

**DATE:** July 08 2025

**FILE:** 6430-01

**TO:** Chair and Directors/Members  
Regional District Board

**FROM:** James Warren  
Chief Administrative Officer

**RE:** June 17 Strategic Planning Session Outcomes

### **Purpose**

To present the strategic planning session outcome and action items related to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board's focus on successfully delivering operational service elements and prioritizing strategic initiatives with the current fiscal and social situation.

### **Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

None.

### **Background/Current Situation**

- The CVRD Board regularly engages in strategic planning ([2023-26 term of office Strategic Plan](#)) to set a high-level course for priorities and initiatives affecting the Comox Valley.
- The June 17, 2025 Strategic Planning workshop reflected on progress made on the initiatives in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, as well as subsequent additions, such as the direction regarding affordable housing.
- Further, the workshop was an opportunity for the Board to consider how to “finish strong” in this term of office. Before the workshop, staff provided the Board with a Strategic Initiatives Update Report dated May 7, 2025, that provided detailed information on milestones and progress for each Strategic Initiative.
- The Strategic Planning Workshop Report is attached (Appendix A) to this staff report and notes that
  - a) staff will provide a separate report on communications at an upcoming meeting, building on the discussions of the second part of the Strategic Planning Workshop, and
  - b) subsequent reports on strategic initiatives will be presented to Board, committee and commission meetings with regular updates over the next 15 months.

Prepared by:

***J. Warrens***

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James Warren  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Government and Community Interests Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)**

N/A	✓
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Attachments: Appendix A – CVRD Strategic Planning 2025 v. Jun 22



# WORKSHOP REPORT

Subject:	CVRD Strategic Planning 2025
Report Date:	June 22, 2025
Meeting Date:	June 17, 2025
Time:	9:00 am-2:30 pm
Location:	CVRD Civic Room
Prepared by:	Allison Habkirk BA MA MPA MCIP

Following the Fall 2022 local government elections, the CVRD Board met in January 2023 and again in June 2023 to develop the 2023-2026 CVRD Strategic Plan. The Electoral Area Services Committee also met in April 2023 to focus on input into the overall Board Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board in August 2023. Since that time the CRVD instituted regular Strategic Plan reporting which has provided the Board with opportunities to receive regular progress reports on the wide range of initiatives included in the plan.

At the June 2023 Strategic Plan Workshop special attention was given to the topic of affordable housing. The objective of the May 30, 2024 CVRD Strategic Planning Workshop was to focus again on the topic of housing and build on the June 2023 Board direction.

The objective of the June 2025 Strategic Planning workshop was to reflect on progress made on the initiatives in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan as well as those initiatives that have been added subsequently such as the direction regarding affordable housing. Further, the workshop was an opportunity for the Board to consider how to “finish strong” in this term of office. Prior to the workshop staff provided the Board with a Strategic Initiatives Update Report dated May 7, 2025 that provided detailed information on milestones and progress for each Strategic Plan Initiative.

The workshop generally followed the outline below.

## Welcome and Introductions

- **Strategic planning process**
- **Session goals**
- **Setting the stage**
  - How is the world different from the world the Board was elected in?
  - How do we move forward?
    - focus on the foundation
    - protecting core services
    - Current political/world context & pressures (instability, economic headwinds)
    - The next 15 months

## Question for the Board – how do we finish strong?

What do you see is different than 3 years ago?

What do you sense the voters are feeling?

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### Update on key initiatives

- EA Services
- Finance & Admin
- Recreation
- Regional Emergency Services
- Regional Sustainability
- Sewage Treatment
- Transportation
- Water Supply

### Rethinking Communications in the current climate

- Community context
- Social media approach and emerging media
- Public engagement considerations and target audiences
- Priority areas of focus / radio and print media interactions

### Deliverables and wrap up

In response to the question of “How is the world different from the world the Board was elected in?” the Board highlighted how dramatically the world has shifted in three years. Board members noted a number of significant themes including:

- A decline in public optimism
- Increased uncertainty
- The public are anxious and want leaders to lead
- There is less money available, particularly from senior levels of government to fund projects
- AI is becoming increasingly important
- Increase in youth unemployment
- Increase in political polarization
- Locally people generally feel good about local government
- The public wants local government to provide stability and to show restraint
- Federal messaging about needing to build nation building projects is a shift
- Threats to Canadian sovereignty exist
- Potential for increasing interprovincial trade
- Increase in the cost of living
- More downloading to local government
- Political shift to the right
- Concerns about cost of living increases
- CVRD has a new CAO – the CVRD is working on exciting initiatives
- Need to communicate to the public and to set the next Board up for success

The Board discussed the Key Initiatives starting with the nine initiatives that were accompanied by a briefing note. These discussions were followed by review of the remaining initiatives on the Key Initiatives Worksheet. The Worksheet is copied below with Board direction for each of the initiatives noted.

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**2025-2026 CVRD STRATEGIC PLAN  
 KEY INITIATIVES WORKSHEET**

<b>Electoral Area Initiatives</b>	<b>BOARD DIRECTION</b>
Develop Septic Regulation / Education Program (briefing note)	<b>PENDING EASC OUTCOME</b>
Develop Watershed Stewardship Service (briefing note)	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Undertake Agricultural Planning	<b>CONCLUDED</b>
Implement Priorities of the Fire Services Review	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Implement Agricultural Plan (briefing note)	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
<b>Regional Emergency Services</b>	
Regionalize Comox Valley Emergency Service	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Design and Construct Mount Washington Fire Services Building	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Design and Construct Denman Island Fire Hall	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Design and Construct Union Bay Fire Hall	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
<b>Finance and Administration</b>	
Strategic Planning	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Foundational Fiscal Framework and Strategy	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Advisory Group on Reconciliation	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Regional Tourism Strategy	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Island Corridor Engagement	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
CV Ground Search and Rescue	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Social Support Service	<b>CONCLUDED</b>
<b>Recreation</b>	
Complete and Implement the Recreation Strategic Plan	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Design and Construct New Artificial Turf	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Develop Playing Fields, Allocation Framework and Amenity Improvements	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Ice Facilities Analysis (briefing note)	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Regional Parks & Trails Service (briefing note)	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
<b>Regional Sustainability</b>	
Regional Growth Strategy - Review	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Housing Supports Analysis	<b>CONCLUDED</b>
CVRD Housing Entity (briefing note)	<b>PUSH FORWARD</b>
Develop a Regional Parks Strategy	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	
Prioritize Transit and Transportation Infrastructure Investments	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Prioritize and Implement the Active Transportation Network Plan (briefing note)	<b>PULL BACK (regional); STAY THE COURSE (rural)</b>
<b>Sewage Treatment</b>	
Sewer Conveyance Project	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>
Sewer Extension South Project (briefing note)	<b>PUSH FORWARD</b>
Complete LWMP Planning for Core and South Addendum	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>

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<b>Water Supply</b>	
Water South Extension (briefing note)	<b>PUSH FORWARD</b>
Water Master Planning	<b>STAY THE COURSE</b>

A number of key comments were made in the course of the Board discussions; these are noted below under the initiative headings.

### **CVRD Housing Entity (briefing note)**

- The Board directed staff to push forward with this initiative with the intention of having the entity launched and operationalized by 2026.
- It was noted that expansion of CFB Comox may have a significant impact on growth in the region and that it may present partnership opportunities.

### **Develop Watershed Stewardship Service (briefing note)**

- A suggestion was made that a Watershed Summit be held to discuss the service and to share data amongst various organizations.

### **Regional Emergency Services**

- The Board indicated an interest in having an update for the public on regional emergency services.

### **Finance and Administration**

- The Board indicated an interest in having an update for the public on the Island Corridor Foundation and Search and Rescue

### **Ice Facilities Analysis (briefing note)**

- A suggestion was made that the CVRD will need good communication to the public about the business case for this initiative.

### **Prioritize and Implement the Active Transportation Network Plan (briefing note)**

- The suggestion was made that the CVRD should continue to press MOTI for improvements to rural links.
- The suggestion was made that the CVRD look for opportunities to build the connector route in pieces.

### **General comments**

- The Board encouraged staff to present pre-election candidate briefings to provide accurate information on key initiatives. There was also interest in preparing non-partisan fact sheets for key initiatives prior to the election.
- The election may provide opportunities to help the public understand local government and particularly regional districts and how taxes fund services. Special attention can be given to describing how decisions are made, the value for services and multitude of benefits that many regional district services provide both directly and indirectly.
- K'ómoks First Nation ratified its treaty and constitution in spring 2025 – a positive moment for the Nation and for the CVRD.
- The Board supported the suggestion that the Chair, Director Hardy and the CAO meet to discuss potential growth and expansion of CFB Comox.

### **Next steps**

CVRD Communications staff will provide a separate report on communications building on the discussions of the second part of the Strategic Planning Workshop.

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CVRD Staff will bring forward this report to a Board meeting and continue to implement Board direction on key initiatives and provide regular updates to the Board over the next 15 months.