

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026**

SUBJECT **Regional Canada Goose Management Service – 2025 Updates**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To seek Committee direction regarding the 2027–2031 service planning process for the Regional Canada Goose Management Service.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Canada Goose Management Service was established in 2023 to work with key regional partners and governments to reduce the impacts of the rapidly growing Canada Goose (CAGO) population and coordinate implementation of the Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy (RCGMS). The Capital Regional District (CRD) Board funded the service for four years with the intention of revisiting based on key performance indicators (e.g., regional population, addling success, harvest levels).

PROGRAM UPDATES

Service levels were enhanced in 2025 by using the maximum allowable requisition (\$252,226) through Bylaw No. 4522 Canada Goose Management Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2022 (Appendix A), and available reserve funds (\$48,605). This allowed a considerable expansion of the egg addling program into new areas, two annual goose harvests (instead of one) and involvement of First Nations partners in the mitigation and monitoring efforts. A summary of 2025 Program Accomplishments is provided in Appendix B.

The current resident population is approximately 6,000 Canada geese (Appendix C). The RCGMS identifies a target regional population of approximately 1,000 geese to minimize the negative impacts of geese. Sustained addling efforts are resulting in a stabilization of the goose population (Appendix D). The use of operating reserve funds to expanded activities (addition of part-time staff to assist in the spring addling program and an additional summer harvest) implemented in 2025 resulted in an immediate 11% reduction in the resident population. A comparable result is expected in 2026.

The first three years of this service have demonstrated an ability to control the CAGO population in the region. However, more resources are needed to reduce it to the target of 1,000 geese. Opportunities for partnerships and contracts with First Nations are starting to be realized and are consistent with reconciliation efforts. The work also complements efforts around food security and protection of agricultural values, and biodiversity and environmental stewardship.

As it is presently administered, the service is at its maximum allowable requisition in 2026; operating reserve funds will be eliminated by year-end; the part-time coordinator's four-year term ends; and the service is not currently funded beyond this year, consistent with the 2026-2030 Preliminary Budget.

Given the Board's broad direction to minimize overall requisition increases for CRD services, staff are bringing service level options forward for consideration and direction by this Committee and the CRD Board in advance of the 2027-2031 service planning process.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

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

1. That staff be directed to extend the funding for the Goose Management Service for the 2027-2031 service planning period at the current requisition level; and,
2. That staff be directed to initiate an amendment to Bylaw No. 4522 Canada Goose Management Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2022 in 2027 to increase the maximum allowable requisition and accommodate any increases based on Board direction.

Alternative 2

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

1. That staff be directed to extend the funding for the Goose Management Service with additional resources identified through the Initiative Business Case process as part of the 2027-2031 service planning period; and,
2. That staff be directed to initiate an amendment to Bylaw No. 4522 Canada Goose Management Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2022 in 2027 to increase the maximum allowable requisition and accommodate any increases based on Board direction.

Alternative 3

The Environmental Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That staff be directed to not fund the Goose Management Service for the 2027-2031 service planning process.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental Implications

Reducing the Canada Goose population to a sustainable target level of 1,000 geese is necessary to reduce existing impacts. The current population of approximately 6,000 geese continue to severely affect regional farmlands, degrade coastal ecosystems and impact recreational activities. Social and public health concerns are rising due to high densities of fecal matter on beaches and recreational playing fields, water contamination, goose conflicts, and increased risk of exposure to avian influenza.

Enhanced activities (expansion of the addling program, additional harvests) led to a reduced regional population and made significant progress towards the regional target population (Appendices C and D).

The removal of nearly 6,000 geese since 2022 through population mitigation resulted in an 11% decline in the resident population based on the summer moult surveys. These data indicate that egg addling efforts are effectively stabilizing population growth, but harvests are needed to achieve a substantial population reduction over the short-term. Dual harvests and continued expansion of egg addling program are planned for 2026.

Enhanced service levels, like those deployed in 2025 and 2026 using reserve funds, would enable

further expansion of the egg addling program, and ensure two annual harvests from key hotspots over the next four years. This would maintain substantial population reduction required to meaningfully ease the environmental, recreational, and economic impact across the region.

Intergovernmental and First Nations Implications

Several municipal partners identified capacity issues to fully participate in egg addling programs but expressed support for additional CRD staffing to conduct addling on their lands. Several First Nations are participating in the program with ongoing conversations regarding participation by other Nations. Recent Memorandums of Understanding between the CRD and First Nations will help facilitate these discussions. The Nations have identified environmental and social benefits as a result of their participation. Currently, the program has limited funds available for First Nations to assist with addling, harvesting, and population surveys. Enhanced service levels will enable contracts with more First Nations to participate in the service and steward their territorial lands. This service supports the CRD Board's priorities regarding First Nations engagement and collaboration.

Financial Implications

There is a clear correlation between service levels and key outcomes for the service. The elimination of the service would result in an increasing trend in the regional Canada Goose population. Maintaining the status quo level of service would stabilize the population at its current level but not likely reduce the overall population. Adding an enhanced level of service would see a continued decline in the regional population.

Ending the Regional Goose Management service in 2027 would not alter the overall requisition for CRD services since it is not currently accounted for in the 2026-2030 Preliminary Budget. Continuing with the service level at the expected maximum requisition would add 0.29% (\$298,267; or approximately \$1.51/household) to the overall CRD requisition increase. Adding the proposed enhancement to the service level would add approximately 0.34% (\$351,877; or approximately \$1.78/household) to the overall requisition increase.

The recommendation balances the progress being made in the service with an awareness of the Board's concerns for fiscal responsibility and the constraints on future requisitions. The recommendation also acknowledges the limited internal resources to accommodate a bylaw amendment this year, especially given the upcoming municipal election process. Staff are proposing to amend the bylaw in 2027 based on Board direction.

The 2027-2031 service plan and budget process will determine requisition levels for the service and this committee's recommendations will inform consideration of future support for the service.

CONCLUSION

The Regional Canada Goose Management Service has shown early success in reducing the regional goose population, supporting ongoing wildlife management, and engaging First Nations for environmental, economic, and social benefits. Continued service would further mitigate agricultural, economic, environmental, public health, and recreational impacts associated with the resident population.

The service is currently funded only through 2026. Extending the program at an enhanced level

for the 2027–2031 service planning cycle would increase the Capital Regional District's requisition by approximately 0.34%. Given current fiscal constraints, staff seek Board direction as part of the 2027–2030 service planning and budget process.

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. That staff be directed to extend the funding for the Goose Management Service for the 2027–2031 service planning period at the current requisition level; and,
2. That staff be directed to initiate an amendment to Bylaw No. 4522 Canada Goose Management Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2022 in 2027 to increase the maximum allowable requisition and accommodate any increases based on Board direction.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Bylaw No. 4522 Canada Goose Management Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2022

Appendix B: 2025 Regional Canada Goose Management – 2025 Program Accomplishments Summary

Appendix C: 2025 Canada Population Survey Report (September 2025)

Appendix D: 2025 Canada Goose Egg Addling Report (September 2025)

Presentation: Regional Canada Goose Management Service – 2025 Update