



Comox Strathcona
REGIONAL DISTRICT

2006 Annual Report

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Message from the Chair



On behalf of my colleagues on the Comox Strathcona Regional District board of directors, I am pleased to introduce the annual report for the year ending December 31, 2006.

Over that year, the regional district acted on its desire to lead many initiatives in new directions. We started with a visual identity transformation, emerging with a new logo and a new overall 'look'. The shift was more than just a visual update; it also symbolized a move within the CSRD to play an even more positive role in the daily lives of our constituents.

In 2006, the CSRD extended its Comox Valley transit service to the Oyster River, and that same service won an award for one of the 25 fastest-growing businesses on Vancouver Island. We branded and launched a new biosolids soil product called "Skyrocket" which sold out soon after offering it to the public. On Quadra Island, a great community / business / CSRD partnership resulted in the new Granite Bay regional park wharf and boat ramp. We funded and worked with the volunteer fire department on construction of the new Oyster River/Black Creek fire hall. A major cooperative effort began the growth management strategy for the Comox Valley, which will plan for services 25 years into the future. The Local Government Management Association (LGMA) recognized our own CAO, Bob Long, with a provincial award for outstanding leadership in local government. And we lobbied the provincial and federal governments on many issues that are crucial to the lives of our residents.

All that, plus our regular provision of 145 services to our residents who are spread over a large geographic area, representing diverse needs and opinions. There is no doubt the CSRD is active and involved in so many important facets of our residents' lives – whether it's providing parks and recreation, teaching recycling education in the school system or keeping our drinking water safe.

As we go through 2007 and beyond I know we will have major challenges and opportunities ahead of us: managing the emergence of large-scale developments, participating in an integrated regional growth strategy, and moving forward with major water and sewer projects. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as the chair of the board for the past four years and I sincerely hope that we can continue to work cooperatively to build on the successes of the past year and deliver results for the future that meet the needs of our constituents.



Jim Abram
CSRD chair

Message from the CAO



It has been another event-filled year at the Comox Strathcona Regional District, as the organization continues to move forward. Change can be difficult, but it also offers opportunities to explore new ways of doing things and to help an organization work more effectively.

My belief remains that a regional district is an organization with a mandate and a responsibility to solve problems at the local level so that its residents can live in a sustainable and functional environment. The themes of this report are teamwork, building community and leadership and I believe that the CSRD demonstrated all three things in the issues and events of 2006.

For the first time, we used statistical research to find out what residents know, think and feel about us as an organization. We learned that the majority of residents within our borders are satisfied with the services they receive from the CSRD. We also learned that our residents are not opposed to change – there was support for growth in residential, commercial and agricultural development – and they support the regional government playing a strong role in a growth management strategy. And finally, the research showed that we can do more to help residents better understand the full breadth of services they receive from the CSRD.

One of the ways we undertook to provide that understanding was through the ‘re-branding’ of the CSRD. This was about more than creating a new logo and developing a professional, modern ‘look’. By applying a consistent visual identity to everything from our compost education gardens to facility signage to work vehicles, we are ‘connecting the dots’ for residents to more easily see the full scope of what we do and what we provide.

We also implemented the highest degree of communication around the liquid waste management plan to help people understand the complex issues so they could make an informed choice on an initiative that would greatly affect their lives. The result was that in early 2006 over 2,000 residents came out to vote in three liquid waste referenda.

This report will outline many more 2006 initiatives that engaged and enhanced communities and I am proud to have been part of the organization providing the leadership that got those things done.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Long', written over a light grey grid background.

Bob Long,
Chief administrative officer



2006 Comox Strathcona Regional District Board of Directors

Back row, left to right

Cliff Pederson, Zeballos; Roger McDonnell, Campbell River; Starr Winchester, Courtenay; Roy Grant, Campbell River; Barbara Price, (Area 'B'); Peter Rambo, (Area 'H'); Carol Quin, (Area 'K'); Fred Bates, Cumberland (vice chair); Heather Sprout, Sayward; Tom Pater, (Area 'G'); Jenny Hiebert, (Area 'I'); Brenda Leigh, (Area 'D'); Paul Ives, Comox; Craig Anderson, Gold River

Front row, left to right

Barry Minaker, (Area 'C'); Dave McIntosh, Tahsis; Morgan Ostler, Campbell River; Jim Abram, (Area 'J') (Chair); Suzanne Murray, (Area 'A'); Don McRae, Courtenay



Comox Strathcona Regional District Senior Management Team

Back row, left to right

Debra Oakman, GM Corporate Services; Ray Boogaards, GM Recreation Services; Leigh Carter, GM Corporate Communication
Carlos Felip, GM Community Planning Services

Front row, left to right

Bob Long, Chief Administrative Officer; Graeme Faris, GM Operational Services

Management's Responsibility for Financial Reporting

These summarized consolidated financial statements have been prepared by management from the complete consolidated financial statements for inclusion in this annual report. They provide a brief financial overview of the regional district's financial position at December 31, 2006 and the results of its activities for the year ended December 31, 2006.

Management maintains a system of internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded and that transactions are authorized, recorded and reported properly. Management also maintains a program of proper business compliance.

The board of directors is responsible for reviewing and approving the financial statements and for ensuring that management fulfils its responsibilities for financial reporting and internal control.

Meyers Norris Penny LLP, Chartered Accountants, the regional district's independent auditors, have conducted an examination of the financial statements in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and have expressed their opinion in their report which accompanies the complete audited financial statements available at the regional district office or online at www.comoxstrathcona.ca.



E.J. Dunlop, CGA

Officer responsible for Financial Administration,
pursuant to Section 199 of the Local Government Act



MEYERS NORRIS PENNY LLP

Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of the Comox Strathcona Regional District:

The accompanying summarized consolidated statement of financial position and statement of financial activities are derived from the complete consolidated financial statements of the Comox Strathcona Regional District as at December 31, 2006 and for the year then ended on which we expressed an opinion without reservation in our report dated March 2, 2007. The fair summarization of the complete consolidated financial statements is the responsibility of management. Our responsibility, in accordance with the applicable Assurance Guideline of The Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, is to report on the summarized financial statements.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements fairly summarize, in all material respects, the related complete consolidated financial statements in accordance with the criteria described in the Guideline referred to above.

These summarized financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on the district's financial position, results of operations and cash flows, readers are invited to obtain a full set of audited financial statements, from the Regional District office or online at www.comoxstrathcona.ca.

Campbell River, British Columbia
March 2, 2007

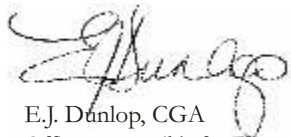
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angus Norris Penny'.
Chartered Accountants

Comox Strathcona Regional District

Summarized Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

As of December 31, 2006 (Audited)

	2006	2005
Financial Assets		
Cash and temporary investments	\$ 36,835,863	\$ 27,115,674
Receivables and inventory for resale	2,638,082	2,667,063
Debt Recoverable from others	44,375,674	43,341,092
Total Financial Assets	83,849,619	73,123,829
Liabilities		
Payables and other liabilities	4,174,825	4,997,186
Long-term debt	81,876,043	79,631,009
Deferred revenue	3,139,667	2,443,488
Provision for landfill closure and post closure	2,248,166	1,940,890
Total Liabilities	91,438,701	89,012,573
Net Financial Assets (Liabilities)	(7,589,082)	(15,888,744)
Non-Financial Assets		
Prepaid expenses and inventory of supplies	69,715	66,451
Tangible capital assets	131,275,715	126,281,477
Total Non-Financial Assets	131,345,430	126,347,928
Net Position	\$ 123,756,348	\$ 110,459,184
Comox Strathcona Regional District Equity Position		
Equity in tangible capital assets	\$ 93,775,346	\$ 89,961,559
Fund balances	29,981,002	20,497,625
Comox Strathcon Regional District Position	\$ 123,756,348	\$ 110,459,184



E.J. Dunlop, CGA
Officer responsible for Financial Administration,
pursuant to Section 199 of the Local Government Act

Comox Strathcona Regional District

Summarized Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

Year ended December 31, 2006 (Audited)

	2006 Actual	2006 Budget	2005 Actual
Revenue			
Frontage and parcel taxes	\$ 202,370	\$ 224,827	\$ 202,707
Grants in lieu of taxes	442,813	366,673	448,198
Requisitions - electoral and municipal	22,489,865	22,495,939	20,297,077
Transfers from other governments	1,542,650	693,516	305,919
Sales of services and own revenue sources	14,096,215	12,633,062	13,301,210
Contribution from others	9,586,834	8,073,964	8,914,340
Debt proceeds to contribution services	191,338	191,338	450,000
Interest earned and actuarial adjustment	2,676,675	-	2,114,605
Total Revenue	51,228,760	44,679,319	46,034,056
Expenditures			
General government	3,339,113	4,341,544	3,227,982
Protective	3,234,434	3,658,567	3,857,558
Environmental health	12,991,328	25,468,728	14,420,134
Public health and welfare	10,546	33,136	38,507
Environmental development	2,013,492	2,055,262	1,823,752
Recreation and cultural	11,267,398	12,251,025	11,192,486
Transportation	1,655,833	1,774,366	1,464,512
Debt charges - Municipalities	8,109,678	8,071,714	7,936,248
Landfill closure and post closure allowance	307,276	-	279,317
Total Expenditures	42,929,098	57,654,342	44,240,496
Net Revenues (Expenditures)	8,299,662	(12,975,023)	1,793,560
Financing Activities			
New debt issued - Regional District	5,300,570	9,409,808	6,760,500
Debt principal repayments - Regional District	(2,120,754)	(2,125,183)	(1,891,094)
Actuarial reduction of debenture debt	(1,999,365)	-	(1,767,460)
Non financial asset valuation change	3,264	-	(7,902)
Decrease (Increase) in long-term financing	1,183,715	7,284,625	3,094,044
Change in Consolidated Fund Balances	9,483,377	(5,690,398)	4,887,604
Beginning Consolidated Fund Balances	20,134,349	20,497,625	15,260,343
Add: Prior period adjustment - Grants in lieu of taxes	363,276	-	349,678
Beginning Consolidated Fund Balances - restated	20,497,625	20,497,625	15,610,021
Ending Consolidated Fund Balances	\$ 29,981,002	\$ 14,807,227	\$ 20,497,625



Building Community



Exhibition grounds ring renovation

In 2006, replacement of the lower warm-up ring at the CSRD's exhibition grounds resulted in a size increase that allowed for additional equine use such as dressage and barrel racing. As well, the installation of wood fencing now allows cattle penning to occur on site. Future development can occur on the portion of the fields that were reclaimed by diverting all excavated material to the east end of the property.

A study was commissioned to report on the electrical and water supply to ensure the grounds meet or exceed the needs of current users, and to let us prepare for any future replacement of buildings, services or structures. In October, engineers and consultants presented their findings to users of the grounds, and gathered feedback from them. Additional user group meetings in 2007 will facilitate further discussions on replacement of buildings and upgrades to the site.

Helping communities plan for their future

In 2006, the CSRD was involved in three initiatives aimed both at improving the delivery of information and services to residents as well as seeking input from and having interaction at the community level. These initiatives included starting the community-based review of the Quadra Island official community plan, which involved the use of four citizen-led steering committees. These committees have a lead role in determining the community issues important to their local area and to the development of policies, goals and objectives that will help give life to the community vision.

Secondly, the regional district partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to facilitate an agricultural

workshop, tour and series of meetings for the six MLAs who form the provincial committee for the development of a comprehensive provincial agriculture plan. The meetings were with elementary school students, local farmers and members of the economic development community, and the tours were to local agricultural operations. This interaction made it possible to highlight local issues and concerns that will hopefully help to strengthen the competitiveness, long-term growth and economic viability of the local agricultural industry.

In a third example of working closely with community, the CSRD community planning staff met with members of the local real estate industry to explain the role of





Improvements at Blind Creek boat launch

community planning in the land development process. This provided an opportunity to highlight the resources the regional district has available such as the web-based 'iMap' tool that allows realtors and residents to obtain a wealth of information about individual properties and land use regulations. It also provided an opportunity to review the updated content of the revamped CSRD website that makes an even wider range of information available to the community.

When the CSRD undertook work to protect and expand the parking area at the Blind Creek boat launch on Cortes Island, strategies were developed to do the work without having a negative impact on fish habitat during or after construction. The improvements to the parking lot required removing small trees and brush, installing additional length to the existing highway culvert, surfacing the parking area and establishing a drainage pattern that would largely prevent sediment from getting to the beach area. Angular rock was hand-placed along the edges of the ramp to act as a safety barrier for vehicles.



Wellness centre opens

Friday, September 22, 2006 marked the grand opening of the new wellness centre at the CSRD's Comox Valley sports centre. The facility has leading edge cardio and strength-training equipment, including the "Equalizer", the "Ergometer" and an active/passive upper and lower body cycle donated by the Rick Hansen Man in Motion Foundation. The province of BC contributed over \$325,000 for other sports centre upgrades, which included a wheelchair-accessible elevated walkway linking arenas one and two, and the conversion of a concession area to rooms for referees and for first aid. The renovations at the sports centre augmented the existing programs and services, providing residents with additional opportunities to maintain or improve individual and family health and wellness.



Photo 1 Wellness centre grand opening. (l to r) Comox councillor Paul Ives; CSRD board chair Jim Abram; Minister of Tourism, Sport & the Arts – Hon. Stan Hagen; CSRD director for Baynes Sound (Area 'A') Suzanne Murray; Rick Hansen Man in Motion Foundation representative Rick Milina **Photographer** Marci Crossan

Photo 2 Working out in the new CSRD Comox Valley wellness centre **Photographer** Koreen Gurak

Democracy in action: CSRD liquid waste management referendums

It was a busy year in three communities whose residents cast their ballots on new sewer projects. 2006 marked the decision year for Royston/Union Bay, Saratoga/Miracle Beach and Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake (Area ‘D’). In the spring, after years of liquid waste management planning, each area took part in a referendum vote. The decision to make: Did the residents want new sewers for their communities and were they willing to pay one-third of the cost? Since the project required a significant amount of money to be spent by all homeowners, it was necessary to make sure a majority of the citizens freely chose whether to have sewers or not. The voter turnout was high with over 50 percent of eligible voters coming out to vote. On February 4, the communities of Union

Bay and Royston voted yes for sewers, while those in Saratoga and Miracle Beach voted no. And on June 10, residents and landowners in the northern parts of Area ‘D’ said yes to a new sewer system. Bob Long, chief administrative officer of the CSRD commented: “We were pleased to see democracy at work in the region. With such a strong voter turnout we feel that people have given us clear direction.” Both projects will depend on receiving funding from federal and provincial infrastructure grants. At the end of 2006, the grant applications were in and the communities of Royston/Union Bay and Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake (Area ‘D’) were looking forward to taking the next steps in the process.



“Power of R” schools program

If change starts at home, then 2006 marked many changes in households across the regional district. Armed with “The Power of R”, our two educators visited over 200 school classrooms throughout the district to spread the word about reducing, reusing and recycling. During each 40-minute classroom presentation, one of the questions the educators asked kids to think about was how our world could be if waste was illegal. Teachers and students enjoyed age-appropriate games and singing, poster coloring contests, and creating arts and crafts projects using recycled items. At the end of the day each one knew the answer to the question: “Who’s got the power?” The answer of course is that each of us has the power of R — the power to reduce, reuse and recycle in order to lessen the amount of waste that eventually finds its way into regional landfills.



Photo Luisa Richardson (above) and Gayle Bates (above right), educators, teaching the ‘Power of R’ to elementary students at Quadra Island and Cumberland Schools, respectively. **Photographer** Hans Peter Meyer



Comox Valley gets new compost education centre

Part of the CSRD's plan for managing solid waste includes sharing techniques for keeping organic items out of our landfills. Teaching residents how to operate a backyard composter is one aspect of this plan. That's why the regional district operates two outdoor compost education centres — one in Campbell River and one in the Comox Valley — where the members of the public and school groups come to learn about composting, waterwise gardening, and pesticide alternatives.

In 2006 we completed a move of our Comox Valley site to its new location on Headquarters Road, across from Vanier high school and adjacent to the farmers' market. Planning and waste reduction staff at the CSRD jointly designed the new site with its eight gardens, seating areas for events, and demonstration areas for different types of composting. Over 150 people joined us for launch day

during Waste Reduction Week in June. The site became an active meeting place for gardeners, compost students, and school groups throughout the summer with free family talks and events like "Ladybugs as Pesticide Alternatives", "Building Mason Bee Homes" and the popular "Great Pumpkin Weigh-In."

Photo 1 The Great Pumpkin Weigh-In: Cathy Beacham and family from Black Creek with 143 pound winner. **Photographer** Hans Peter Meyer
Photo 2 CSRD compost education centre launch with community members event. **Photographer** Hans Peter Meyer



Mapping out a plan

Since the summer of 2006 CSRD staff have worked to create a Geographic Information System (GIS) and mapping database for the Ka:yu:'k't'h'/Che:k:tlas7et'h' that will be instrumental in allowing the First Nation to develop a sustainable plan for their community which is based upon current and accurate information.

Staff converted previous survey work and engineering drawings for the sewer and water systems to a digital format that can be turned into a GIS format that could be used by the First Nation. As well, existing development including the location of all residential, office and commercial development, roads and pathways, water lines and hydro lines, both on and off reserve, is being incorporated into a GIS base map.

Regional district staff has also worked with the First Nation to identify potential funding opportunities to facilitate the purchase of the necessary hardware, software and training to create the GIS system. As a result of this work, the First Nation will be applying for a capacity building program grant through Geo-Connections, a federal funding partnership program.

Once this funding is in place the GIS will be implemented and the process of developing a sustainable community plan that is based on current and accurate information.



Photo Houpsitas reserve and St. Paul's Dome, Kyuquot (Kyuquot-Nootka – Area 'G') **Photographer** Marlaina Elliott



CSRD recreation's future: building better places to play

As our population grows, the need for more and different space for special events and recreation grows too. That's why the CSRD undertook the "arena facility needs report". Consultants were to look at opportunities for a spectator-oriented facility that could respond to community programs, junior hockey and special events. In addition, the report considered options that included a curling facility either as part of a new spectator facility or as part of the current Strathcona Gardens site. The report was prepared using public input from the general community, the users, and the staff that currently operate the existing facilities. The following recommendations resulted from that input:

- Improve arena #1 in Strathcona Gardens with renovations and renewal rather than constructing a new community arena.

- Construct a 3,000 fixed seat spectator facility, designed with the flexibility to host a broad range of entertainment and sporting events.
- CSRD & Campbell River should begin discussions with the We Wai Kai Nation to determine the ability of the three parties to enter into a contract that would allow for the development of a 3,000 seat events centre on the Quinsam Crossing site.

In addition to developing a new facility, the regional district will also look at maintaining and enhancing the existing facilities. The CSRD's Strathcona Gardens in Campbell River has been an important investment in the well-being of the region for almost 35 years and will continue to evolve and serve the needs of an expanding and vibrant community.



Teamwork



Stronger together: parks amalgamation

The CSRD board endorsed the amalgamation of three separate parks functions for Baynes Sound (Area 'A'), Lazo North (Area 'B') and Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C') into one function and identified the development of a strategic greenways and parks plan as a priority. That allowed for more cost effective and coordinated acquisition, development, and maintenance of programs for the variety of parks within those electoral areas. Providing a coordinated network of trails and parks across jurisdictional boundaries is a proactive approach to meeting the demands resulting from substantial growth and development in the Comox Valley and will help foster healthy communities within the valley by benefitting the quality of life for both residents and visitors.

Sustainability in planning practices – everyone wins

In March, the CSRD, along with staff from the Ministry of Environment and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, hosted a workshop called “Develop with care: environmental guidelines for urban and rural land development”. Members of the construction, development and real estate industries as well as representatives from local government and other organizations attended to learn how best management practices (BMPs) have been developed to maintain environmental values during development of urban and rural lands in BC.

The workshop incorporated a field visit to a rural property and an onsite discussion of how those BMPs might apply to it. The site chosen for the visit was waterfront property (known as “Driftwood Estates”) just to the north of the mouth of Black Creek, an important watercourse that supports a significant salmon population. The property contains an extensive series of back channels which connect to Black Creek and which serve as a prime rearing area for salmon fry and habitat

for other species. The onsite review of the property and the development proposal affirmed how thoughtful development can both protect the environmental value of property and create higher value lots. Instead of the required five percent dedication of land for park, the owner had willingly dedicated 50 percent of the 8.47 hectare (21 acre) site as parkland held in public ownership to protect the important habitat residing within the property. This initiative between governments, members of the development community and private citizens was able to demonstrate the mutual benefits of giving equal consideration to economic, social and environmental values in the development process which resulted in a shared win for the landowner, the local community and the environment.





Granite Bay park: now better for boaters

The CSRD applied for a licence of occupation for this remote foreshore lot back in 1998 to protect the public recreation use of this water access while also working to meet the needs of the commercial users. In 2006, the CSRD partnered with local businesses and community members to improve the ramp and dock, which allows for enhanced use and enjoyment of the park by recreational users. The improved park facilities support a diversity of uses, including continued boat access for outer island residents requiring service and supplies, recreational moorage opportunities for local residents, a safe, reliable access point for marine and medical emergencies, and pick up and drop off points for commercial operators in shellfish farming and commercial fishing.



New fire hall comes into being

In March, the CSRD and the Oyster River volunteer fire service opened the new Oyster River/Black Creek fire hall. The project had been several years in the making and became a great addition to fire protection and safety for the area. The CSRD provides financial support for fire protection services in that area and worked with the volunteer fire department on the design and construction of the building.

Photo 1 CSRD Discovery Islands & Mainland Inlets (Area 'J') director Jim Abram (fourth from right) with volunteers who built the new wharf and ramp at Granite Bay Park **Photographer** Koreen Gurak **Photo 2** Fire hall grand opening. (l to r) CSRD director for Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C') Barry Minaker, fire chief Al Mose, CSRD director for Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake (Area 'D') Brenda Leigh **Photographer** Hans Peter Meyer



All aboard: expanding the Comox Valley transit system

Just in time for back-to-school riders, the CSRD launched an expanded transit service in the Comox Valley transit system in September. Passengers could now travel seven days a week, ride the bus later on a Friday night, or connect to Campbell River via the new “North Valley Connector” route which offers three trips per weekday and two trips each Saturday between downtown Courtenay and Oyster River, Saratoga Beach, Black Creek, and Merville. (These trips are timed to connect with Campbell River Transit at Oyster River.) Besides these major changes the new transit services also included improvements such as buses to meet morning ferries at Buckley Bay and improved connections for students traveling from Highland Secondary and Aspen Park Middle schools to Royston and Cumberland. A week after this expansion the Comox Valley transit system was chosen as one of the fastest 25 growing businesses on Vancouver Island by the Victoria Times Colonist newspaper, the Victoria Chamber of Commerce and KPMG. In 2006, the Comox Valley system continued to have one of the highest overall ridership growth rates in the province.



Photo CSRD director for Oyster Bay-Buttle Lake (Area 'D') Brenda Leigh and CSRD director for Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C') Barry Minaker get on board the new connector line **Photographer** Hans Peter Meyer



A successful Tsolum River crossing

The CSRD delivers water services to over 38,000 residents, including those in Courtenay and Comox. Back in 1982 a 30-inch concrete cylinder watermain was installed to deliver water to Comox and Courtenay by crossing underneath the Tsolum River. The crossing was 3,900 feet upstream of the confluence with the Puntledge River. These two rivers move widely within their floodplains. By 1993, additional bank protection (riprap) was placed along the bank of the Tsolum and over the crossing itself. In 1993 and 2000, three above-average floods caused the Tsolum to cut itself off at a large bend upstream of the original confluence of the two rivers. This effectively shortened the length of the river by 1,000 feet and moved the confluence only about 1,900 feet from the underground watermain crossing.

When a river is suddenly shortened it will adjust itself by degrading the riverbed and eroding the banks. The CSRD

recognized that it was only a matter of time before the river would threaten the watermain so we needed to take a proactive approach. After extensive planning and detailed design work, this \$1.6 million project was started and completed during the summer of 2006. The job included shutting off the water in order to tie in the new watermain sections, extensive dewatering of the area, installing 1,650 feet of new pipe, and working quickly within the Department of Fisheries window (July 15 – September 15) so there would be no adverse effects on water flows for fish. To decrease the water demand, sprinkler bans were in place during the tie-in work. The project also included placing 700 yards of riprap protection along the pipeline. The project was completed on time, on budget and without having a negative effect on the river flow.



Leadership

'Velvet glove' enforcement

The CSRD put the finishing touches on a new bylaw ticketing system that allows the regional district and fire departments, the SPCA, and the RCMP within the CSRD's electoral areas to issue tickets for noise, animal and fire control.

New bylaw ticketing known as the ticket information system (TIS) was introduced into all electoral areas of the region in 2005, and then moved into use for officials with fire departments, police and the SPCA in mid-2006.

TIS provides the regional district with a more expedient and less costly means of enforcing bylaws. Before TIS, all bylaw offences that were not voluntarily complied with were enforced through provincial courts where the legal costs to the regional district and the fines issued to a violator were significantly higher. Under TIS, fines range from \$50 to \$150 and are payable at the CSRD head office. Tickets will only be issued when all other means of resolution have been exhausted, if the accused continues to violate bylaws after warnings, or if the violation is a blatant disregard for bylaws.

TIS is used primarily where safety is a concern, providing officers with an alternative tool for enforcement, particularly around fires, noise and animal control. TIS was introduced in BC in 1996 and is now in place in over 60 local governments across the province.



Non-surgical facelift for the CSRD

In 2006, the oldest regional district in BC received a visual ‘makeover’.

For several years there had been a lack of consistency in the CSRD’s visual identity. In some cases there had been no identification of the regional district at all, making it difficult – if not impossible – for the public to be aware of the wide range of services and initiatives for which the CSRD was responsible. That was borne out in the market research conducted of regional residents in early 2006, so Trapeze Communications of Victoria was contracted to help undertake a re-branding of the organization's visual identity.

The result was multi-faceted. There was a switch in the way the regional district’s name is used – putting the place (Comox Strathcona) first and the type of local government (regional district) second, since the research had showed that residents identified strongly with their geographic surroundings. As well, a new logo was created using modern colours and a clean, fresh design that incorporated the C and the S of the regional district's

name. A ‘positioning statement’ was also developed: “stronger together” which relates to the regional district’s strength being the greatest as a whole, rather than in its individual parts.

The CSRD website was re-designed and renamed (went from www.rdc.bc.ca to www.comoxstrathcona.ca). Print material, advertising and regional district vehicles (even including the ice resurfacer at the CSRD’s Strathcona Gardens in Campbell River and its Comox Valley sports centre!) were changed to incorporate the new look. The design of exterior signage on facilities and parks is changed in the natural course of replacing items, or when new signs and material are produced.

A consistent visual identity helps to ‘connect the dots’ so that people realize that the same organization is responsible for a recreation facility, a park, a landfill or a water treatment plant and provides a better understanding to residents of what the CSRD provides for the tax dollars it receives.



Opinions count: first market research study conducted

In January 2006, the CSRD contracted Venture Market Research Inc., of Victoria, to design and conduct a survey of over 600 residents to gauge opinions of regional district programs and services. It was the first time such a statistical survey had been conducted in the CSRD and the results formed a good baseline against which to measure change over time.

Overall, nearly 60 percent of residents described themselves as being at least somewhat aware of the services provided by the CSRD, although just 12 percent said they were 'very aware'. Services identified most often in top-of-mind (unprompted) responses included sports centres or a recreation complex (23%), water supply (22%) and garbage dump and/or recycling (20%).

Results of the survey revealed that people generally have a positive impression of the CSRD, and that most of those who have dealt with the regional district have been satisfied with the service they have received. The survey also showed that while there is support for further residential, commercial and agricultural growth and

development in the regional district, there is also a clear indication that people want future growth to be carefully managed, and that the balanced urban and rural quality of life offered here is highly valued by residents.

Annual tracking surveys will be conducted to help give the CSRD an accurate picture of what programs and services are valued by residents and to identify areas needing increased focus. The full results of the 2006 survey can be seen on the CSRD website at www.comoxstrathcona.ca, and clicking on 'newsroom' and then 'other news'.



SkyRocket took flight

SkyRocket, a soil amendment for lawns and gardens, was launched by the CSRD in the summer of 2006. This innovative compost product is made of wood chips mixed with biosolids from the sewage treatment process to create nutrient-rich mulch. The launch of SkyRocket caught the attention of landscapers, developers and gardeners across the island. Loads of the dark, loamy mixture were trucked down to Union Bay for land reclamation at the coal hills site, a large amount was used in tree plantings and slope stabilization by the Ministry of Transportation, and local environmental groups used the mulch when they removed non native plants near the Courtenay airpark. Two months after the launch of SkyRocket, it had completely sold out! SkyRocket is a great example of how the management of liquid waste can be linked with the management of solid waste, to

create a renewable product. By establishing one of the most innovative biosolid composting facilities in Canada, the CSRD took a leadership role in this area and is now sharing its knowledge with others. The facility was featured during a Compost Council of Canada conference in 2006.





New water conservation bylaw

On June 1 the CSRD brought the first Comox Valley Water conservation bylaw into effect. This bylaw (number 2867) introduced a new three-stage water conservation program to replace the previous sprinkling regulation guidelines that were general in scope. It's very useful to have a 'stage 1-2-3' water conservation bylaw in place, especially during dry seasons when different stages of the bylaw are called into effect depending on the status of the water supply and reservoir levels. By leading the way with this new bylaw, the CSRD's Comox Valley water committee established a clear way to communicate with the public about the level of urgency when water resources are low.

Big machine for a big job

If the accomplishments of the regional district were measured by the kilogram, it would be hard to beat something that weighs in at over 40 tonnes. In October, staff at the Comox Valley Waste Management Centre (CVWMC - formerly known as the Pidgeon Lake Landfill), took delivery of a new Al-Jon trash compactor. As with any landfill, the amount of space that refuse takes up is a factor in how long each landfill can remain open. With the new trash compactor in operation it is estimated that the lifespan of the CVWMC has been extended by up to 20 years. The price tag for such a powerful crushing machine? Close to \$600,000 to be earned back over time by the regional district through the tipping fees paid for each load of waste that comes in over the scale.





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