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EEI 26-36

REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026

SUBJECT **Climate Action Strategy 2026-2030**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the Capital Regional District's (CRD) renewed Climate Action Strategy to guide the Climate Action and Adaptation Service from 2026 to 2030.

BACKGROUND

From 2021 to 2025, the Climate Action and Adaptation Service has been guided by the 2021 Climate Action Strategy (CAS), created following the CRD Board's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. Since late 2024, staff have been preparing a renewal of the CAS to guide the service to 2030, including engagement with municipalities. In October 2025, the Board approved updates to the CAS guiding framework including the vision, principles, goals and targets.

The Board also directed that within the renewed CAS, staff clarify the CRD's jurisdiction on greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions, the support role played by the CRD, and the targets and progress of the 13 member municipalities and three electoral areas. Earlier motions from the Board also directed that the renewed CAS include a climate budget and additional opportunities to achieve the regional GHG target.

DISCUSSION

Changing Context

There have been significant recent changes to the climate policy context with implications for the capital region, including the elimination of consumer carbon taxes and adjustments to electric vehicle mandates at the provincial and federal levels, the deepening housing and cost-of-living crisis, economic uncertainty from USA tariffs, and most recently, a sharp rise in fuel prices due to war.

Climate action in British Columbia (BC) is largely enabled and constrained by provincial legislation and jurisdiction. The Province's November 2025 CleanBC Independent Review[1] noted that the provincial climate strategy (CleanBC) was generally found to be working, while making several recommendations for a pragmatic approach in today's context. The review noted the critical role of consumer rebates in driving public adoption of clean technologies and suggests recycling revenues from climate policies into climate action. It also notes that overly ambitious targets can be counterproductive and suggests an alternative approach of tracking leading indicators (such as adoption rates) in addition to lagging indicators like GHG emissions.

The CleanBC Independent Review priorities for action guided the renewal of the CRD's CAS, including making it easier for residents to cut energy bills and GHG's, deepening partnerships with First Nations and local governments, and focusing on delivering effective, achievable and fiscally responsible outcomes.

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[1]Retrieved from: https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2025/11/CleanBC-Independent-Review-Final-Report-November-2025.pdf

Progress Summary

CRD staff across multiple services - in collaboration with municipalities - have made continual and precedent-setting progress on the CAS since it was approved in 2021, with 85% of the original 126 sub-actions now complete or operationalized by 2025. Leading initiatives include establishing a new Regional Transportation Service, becoming the first regional government in BC to adopt a Zero Carbon Step Code (ZCSC) in electoral areas and the first to create a regional building benchmarking program, and adding over 164 public electric vehicle chargers to the regional network since 2021. Electrification of over a third of the CRD fleet saved $104,000 in 2025, and major efficiency upgrades completed or underway at CRD facilities save hundreds of thousands of dollars and hundreds of tonnes of GHG emissions a year. Community GHG emissions are now 11% below 2007 levels despite a growing region – compared to a 6% reduction across BC since 2007 and a 9% increase in Metro Vancouver from 2010 to 2022 – with per capita GHG emissions down 30% in the CRD since 2007.

The current CAS has targets for corporate and community GHG reductions that are summarized in the table below. The renewed CAS includes reviewing the community targets as part of future updates to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), and reporting under the renewed CAS will evolve to show how the CRD's actions contribute to achieving the regional targets by introducing new outcome statements and indicators as additional measures of success. The indicators will be reviewed and updated with each annual report to improve reporting over time.

Table 1: Status of Climate Targets

	Corporate	Community
Target	45% below 2007 levels by 2030	61% below 2007 levels by 2038
Status	On track	Off track
CRD Control	Direct: reductions can be projected for specific CRD projects	Indirect: reductions are influenced by many factors beyond the CRD's control

While climate change presents a challenge for the region to adapt and to do our part to reduce emissions, addressing climate change also presents an opportunity to create a more efficient, resilient and affordable region. Electric bicycles (E-bikes) and electric vehicles can save residents thousands of dollars a year on transportation costs, and efficient electric heat pumps can heat homes and buildings for less than the cost of a gas appliance, while providing summertime cooling. Every one dollar invested in preparing infrastructure for climate change saves $10-15 over its lifetime[2].

Renewed Climate Action Strategy 2026-2030

The renewed CAS clarifies the CRD's roles and responsibilities, improves progress tracking and reporting, and focuses on clear and specific actions with the highest impact. It also reflects the changing context and establishes a more pragmatic approach to ambitious but achievable climate action.

CRD Role and Strategy

While the CRD does not directly control regional GHG emissions, the renewed CAS focuses on actions where the region can have the greatest influence, such as zero-carbon buildings and

[2] Canadian Climate Institute, *Damage Control: Reducing Climate Impacts*. Retrieved from: https://climateinstitute.ca/reports/damage-control/

electric mobility, and on establishing the enabling conditions for broader climate action. This approach clarifies the CRD's role: to plan, invest in, coordinate, and deliver the infrastructure and programs that enable residents, businesses and municipalities to achieve emissions reductions and improve climate resilience.

The CRD's role, the Board-approved guiding framework, and the changing context all inform the renewed strategy. For climate mitigation, the strategy emphasizes supporting and accelerating the transitions already underway, like heat pump retrofits, electric mobility and electric vehicles. For climate adaptation, the strategy uses a disaster risk reduction approach, which emphasizes the overlap between climate adaptation and emergency management. It also places natural assets and healthy ecosystems across the region as the first line of defence against climate hazards, together with resilient critical infrastructure and connected and empowered community networks.

Key Actions and Workplan

Actions in the renewed CAS are proposed to continue existing high-impact initiatives including the benchmarking program for large existing buildings, the Home Energy Navigator retrofit support program for low-rise homes, installing regional electric vehicle charging infrastructure, convening staff across the CRD with municipalities and mobilizing public climate action, and providing climate data and mapping for the region.

The renewed CAS also introduces new actions that position the CRD to advance a focused set of high-impact initiatives delivering tangible benefits across the capital region. These include accelerating the uptake of low-carbon home retrofits such as heat pumps, expanding and improving low-carbon mobility options through the newly established transportation service, unlocking opportunities to generate renewable energy from CRD facilities and infrastructure, and embedding climate resilience into the design and delivery of core services.

Immediate Actions

In addition to the renewed CAS that will guide the CRD's climate initiatives over the next four years, staff are recommending immediate direction to move forward with two foundational elements that will reinforce and accelerate regional climate action:

- First, advocating for full implementation of the recommendations of the independent CleanBC Independent Review, including continuing the Local Government Climate Action Program, which provides funding to local governments across the province for climate action.
- Second, that revenues from the sale of carbon credits are directed into CRD programs and projects with demonstrated climate benefits. This direction will secure additional funds for climate action and enable the program to accelerate infrastructure delivery and take full advantage of emerging opportunities for climate action without additional requisition increases.

NEXT STEPS

In 2026, staff will continue implementing key initiatives such as the Building Benchmarking Program and the Regional Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network Project and begin new initiatives such as exploring incentive program options for E-bikes and heat pumps. Staff will report back to the Board by Q2 2027 with an annual update and progress report on how the renewed strategy is being implemented.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1
The Environmental Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1) That the Board adopt the renewed Climate Action Strategy attached as Appendix A to guide the Capital Regional District (CRD) Climate Action and Adaptation Service through to 2030;
2) That staff be directed to review and report back on regional greenhouse gas reduction target alternatives for inclusion in the next update to the Regional Growth Strategy;
3) That the Chair on behalf of the Board send a letter to the Premier of BC and relevant ministers advocating for the full implementation of the recommendations of the CleanBC Independent Review, including continued funding for the Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP);
4) That staff establish all necessary processes and systems to direct all revenues from the sale of carbon credits – such as those generated under the federal Clean Fuel Regulation and provincial Low Carbon Fuel Standard – into CRD programs and projects aligned with the renewed Climate Action Strategy;
5) That staff establish continuous internal processes to seek opportunities that generate carbon credit and renewable energy revenues; and,
6) That staff report back on how these carbon credit revenues will be used to accelerate climate action, for the Board's consideration and approval.

Alternative 2
That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

Climate action has been a CRD Board priority since 2009, when the Climate Action and Adaptation Service was first established, and is one of the five current 2023-2026 Board priorities. The current CRD Corporate Plan includes four goals and 11 initiatives for climate action, covering goal areas of sustainable and resilient land use, planning and preparedness, low carbon mobility, low carbon and resilient buildings and infrastructure, and community-based greenhouse gas emissions. The renewed CAS sets out a suite of actions to continue progress on climate action through to 2030.

Climate Implications

The renewed CAS is the key guiding document for CRD climate action. While the CRD does not directly regulate or control regional GHG emissions, the actions included will enable significant reductions in regional GHG emissions and - together with action by all other levels of government – have the potential to approach the region's ambitious emissions reduction targets.

Environmental Implications

Climate action has wider environmental benefits beyond decreasing GHG emissions, and the actions in the renewed CAS have the potential to reduce waste, reduce air and water pollution from vehicles, and protect and enhance regional ecosystems.

Financial Implications

Current Funding

The Board-approved CRD Financial Plan includes an annual operating budget of approximately $2.6 million for the Climate Action and Adaption Service. Historically this has been funded through a mix of requisition, reserves, funding from the provincial LGCAP, and grant contributions from utilities. The service also oversees a capital budget of approximately $2.7 million over three years for public electric vehicle charging infrastructure, of which 73% ($2 million) comes from grants from higher levels of governments. The current operating reserve for the Climate Action and Adaptation Service is $1.5 million, which is used strategically to stabilize requisition impacts in consideration of variable climate program and projects costs over multiple years.

Financial Strategy for Climate Action Strategy Implementation

The updated CAS will be delivered within the CRD's existing Financial Plan and funding framework. The Climate Action and Adaptation Service will continue to leverage external grants, partnerships, and ongoing program reviews to maintain requisition impacts at or near inflationary increases. New initiatives and expanded climate action programs will be supported through reinvestment of revenue generated from carbon credits, including credits associated with renewable natural gas production at Hartland Landfill and electricity supplied through CRD-owned electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This approach enables the CRD to expand climate action efforts while maintaining the current financial plan assumptions and minimizing impacts on requisition-funded services.

First Nations Implications

The actions in the renewed CAS have been developed to consider First Nations engagement responses including the exploration of opportunities to support and coordinate on priority initiatives identified by First Nations such as coastal and ecosystem restoration.

Intergovernmental Implications

Coordinating with and supporting climate action of municipalities and electoral areas is a core part of the renewed CAS and can increase the reach, effectiveness, and consistency of climate action across the region. The renewed CAS also includes advocacy to other levels of government and utilities, whose actions are critical to achieving regional GHG targets.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The RGS is an important tool in planning for complete, climate-resilient communities and managing emissions from a growing region. Preparing a CAS was one of the implementation measures noted in the 2018 RGS, and the renewed CAS and the RGS work together to create a lower carbon region. The RGS also includes the regional GHG reduction target. The renewed CAS includes taking action through potential updates to the RGS proposed to take place in 2027-2028 by applying a strong climate lens and reviewing the regional GHG targets.

CONCLUSION

Since 2021, the Capital Regional District (CRD) has made significant progress supporting regional climate action. With the costs of fuel and climate hazards rising, climate action represents an opportunity to support a cleaner, more affordable and resilient region. The renewed Climate Action Strategy, developed with input from member municipalities, continues important existing programs and introduces new opportunities and targeted actions, while clarifying the CRD's role, evolving annual reporting, and creating a strong financial foundation for accelerating climate action. This report renews CRD climate action through to 2030 for a cleaner, more affordable and resilient region, includes previous Board direction, and recommends immediate actions the Board can take to advance climate action.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environmental Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1) That the Board adopt the renewed Climate Action Strategy attached as Appendix A to guide the Capital Regional District (CRD) Climate Action and Adaptation Service through to 2030;
2) That staff be directed to review and report back on regional greenhouse gas reduction target alternatives for inclusion in the next update to the Regional Growth Strategy;
3) That the Chair on behalf of the Board send a letter to the Premier of BC and relevant ministers advocating for the full implementation of the recommendations of the CleanBC Independent Review, including continued funding for the Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP);
4) That staff establish all necessary processes and systems to direct all revenues from the sale of carbon credits – such as those generated under the federal Clean Fuel Regulation and provincial Low Carbon Fuel Standard – into CRD programs and projects aligned with the renewed Climate Action Strategy;
5) That staff establish continuous internal processes to seek opportunities that generate carbon credit and renewable energy revenues; and,
6) That staff report back on how these carbon credit revenues will be used to accelerate climate action, for the Board's consideration and approval.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: CRD Climate Action Strategy 2026-2030 (June 2026)
Presentation: Climate Action Strategy 2026-2030