and other Coast Salish peoples for time out of mind, and its living landscape is culturally and archaeologically rich, and sensitive. The Living Dike is being explored as a way to help manage coastal flood risk while protecting and potentially enhancing salt marsh habitat and ecosystems. It involves exploring how to gradually increase elevations in foreshore areas through deposits of fill and enhancement of salt marsh vegetation, so that the salt marsh persists as sea level rises. Because the landward edge of the salt marsh in Boundary Bay is bounded by dikes, as sea level rises in coming decades the marsh will eventually be completely underwater and will disappear if nothing is done. A healthy salt marsh is an important part of Boundary Bay ecosystems that support many different species, provide community benefits and are part of the cultures and economies of Semiahmoo First Nation and other Coast Salish peoples who have managed these areas sustainably for many millennia according to their own laws. A healthy salt marsh can also absorb wave energy and provide flood regulation services that will complement conventional diking infrastructure as coastal flood risks increase.

2. Why have the Living Dike Roundtable?

Boundary Bay is a landscape with multiple layers of jurisdiction (federal, provincial, and local). Non-Indigenous/Crown/colonial jurisdiction in Boundary Bay is siloed and fragmented across

geography, species, human activities and infrastructure and has historically been exercised in a way that does not respect Indigenous title and rights. Recent legislative commitments by federal and provincial governments to align their laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples create a legal mandate for pro-active recognition of Indigenous title and rights, but this commitment has not yet been translated into specific regulation or policy to guide projects such as the Living Dike. In this context, co-operation and relationship building is needed to carry out the Living Dike project, but there is no forum to bring everyone together.

Beginning in 2017, staff from the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance (whose role was later taken on by the Emergency Planning Secretariat) and West Coast Environmental Law convened a series of meetings and technical dialogues about the possibility of the Living Dike project with most of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous authorities in the region. In spring 2019, a partnership of the City of Surrey, Semiahmoo First Nation and the City of Delta was successful in obtaining funding through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) of Infrastructure Canada for a number of coastal flood management projects, including pilots for the Living Dike in Boundary Bay. Representatives from these authorities and other government agencies with jurisdiction in Boundary Bay recognized the usefulness of continuing to meet together as a Roundtable to support the design and implementation of the Living Dike pilots during the period 2019-2028.

Specifically, the purpose of the Roundtable is to:

- 1) Support implementation of specific applications of the Living Dike concept at the sites currently proposed in Boundary Bay;
- 2) Help to identify and share concerns and priorities of Semiahmoo First Nation and other Coast Salish nations with overlapping/shared territories that are related to the Living Dike pilots;
- 3) Support longer-term uptake of the Living Dike and other nature-based approaches within the region and broadly, in a way that upholds Indigenous title and rights and

implements the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and

- 4) Build relationships and understanding among participants across jurisdictions.

To achieve these goals, the following activities are anticipated:

- a) Facilitating information sharing and technical dialogue among participants related to the design and implementation of the Living Dike projects, in a respectful way that supports relationship building and ecosystem health for the region;
- b) Leveraging expertise and resources relevant to the Living Dike projects from other projects and activities;
- c) Helping to identify and support adaptive management and research related to the Living Dike projects that increases the likelihood of successful implementation as well as providing lessons and inspiration for future projects related to coastal restoration and protection and coastal flood management; and
- d) Providing a forum to explore how the Living Dike projects can align with or support other initiatives in Boundary Bay related to ecosystem health, action for reconciliation and priorities and objectives of Indigenous authorities, such as Semiahmoo First Nation.

3. Who are the participants in the Living Dike Roundtable?

Membership in the Roundtable is voluntary, and generally will include leadership or staff representatives, or both, from the following:

DMAF Project partners:

- City of Surrey;
- Semiahmoo First Nation; and
- City of Delta.

And also:

- BC-WLRS, South Coast Region;
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada;

- Natural Resources Canada;
- Environment and Climate Change Canada;
- Metro Vancouver; and
- National Research Council of Canada.

Tsawwassen First Nation and other Indigenous nations that have expressed interest in having representatives attend are always welcome and will be sent invitations to Roundtable meetings.

Members of the Roundtable support the design and implementation of the project in a multi-jurisdictional environment and share information and insights related to the purposes and goals of the pilot projects, but do not exercise any regulatory or other powers through the Roundtable.

Other invited participants will include technical advisors, for example, and other invitees, who may attend one or more meetings of the Roundtable, as determined by the Roundtable participants in discussion with the Roundtable Co-chairs.

The Roundtable will be facilitated and supported logistically by two Co-chairs: Emergency Planning Secretariat and West Coast Environmental Law.

4. Decision-making by the Living Dike Roundtable

The regular membership of the Roundtable will make decisions about its process, purpose, and membership, and will rely on a consensus approach. The decisions of the Roundtable are only about the Roundtable and its process.

5. Meetings of the Living Dike Roundtable

Roundtable meetings will be held approximately 2-4 times per year, virtually or in-person, over the course of the design and implementation of the Living Dike projects in Boundary Bay. The members of the Roundtable may also decide to form related groups, including a Technical Working Group, to consider specific issues related to the Living Dike projects in more detail, and to invite other organizations and individuals to meetings of those working groups.

6. Technical Working Group associated with the Living Dike Roundtable

A Technical Working Group associated with the Roundtable will also be formed to discuss specific, technical issues related to the Pilot Project in more detail and to draw on relevant expertise related to the design and implementation (construction, monitoring and adaptive management) of the Pilot Project and the Living Dike over the longer term.

Participation in meetings or other activities associated with the Technical Working Group, such as site visits, will be open to all Roundtable participants and their staff, and the Project Partners may also invite, at their discretion, project consultants and other organizations and individuals with relevant technical expertise.

The Technical Working Group will meet on an as-needed basis, as determined by the Co-chairs in discussion with the Project Partners.

The Roundtable Co-chairs will organize and facilitate the meetings and other activities of the Technical Working Group and will provide minutes from Technical Working Group meetings to Roundtable participants.

7. Core Team meetings associated with the Living Dike Roundtable

To support more detailed discussions related to the design and construction of the Living Dike pilot projects funded by DMAF, the Co-chairs will also convene and facilitate meetings of the DMAF project partners, including staff and representatives from City of Surrey, Semiahmoo First Nation, and City of Delta. Project consultants and other technical experts may be invited to these meetings as appropriate.

8. External Communications from the Living Dike Roundtable

Members of the Roundtable will exercise good faith and respect in external communications about matters discussed at the Roundtable, and the Roundtable itself, and will communicate only in their own capacity and not on behalf of the Roundtable as a whole or on behalf of other members of the Roundtable.

Members of the Roundtable may also agree to coordinated external communications about the Living Dike pilot projects and the Roundtable and its process.

Meetings of the Boundary Bay Living Dike Roundtable (September 2019 – February 2023)

Roundtable meetings

September 4, 2019
February 3, 2020
October 14, 2020
March 12, 2021
March 29, 2021
January 28, 2022
March 23, 2022
October 3, 2022
February 17, 2023

Technical Working Group meetings

March 17, 2021
September 23, 2021 – Site visit with CSSP
January 10, 2022
March 4, 2022
September 13, 2022
February 15, 2023

Core Team meetings

April 8, 2021
May 13, 2021
July 20, 2021
October 7, 2021
November 4, 2021
December 2, 2021
January 6, 2022
February 3, 2022
March 3, 2022
May 5, 2022
September 20, 2022
November 7, 2022
November 14, 2022
February 8, 2023