

REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

SUBJECT **Climate Action Strategy – 2023 Progress Report**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the Capital Regional District's (CRD) 2023 Climate Action Progress Report, which identifies progress towards the CRD's Climate Action Strategy.

BACKGROUND

The CRD has a strong history of climate action and remains committed to addressing climate change within its own operations and at the regional level. The CRD signed the BC Climate Action Charter in 2007, established a regional climate action service in 2009, embedded climate action targets and goals into the Regional Growth Strategy in 2018, and declared a climate emergency in 2019. In 2021, the Board approved a renewed CRD Climate Action Strategy and five-year action plan. The Strategy provides direction for how the CRD, under its service mandates, will show leadership on climate action, both for the CRD's corporate operations and for its community-focused services. Actions are categorized within six goal areas. The CRD has committed to annually reporting on the progress towards achieving its climate action goals.

2023 Progress Report Results

The 2023 Climate Action Progress Report (Appendix A) provides a summary of the 2023 activities undertaken by multiple CRD services to track the progress of the CRD Climate Action Strategy's corporate and community-focused actions. The Progress Report also includes a report card that compiles self-reported progress metrics from divisions responsible for advancing each of the Strategy's 54 actions (comprised of 127 sub-actions). These metrics were used to produce a 'status' (on track, opportunity for improvement or attention required) for overall action plan progress, corporate and community-focused actions, the six goal areas of the strategy and each action. This systematic evaluation provides an indication of where focused efforts need to be made or increased to achieve targeted actions and outcomes within the Strategy and meet our targets.

The overall status for the 2023 year was calculated as 'on track', meaning 75-100% of the yearly target for actions were progressed as envisioned within the Strategy's five-year action plan. The averaged status for all corporate actions was calculated as 'opportunity for improvement' and the averaged status for all community-focused actions was calculated as 'on track'. The Progress Report also includes a list of both corporate-focused and regional indicators. These indicators are not included in the status calculations but provide context and track long-term trends relevant to the organization and broader regional climate action trends.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Impacts

To track progress, the CRD completes an annual corporate emissions inventory. Emissions associated with Hartland Landfill and the Capital Region Housing Corporation are not included,

as they are excluded from the provincial reporting framework. The results of the 2023 corporate inventory indicate:

- CRD operations generated 2,956 tonnes of CO₂e emissions, a 2.8% increase from 2022 and a 1.6% decrease from the baseline level of emissions from 2007.
- Emissions from buildings, facilities and infrastructure decreased by 8.7% to 1,552 tonnes, attributed in part to several energy-focused maintenance and operational measures.
- Emissions from vehicle travel increased by 19.4% to 1,404 tonnes due to a growth in service levels provided by the CRD. Factors that contributed were increased vehicle use for building inspections, bylaw enforcement, emergency programs, and the overall staffing increases in various services, notably Regional Parks.

As the region continues to grow, there is also an increased demand for government services to adequately serve and support communities, which is reflected in our corporate emissions. This context does not preclude the need to reduce emissions further or meet our targets; the CRD is committed to advancing greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation efforts to align with the emission reduction pathways outlined in the Climate Action Strategy. For example, throughout 2023, the CRD procured an additional 36 electric vehicles, which included a backlog of orders from previous years; it is expected these zero-emission vehicles will assist in the reduction of GHG emissions from vehicles in 2024 and beyond.

The CRD completes regional and local government GHG inventories every two years, following the internationally recognized Global Protocol Community-Scale GHG Inventories BASIC+ Framework. The latest inventory, completed for the 2022 year and presented to the Board in October 2023, indicated:

- The capital region emits approximately 1.86 million tonnes of CO₂e annually.
- This represents a 7% reduction from 2007 levels and a decline in per capita GHG emissions (t CO₂e/capita) of 25%.
- Emissions increased by 1% compared to the 2020 inventory.

Regardless of GHG emission reductions today, the capital region will continue to experience the impacts of climate change now and into the future. The CRD and regional partners must work to reduce vulnerability in our communities and adapt to a changing climate by improving how we anticipate, respond to and recover from both extreme weather events and more gradual changes occurring over time. Climate adaptation planning and implementation will be a key aspect of future service delivery.

CRD Climate Action Service

Under Bylaw No. 3510, the CRD established a Climate Action service in 2009 with a regional collaboration mandate to directly support the organization and local governments in reaching mitigation and adaptation targets, policies and actions. The service hosts two inter-municipal networks, and closely works with local government staff, senior governments, utilities and other stakeholders to identify other climate action opportunities and advance initiatives in collaboration.

In 2023, the Climate Action service operated on an annual budget of approximately \$1.9M, which included five full-time employees and one four-year, full-time term position. In addition, the corporation provided an annual stipend of \$100,000 towards a fund to support key corporate-focused climate action planning activities. The program's core budget is provided through an annual requisition from all the region's municipalities and electoral areas and

supplemental funding from corporate services. The program also relies on external grants and partnerships to undertake corporate and community climate action programming. External sources accounted for approximately \$500,000 in additional funding to support completion of key projects in 2023.

CONCLUSION

The CRD’s Climate Action Strategy provides direction for how the CRD, under its service mandates, will show leadership on climate action, both for the CRD’s corporate operations and for its community-focused services. The CRD’s 2023 Climate Action Progress Report outlines actions the CRD has undertaken to advance the Climate Action Strategy, Board priorities, and commitments as a signatory to the BC Climate Action Charter over the past year. Overall, in 2023, the CRD progressed on several climate action initiatives and has identified where focused efforts need to be made or increased to achieve targeted actions and outcomes. The overall status for the 2023 year was calculated as ‘on track’, meaning 75-100% of the yearly targets for actions were progressed as envisioned within the Strategy’s five-year action plan. The CRD remains dedicated to expediting crucial actions and planning aimed at achieving corporate greenhouse gas reduction targets and preparing for climate impacts. Furthermore, the organization continues to collaborate with partners to meet regional goals.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: 2023 Climate Action Progress Report