

Appendix D: Staff Vacancy Management

BACKGROUND

On April 30, 2025, the CRD Board (Board) directed staff to report back with specific recommendations on “[pursuing] staff vacancy management, where appropriate”.

In the field of human resource management, vacancy management refers to the structured processes followed to manage unfilled positions within an organisation. At the CRD, the People, Safety & Culture division establishes the overall frameworks and procedures for managing vacancies and is also bound by the collective agreement between the CRD and CUPE Local 1978. Hiring managers are responsible for assessing ongoing capacity and staffing needs, defining operational roles, and planning for succession, with support from People, Safety & Culture Advisors.

Each year, the CRD fills over 550 job opportunities across a range of roles, including regular, fixed-term and auxiliary/seasonal roles, such as Camp Leaders and Watershed Operators. In recent years, the CRD’s recruitment efforts have been challenged by higher-than-average retirement rates and relatively low unemployment levels in British Columbia and Canada, making it more difficult to attract and retain highly qualified staff. For example, the annual turnover rate for regular staff was 9.1% in 2024, compared to the industry average of 7.7%. Similarly, the annual retirement rate for regular staff was 2.6% in 2024, compared to the industry average of 2.0%.

Specific strategies may be periodically applied to vacancy management practices in response to operational challenges, including those of the corporate People, Safety & Culture Strategic Plan.

Context in 2026

In recent years, the CRD Board has worked to balance an ambitious vision for the region with the realities of staffing and budget pressures. Like many local governments in the region, CRD services face budget pressures driven by rising labour costs, new capital expenses, infrastructure renewal, and the need to modernize critical systems and technologies, to name a few. Despite these challenges, the Board has approved several new initiatives and associated staffing positions for 2024 and 2025, enabling staff to maintain momentum and, in some cases, expand service delivery capacity. During the 2025 provisional budget deliberations, the Board acknowledged the year-on-year growth of CRD services and emphasized the importance of efficient service delivery.

As part of its April 30, 2025, discussion on regional district services and service review options, the CRD Board directed staff to pursue vacancy management, where appropriate. In this context, vacancy management is defined as enhancing oversight over staffing decisions to ensure:

1. Any vacant role remains operationally necessary to maintain service levels or advance Board- or Commission-approved initiatives.
2. If the position is no longer deemed necessary, or if the position-specific initiative/job duty can be deferred, the full-time equivalent (FTE) be reallocated to address critical operational needs, taking a cross-organizational perspective.
3. The strategy is applied consistently for at least one year to support long-term workforce planning. If successful, it may be adopted as a permanent approach.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

The ELT has taken practical steps to limit staffing growth and, where appropriate, reallocate existing resources to meet critical needs. In response to the operating context and financial pressures, and to reinforce the CRD's commitment to fiscal responsibility, the ELT has implemented a pause on new staffing requests for the 2026 service planning cycle, unless directed otherwise by the CRD Board or a commission with delegated authority¹. This means no new positions will be added to the Staff Establishment Chart for 2026 unless directed, and positions previously planned for 2026 have been re-evaluated and, in most cases, deferred.

In setting this direction, the ELT emphasized that essential services will not be compromised. A separate strategy has been developed to address those critical needs without increasing the overall staff complement. Where feasible, existing vacancies, particularly those where the work is no longer deemed necessary or can be deferred, have been reallocated to fill these critical roles. To date, two positions have been created through reallocated vacancies:

- Deputy Corporate Officer (second position)
- Financial Analyst/Officer

Additional vacancies are currently being assessed to support the following critical roles:

- Manager, Parks Operations (second position)
- Corporate Recruiting Specialist
- Departmental Administrator (Paralegal and Assistant)

Since 2024, divisional leads have also been required to submit five-year staffing forecasts, providing valuable insights into future organizational needs and areas of potential growth. It is important to note that only positions supported by a documented business case are included in the Five-Year Financial Plan.

The CRD also continues its practice of using fixed-term positions for service levels where long-term needs are uncertain, under review, or tied to time-limited projects. If the long-term need for a term position is confirmed, it may be brought forward to the Board for permanent inclusion.

IMPLICATIONS

Service Delivery Implications

The purpose of the staffing pause is to allow the organization to focus on filling current vacancies and hiring the 61.5 FTEs, regular and fixed-term positions, approved for 2025. Once these positions are in place, the organization will reassess its future capacity needs. In some cases, implementing the pause has required staff to revise workplans and adjust timelines to align with available resources.

RECOMMENDATION

No additional policy direction from the CRD Board is required at this time.

¹ As of September 15, 2025, staff have received direction to implement new staffing roles in 2026 from the Regional Water Supply Commission, the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission, and the CRD Board, which carried a recommendation from the Performing Arts Facilities Select Committee.