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EEP 25-47

REPORT TO WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2025

SUBJECT **2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria to the Water Advisory Committee (WAC) for review and feedback.

BACKGROUND

The Capital Regional District's (CRD) water efficiency objectives are driven by corporate policies and strategic goals set out in the Water Supply Master Plan, the Regional Growth Strategy, and the Regional Water Supply Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan sets new demand management goals to develop a water conservation plan and define demand baseline and targets.

In late 2024, the CRD retained Econics and Kerr Wood Leidal consulting engineers to facilitate the development of a ten-year Water Conservation Plan (Plan) for the Greater Victoria Drinking Water Service (GVDWS). Demand management staff provided significant input for the review of past programs and achievements and identified enhancements to existing programs and new programs that could be implemented in the future. A quantitative analysis of water production, consumption trends and demand forecasting was conducted. Infrastructure and Water Services staff provided operational input, ensured alignment with strategic priorities, and provided input on the modelling used in the development of the Plan. Development of the Plan was guided by the Province's Water Conservation Guide and North American industry best practices.

The 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria (Appendix A) applies to the Regional Water Supply Service that serves Greater Victoria, including 13 municipalities, eight First Nations, and parts of the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. The Plan builds on the past successes of the CRD's water conservation programs and refreshes program direction for the next decade towards helping residents, businesses, and institutions become more water efficient and partnering with municipal and First Nations water suppliers to improve demand management in the region. It sets out actions, establishes data-based targets, and outlines implementation strategies and schedules. The Plan is built around four goals:

- Lead and support collaborative water conservation best practices;
- Reduce outdoor water use and instantaneous peak demand;
- Foster community water stewardship and encourage efficient use; and
- Improve understanding of community water use through research and monitoring.

The Plan is being provided to the WAC and the Greater Victoria Demand Management Working Group for review and feedback prior to it being presented to the Regional Water Supply Commission in early 2026.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental and Climate Implications

The Plan lays out detailed actions required to make progress on the four goals over the next ten years. Many actions are enhancements of existing approaches while others will develop new programs for implementation subject to budget availability. The following high priority actions will be implemented first because they are likely to provide large volumes of water savings relative to costs or address more urgent operational needs:

- Establish a regional demand management community of practice;
- Review the effectiveness of the Water Conservation Bylaw and implement new best practices as appropriate for the Capital Region;
- Enhance outdoor irrigation outreach including campaigns aimed at Water Conservation Bylaw compliance and at reducing instantaneous peak demand;
- Enhance the industrial, commercial and institutional Water Use Assessment Program;
- Phase out once-through cooling systems and promote best practices in other cooling technologies; and
- Update the CRD Residential Water Survey.

The CRD, as the water retailor for the Juan de Fuca Water System, identified two priority operational planning projects for early implementation:

- Investigate the potential impact of conservation-oriented water services pricing, and
- Pilot advance metering infrastructure in the Juan de Fuca Water System.

An adaptive management framework, which means learning from experience and responding as needed to fine tune delivery, will be utilized for Plan implementation. The following 2035 targets will be used to measure progress on Plan implementation:

- Target 1: Total Water Production – Reduce per capita water production from treatment facilities by 0.9% year-over-year to achieve a target of 300 litres per capita per day (LCD).
- Target 2: Residential Consumption – Reduce residential per capita consumption by 1.2% year-over-year to achieve a target of 200 LCD.
- Target 3: Instantaneous Peak Demand – Reduce the maximum change in instantaneous flow rate at 4:00 am from 46% to 20%.
- Target 4: Peak Season Demand – Maintain Maximum Day Demand at 300 megalitres per day (ML/day).

Best estimates from Implementation of the Plan are a reduction of total annual water production by 3-6 % and the maximum day demand (MDD) by 5-9 % in the GVDWS by 2035.

Social Implications

Education and outreach efforts identified in the Plan will require transitioning from the current information-intensive approach that heavily utilizes mass media to a more community-based social marketing (CBSM) approach involving more targeted outreach and improved performance measurement.

CBSM is a methodology for fostering sustainable behaviour change in the community. With residential water use accounting for 66% of total water consumption, the CBSM approach will utilize market research, implement smaller pilot projects to test methods and results prior to region-wide implementation and will emphasize personal engagement, removing barriers to conserving water and using proven tools for change to foster improved water conservation by residents.

Institutional, Commercial and Industrial Implications

The CRD has long-running, successful programs targeted at the industrial, commercial and industrial (ICI) sectors which are anchored by the Water Use Assessment program. The CRD will continue to provide free water use and efficiency audits to businesses and institutions and will enhance the program to improve post-audit implementation.

Other approaches to encourage water conservation for users in the Institutional, Commercial and Industrial sectors include phasing out Once-Through Cooling, piloting smart technology, and targeted outreach to high users around peak hour usage.

Intergovernmental and First Nations Implications

Key aspects of demand management take place at the water distribution system level and depend on the collaborative efforts of local government, First Nation and private retail water suppliers across the region. These efforts include management of non-water revenue, rate setting, land use development planning and various other activities. All retail water suppliers benefit from reduced consumption and improved management of non-revenue water through lower capital and operational costs, fewer service interruptions and unscheduled emergency callouts. Better consumption data helps optimize local infrastructure and development planning.

The 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria focusses efforts on establishing a regional community of practice in collaboration with retail water suppliers to promote innovative non-revenue water management and improved understanding of community water use through research and monitoring. This will include sharing expertise, improved data quality, data accuracy and data sharing, and utilizing best practices. A renewed emphasis on collaboration will foster regular dialogue through workshops, technical exchanges, and joint pilot projects focused on leak detection, meter accuracy and system auditing.

The Demand Management program has established the Greater Victoria Demand Management Working Group, with representatives from local government, First Nations and private water retailors to improve collaboration. This group will be invited to review the Plan and will provide input at an upcoming workshop in December.

Financial Implications

With current budget allocation, staff can continue to deliver existing programs as well as complete the priority projects identified for immediate implementation in the Plan. Longer-term actions follow an adaptive management framework, building on knowledge gained from pilot projects and surveys, and allowing actions to be adjusted based on new data, progress reviews, community feedback, and cost-benefit analyses. This framework aims to ensure the plan remains responsive, resilient, and effective in advancing long-term water sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria sets out an action plan, establishes data-based targets, and outlines implementation strategies and schedules and refreshes program direction towards helping residents, businesses and institutions become more water efficient and partnering with municipal and First Nation water suppliers to improve demand management in the region. Implementation of this plan will facilitate adaptation to future pressures from climate change and will play an integral role in making the Capital Region more water sustainable.

RECOMMENDATION

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

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria