

DATE: August 10, 2023

TO: Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

FROM: James Warren
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

RE: **Strategic Plan – 2023-2026**

FILE: 6430-01

Supported by James Warren
Acting Chief Administrative
Officer

J. Warren

Purpose

To present the Comox Valley Regional District Board's Strategic Plan, which is the outcome from the strategic planning session held in June 2023.

Recommendations from the Acting Chief Administrative Officer:

1. THAT the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, attached as Appendix A to the staff report dated August 10, 2023, be approved.
2. THAT the Board establish its mission statement as follows:

The Comox Valley Regional District is a partnership of three electoral areas and three municipalities providing sustainable services for residents and visitors to the area. The local governments work collaboratively on services for the benefit of those living and visiting the diverse urban and rural areas of the Comox Valley.
3. THAT the Board update and affirm its strategic drivers, for the purpose of defining the means by which Comox Valley Regional District services are delivered, as follows:
 - **Fiscal Responsibility:** Careful management of services and assets is essential to providing affordable and reliable services to citizens and businesses in the Comox Valley Regional District.
 - **Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection:** The Comox Valley Regional District is committed to reducing our impact on the environment and ensuring we can adapt and respond to climate change impacts.
 - **Community and Social Wellbeing:** The social fabric of our communities, health and well-being of citizens, and community partnerships is ever present in guiding our service delivery.
 - **Indigenous Relations:** We are committed to reconciliation and relationship building with indigenous peoples and specifically K'ómoks First Nation.
 - **Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** The Comox Valley Regional District is committed to ensuring all community members have access to services and feel they belong to our regional community.
4. THAT updates on the Strategic Plan initiatives be provided on a regular basis, including milestones, risks, challenges and changes to targeted project completion.

Executive Summary

Strategic planning at the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) helps to identify the Board of Directors' goals and align the CVRD's service delivery with those goals. Using a multiphase approach, the Board establishes certain strategic drivers to guide service delivery. Those drivers are applied to the CVRD's core services and the Board approves work plans through its financial planning process.

- Following the October 2022 local government elections, the CVRD Board reviewed its strategic planning process in January 2023 and defined an approach to address its highest priorities being social development supports, active transportation, climate crisis response, advocacy and housing ([CVRD Board meeting minutes dated January 31, 2023](#))
- The Electoral Areas Services Committee undertook a strategic planning session in April 2023 and applied focus on agricultural planning, affordable housing, parks and regional parks and economic development ([EASC strategic planning session staff report dated May 4, 2023](#))
- A two-day session was held June 15 and 16, facilitated by Allison Habkirk, to review the CVRD's vision statement and strategic drivers and affirm or update the key service outcomes and initiatives for each of the Board's eight core services. A particular focus of the two-day session was determining the CVRD's response to the affordable housing crisis.
- The 2023-26 Strategic Plan that resulted from the June session is Appendix A to this report.
- Staff recommend several resolutions to enact the plan and work towards realizing the Board's visions for the 2023-26 term of office, including;
 - Recommendation 1: the Board is recommended to approve the Strategic Plan to establish the focus and priority for the 2023-2026 term of office;
 - Recommendation 2: the Board discussed the following text that has historically been referred to as the Vision Statement, and collectively agreed to rename this as the Mission Statement:

The Comox Valley Regional District is a partnership of three electoral areas and three municipalities providing sustainable services for residents and visitors to the area.

The local governments work collaboratively on services for the benefit of those living and visiting the diverse urban and rural areas of the Comox Valley.

- Recommendation 3: the Board discussed the importance of inclusivity and equity in delivering CVRD services and debated whether the topic should be added to the existing community and social wellbeing driver or add a new, fifth driver. Given the more broad-reaching effect of naming an additional driver, for both the public and the CVRD as an organization, staff are recommending that the Board approve a fifth strategic driver related to accessibility, diversity, inclusivity and equity.
- Recommendation 4: regular reporting on the strategic plan is important to describe the progress on various aspects including key initiatives and key service outcomes. Staff intend to provide initiatives updates at least three times annually, around financial and strategic planning milestones.

- Several options exist for any of the above noted recommendations, and staff can expand on related projects as needed. It should also be noted that all of the initiatives have individual work plans and updates or decision points will be presented to the Board or various committees and commissions as needed. The topic of determining the CVRD’s response to affordable housing, as an example, will be presented in a comprehensive fashion in September 2023

Prepared by:

J. Warren

James Warren
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment: Appendix A – DRAFT 2023-2026 Strategic Plan



Comox Valley Regional District Strategic Planning 2023

June 2023

Prepared by A. M. Habkirk BA MA MPA MCIP

This report documents the outcomes of a two-day workshop held with the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board and senior staff on June 15 & 16, 2023.

The workshop followed earlier held workshops of the full Board in January 2023 and with the Electoral Area Service Committee in April 2023.

The key objectives of the June workshop were to:

- Work through each core service and:
 - Review/amend Key Service Outcomes;
 - Refine/amend each initiative/direction; and
 - Consider recommended new initiatives.
- Consider in detail Housing Response and chart a path forward.
- Review electoral area priorities.
- Discuss potential 5th driver (accessibility, diversity, equity & inclusion).

This report documents the key decisions of the Board including:

- affirmation of the Corporate Plan Strategic Drivers (Fiscal Responsibility, Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection, Community and Social Wellbeing, and Indigenous Relations);
- amended Key Service Outcomes; and
- amended Key 2023-2026 initiatives.

Key Directions given by the Board:

- Continue key initiatives in most service areas
- Convert the CVRD's vision statement into a mission statement

Mission Statement

The Comox Valley Regional District is a partnership of three electoral areas and three municipalities providing sustainable services for residents and visitors to the area.

The local governments work collaboratively on services for the benefit of those living and visiting the diverse urban and rural areas of the Comox Valley.

- Develop alternate wording for a) a new driver focused on diversity, equity and inclusivity (DEI) or b) incorporate DEI into the community and social wellbeing driver

New driver option

Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity: The CVRD is committed to ensuring all community members have access to services and feel they belong to our regional community.

Integrated into the Community and Social Wellbeing driver

The social fabric of our communities, accessibility and equity, health, wellbeing and inclusion of citizens, and community partnerships is ever present in guiding our service delivery.

- Develop a response to the housing crisis that focusses on:
 - Establishing a vehicle for regional housing collaboration, coordination, advocacy and development focused on non-market rental housing (staff will bring forward an interim report on a housing function(s) in September 2023 that includes consideration for a housing corporation to be worked on through the fall and winter)
 - Advocating to the Province for emergency shelter housing
 - Continuing to support the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness

The housing directions flowed out of a detailed discussion focused on housing needs, current, services in the valley, and the Kelowna Wheelhouse model illustrated below



The Wheelhouse describes three categories of housing:

- Market housing
- Safety net housing
- Housing with supports.

The Board generally agreed the CVRD should focus its efforts and resources on the safety net and housing with supports sectors of the wheelhouse.

It was noted there may be an additional sector that represents unsupported rental housing such as co-op housing or not for profit owned and operated rental housing. The Kelowna model refers to subsidized (monthly subsidies or capital grants) rental housing but not unsubsidized not for profit rental housing.

The following pages detail Board direction for CVRD key services for the 2023-2026 time horizon.



Finance and Administration

Finance and Administration provides support services for: legislative, financial, personnel, communications, executive, information technology and administrative functions. In addition, it oversees borrowing for large scale projects, elections, and public approval processes.

Key Service Outcomes:

- Fiscal responsibility and effective management
- Quality information and communication for residents and businesses
- Social procurement
- Strategic partnerships
- Community leadership
- Enhance and strengthen relationships with Indigenous peoples and implement UNDRIP and DRIPA
- Organizational strength and wellness
- Exceptional services for the community

Key 2023-2026 initiatives/directions:

1. Develop Asset Management Program
2. Develop Fiscal Framework and Strategy
3. Continue to work with the Advisory Group on Reconciliation
4. Complete and implement the Regional Tourism Strategy
5. Continue Island Corridor Engagement



Water Supply

CVRD owns and operates water supply systems that provide treated water, either in bulk or directly to 60,000 residents in Courtenay, Comox, parts of the surrounding electoral areas including Union Bay, Black Creek, Saratoga Beach and Denman Island. In the largest system, water from Comox Lake is treated with filtration, chlorination and ultraviolet light and then flows through a network of reservoirs, pumping stations and transmission mains or pipes. Distribution to residents and businesses is managed by municipalities and individual electoral area water services.

Key Service Outcomes

- High quality water
- Sufficient water supply to accommodate current and future demands
- Leader in water conservation (reduction of per capita usage)
- Reliable and resilient infrastructure
- Source and infrastructure resiliency to climate change impacts
- Equitable access to water
- Positive K'ómoks First Nation relations regarding water supply
- Protected watersheds
- Reduced impacts of recreational users
- Informed residents regarding water supply and conservation

Key 2023-2026 initiatives/directions:

1. Complete Water South Extension
Mutual benefit agreement with K'ómoks First Nation
Partnership CVRD (Royston), K'ómoks First Nation, Courtenay
Construction 2025
2. Continue Water Master Planning
CVWS (BCOB, Royston, Union Bay complete)
3. Review Water Rates
Black Creek – Oyster Bay, Comox Valley, Royston, Union Bay



Sewage Treatment

CVRD owns and operates conveyance and treatment infrastructure for wastewater from the communities of Courtenay, Comox, CFB Comox (19 Wing) and K’ómoks First Nation (by service contract). The Comox Valley Water Pollution Control Centre, commissioned in 1984, is a secondary wastewater treatment facility. The CVRD Board delegates operational and administrative decisions to the Comox Valley Sewage Commission.

The CVRD also provides liquid waste management planning on sewer and septic matters in the electoral areas.

Key Service Outcomes

- Managed assets
- Affordable service
- Infrastructure resiliency to climate change impacts
- Partnerships with K’ómoks First Nation
- Reduced storm water infiltration
- Willemar Bluff risk reduction

Key 2023-2026 initiatives/directions:

1. Complete Comox Valley Sewer Conveyance Project
2. Complete Liquid Waste Management Planning for Core and South addendum
3. Construct Sewer Extension South



Electoral Area Services

CVRD delivers local government and services to electoral areas (street lighting, land use planning, fire protection, building inspection, bylaw compliance, water distribution, Islands-based services, parks, heritage conservation, community hall supports, community grants and more).

Electoral area directors advocate for services with the CVRD itself, senior government, and other stakeholders.

Key Service Outcomes

- Local government for rural areas
- Advocating for equitable and appropriate service delivery
- Infrastructure and community resiliency
Responding to and partnering with community groups and residents

Key 2023-2026 initiatives/directions:

1. Develop Septic Regulation / Education program
2. Develop Watershed Stewardship Service
3. Undertake Agricultural Planning
4. Examine Building Inspection and Applications processes
5. Implement Community Parks and Greenways Strategic Plans
6. Implement priorities of the Fire Services Review



Regional Sustainability

The Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), adopted in 2011, promotes human settlement that is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land, and other resources. In addition, one of the intents of the RGS and Regional Sustainability priority is to provide a mechanism for regional collaboration.

The RGS includes eight goals related to: housing, ecosystems, natural areas and parks, local economic development, transportation, infrastructure, food systems, public health and safety, and climate change. Regional Sustainability and the RGS provide broad opportunity for data collection, monitoring and reporting to support regional district, municipal, and senior government decision-making and public awareness and education.

Key Service Outcomes

- Settlement that is socially, economically, environmentally healthy
- Housing supply for current and future needs
- Affordable housing
- Affordable servicing
- Collaborative governance with K'ómoks First Nation and other organizations
- Improved air quality
- RGS monitoring and evaluation
- Planning and implementation for climate change
- Robust and resilient food system
- Transition to low-carbon region

Key 2023-2026 initiatives/directions:

1. Review Regional Growth Strategy
2. Develop RGS Action Plans
3. Implement 2021 Poverty Reduction Strategy
4. Develop a Regional Parks Strategy to define the service
5. Develop a response to the housing crisis that focusses on:
 - a. Establishing a vehicle for regional housing collaboration, coordination, advocacy and development focused on non-market rental housing (staff will bring forward an interim report on a housing function(s) in September 2023 that includes consideration for a housing corporation to be worked on through the fall and winter)
 - b. Advocating to the Province for emergency shelter housing
 - c. Continue to support the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness



Transportation

The key focus areas for Transportation include improved mobility options for residents, reducing GHG emissions, and providing convenient, affordable, safe alternatives to automobiles within the community. The Comox Valley Transit System, in partnership with BC Transit, forms a large component of the CVRD's approach to transportation

Key Service Outcomes

- Affordable fares
- Access equity
- Greenhouse gas reduction
- Alternative services in rural areas
- Access for high need users to services e.g. food bank, farmers market
- Integration with School District 71 student transportation needs
- Mode shift from single occupancy vehicles to alternative modes
- Links to neighbourhood services and interregional linkages

Key 2023-2026 initiatives/directions:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Implement Transit Future Action Plan | |
| 2. Improve Electoral Area and Ministry of Transportation relationships regarding infrastructure improvements | |
| 3. Prioritize and implement the Active Transportation Network Plan | |
| 4. Prioritize transit and transportation infrastructure investments | |



Recreation

CVRD owns and operates the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre (pool facilities), Comox Valley Sports Centre (two ice sheets, wellness centre and pool facilities), Comox Valley Curling Centre, track and synthetic turf field and the Exhibition Grounds. Administration, recreation grants, and operation oversight of the facilities and programs is delegated to the Comox Valley Recreation Commission.

The Commission undertook its own strategic planning session in 2023. The strategic planning will help guide the future programming and capital plans going forward.

Key Service Outcomes

- Supporting the health of citizens
- Asset management
- Partnerships between jurisdictions and external stakeholders
- Connectivity to recreational services
- Accessibility to recreational services
- Volunteer engagement
- Collaborate with School District 71 facilities
- Greenhouse gas and environmental impact reduction
- Partnerships with K'ómoks First Nation and indigenous peoples

Key 2023-2026 initiatives/directions:	
1. Complete and implement the CVRD Recreation Strategic Plan	
2. Design and construct the new artificial turf	
3. Develop playing fields use framework and amenity improvements collaboratively	
4. Analyze capital and climate aspects for ice facilities	



Regional Emergency Services

CVRD Regional Emergency Services provides Comox Valley wide collaboration and coordination of emergency management under the four pillars of emergency management – mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

The Emergency Services support the activation and operations of the regional emergency operation centre in emergency situations.

Several rural and community fire department services (under a volunteer fire fighter model) are delivered through CVRD.

Key Service Outcomes

- Emergency prevention and mitigation
- Emergency Operations Centre preparedness
- Business and resident emergency preparedness
- Support for emergency staff and volunteers
- K'ómoks First Nation partnerships and bridging
- Emergency food supply preparedness
- Prepared for climate readiness

Key 2023-2026 initiatives/directions:

1. Regionalize Comox Valley Emergency Planning Program
2. Complete the new Regional Emergency Operations Centre
 - a. Developing, training, and implementing the EOC personnel plan capable of filling three shifts for a stage 3 activation
3. Design and construct the Mount Washington fire service building
4. Design and construct the Union Bay Fire Hall
5. Design and construct the Denman Island Fire Hall
6. Plan for Community Fire Smart Program and Wildfire Protection