

## New Initiatives (2025-2029) - Overview

Through the annual service and financial planning process, staff review existing service levels, the status of advancing initiatives, and commitments made in strategic plans (e.g. Board Priorities, CRD Corporate Plan, etc.) to identify and develop future workplans.

Initiative business cases recommending new incremental initiatives and service level adjustments are drafted in the spring. These are then reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to assess each initiative, including the proposed approach, phasing, and impacts on resources and organizational capacity. This information is presented annually for approval by the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board, alongside the provisional budget. This approach has effectively highlighted the focus of staff's work for the following year to the CRD Board on an annual basis.

To build and improve on this approach, this year staff are presenting a multi-year roadmap of planned initiatives. This report outlines new proposed initiatives for 2025 and beyond. By presenting a roadmap of future years with initiatives grouped thematically, staff aim to provide the CRD Board with a more transparent and accountable view of upcoming activities and changes in the short and medium term.

This report contains five thematic groupings of initiatives:

1. Building and operating **regional housing**
2. Adapting to **service growth**
3. Strengthening the **corporate foundation**
4. Futureproofing through **technology investments**
5. Supporting the **Electoral Areas**

Descriptions of each initiative included in this package, summarizing the drivers, goals, requirements and funding source have been included in a separate appendix.

### Review and Prioritization Process

To prepare this report, ELT conducted two full days of business case reviews to assess the strategic case for each initiative, followed by several follow-up rounds of prioritization. Through this work, ELT adjusted the approach and phasing of many initiatives listed in this report to manage organizational capacity, smooth out resource impacts, and make room for emergency or unplanned work. Additionally, ELT completed a comprehensive review of service budgets and the financial impacts of new initiatives before finalizing the package.

Per the usual service and financial planning process, staff will bring forward revised initiatives groupings annually to ensure that the CRD Board considers the following year's proposed package of work considering economic and operational conditions and factors.

**CRD Evolves 2024-2025**

In 2023, ELT announced an organizational reorganization, called CRD Evolves 2024-2025. The CRD Board received an information report about CRD Evolves 2024-2025 on October 9, 2024.

Planning for these changes has been ongoing throughout 2024, with implementation set to begin in 2025. It will be important to begin to realize the benefits of the new organizational structure before any significant adjustments associated with CRD Evolves are made to staffing levels or service budgets. For this reason, ELT has instructed staff not to include these changes in this year's service and financial planning package.

There are two exceptions of note. Two initiatives related to CRD Evolves 2024-2025 have been included in this year's service planning package and provisional budget as the new staff positions are required to implement the changes envisaged. They are initiatives *16e-5.1 Electoral Area Services Department Oversight* and *13a-1.2 Manager of Procurement*.

CRD Evolves sets long-term corporate goals and achieving them will, in some cases, require increases in resource capacity. The Chief Administrative Officer will provide regular updates about the CRD Evolves to the CRD Board, and staff will bring forward any future resource adjustment requests through the usual service and financial planning process annually, for approval by the CRD Board.

## 1: Building and Operating Regional Housing

### Background

The CRD Board identified the construction and operation of affordable housing as a critical priority for the region at the outset of its term. The Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC), a wholly owned subsidiary of the CRD, is responsible for building and operating affordable housing in the region, supported by two additional CRD services<sup>1</sup>. This grouping of initiatives provides a roadmap of resources - primarily staffing capacity - necessary to maintain service levels, meet all regulatory and legislative requirements and ensure continued compliance with the terms of the various funding agreements driving new projects and operations, while absorbing the additional workload associated with onboarding new homes as well as the (re)development of multiple existing properties. Given the increasing scale and complexity of pursuing and delivering major projects and operating properties, the grouping forecasts additional requirements in future years.

### Building Affordable Housing

The CRHC continuously explores opportunities to increase the affordable housing stock by initiating new development and redevelopment projects through various funding programs. The volume of opportunities available has grown considerably in recent years to address increased demand for affordable housing in the region. As a result, the total number of affordable rental homes under development and existing buildings undergoing extensive renovations increases on an annual basis<sup>2</sup>. Due to the complex, demanding scope of (re)development activities in this portfolio, allocating sufficient staff resources to support each major capital project and pursue new projects is paramount to increasing the delivery of affordable housing within schedule, scope, and budget. Every development project also has knock-on operational impacts as adequate staffing capacity needs to be allocated to the operation of new buildings once onboarded.

### Operating Affordable Housing

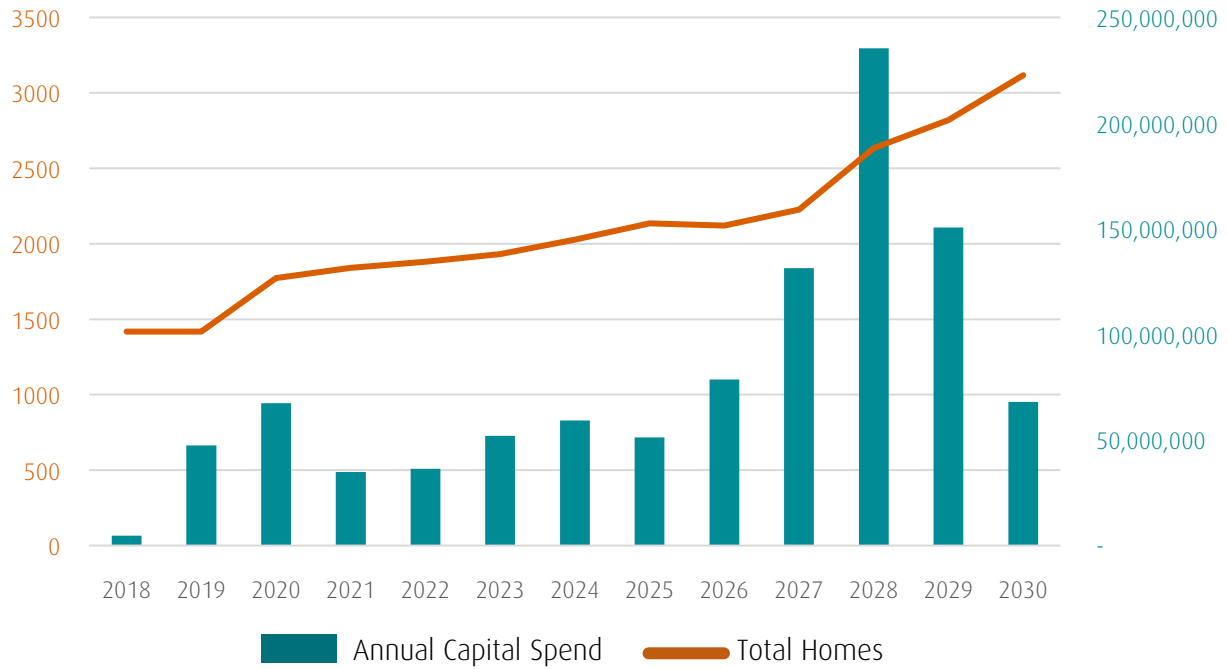
The CRHC is the largest social housing provider on Vancouver Island and delivers affordable, attractive, inclusive, and sustainable affordable rental housing to low-, moderate-, and middle-income households. It is responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of over 50 properties and more than 2,000 affordable rental homes across seven municipalities, as well as the operational activities associated with the growth the corporation is experiencing. The housing market has shifted significantly since the CRHC was established in 1983 and staff are balancing a number of significant risks and pressures including changes to the customer base, a highly competitive market, changing regulatory and funding requirements, and increasing demand for deeply affordable housing. These pressures are compounded by a heated labour market and continued growth in the number of affordable rental homes in its portfolio.

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<sup>1</sup> Land Banking & Housing and Regional Housing Trust Fund

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the CRHC Major Capital Plan for detail of current funded projects

CRHC 2018-2030

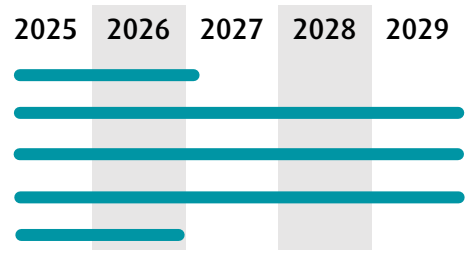


More information about these services can be found in the Housing & Health Community Need Summary.

Roadmap of New Initiatives

▶ ALL INITIATIVES LISTED IN THIS ROADMAP SUPPORT A BOARD PRIORITY

- 5a-1.3 Increasing Housing Supply & Rural Pilot Program
- 5a-1.4 Maintaining CRHC Operations
- 5a-1.5 Capital Project Delivery
- 5a-1.6 Manager Finance Regional Housing
- 5d-1.1 Regional Data System & HIFIS



Legend:

- Implementation activities
- Operationalized/absorbed in core service

## 2: Adapting to Service Growth

### Background

The CRD has experienced growing demand for many core services for over five years, driven by community needs. Over the past five years, from 2019 to 2023, the CRD has experienced increased demand for core services, including a 22% rise in park visitors, a 7% increase in the rolling average of water demand, and a 23% increase in refuse volumes. This growth is largely fueled by community needs and sustained regional population growth. It is expected that population growth will continue to be a significant economic driver in our region for the foreseeable future, increasing demand for housing, jobs, and CRD services.

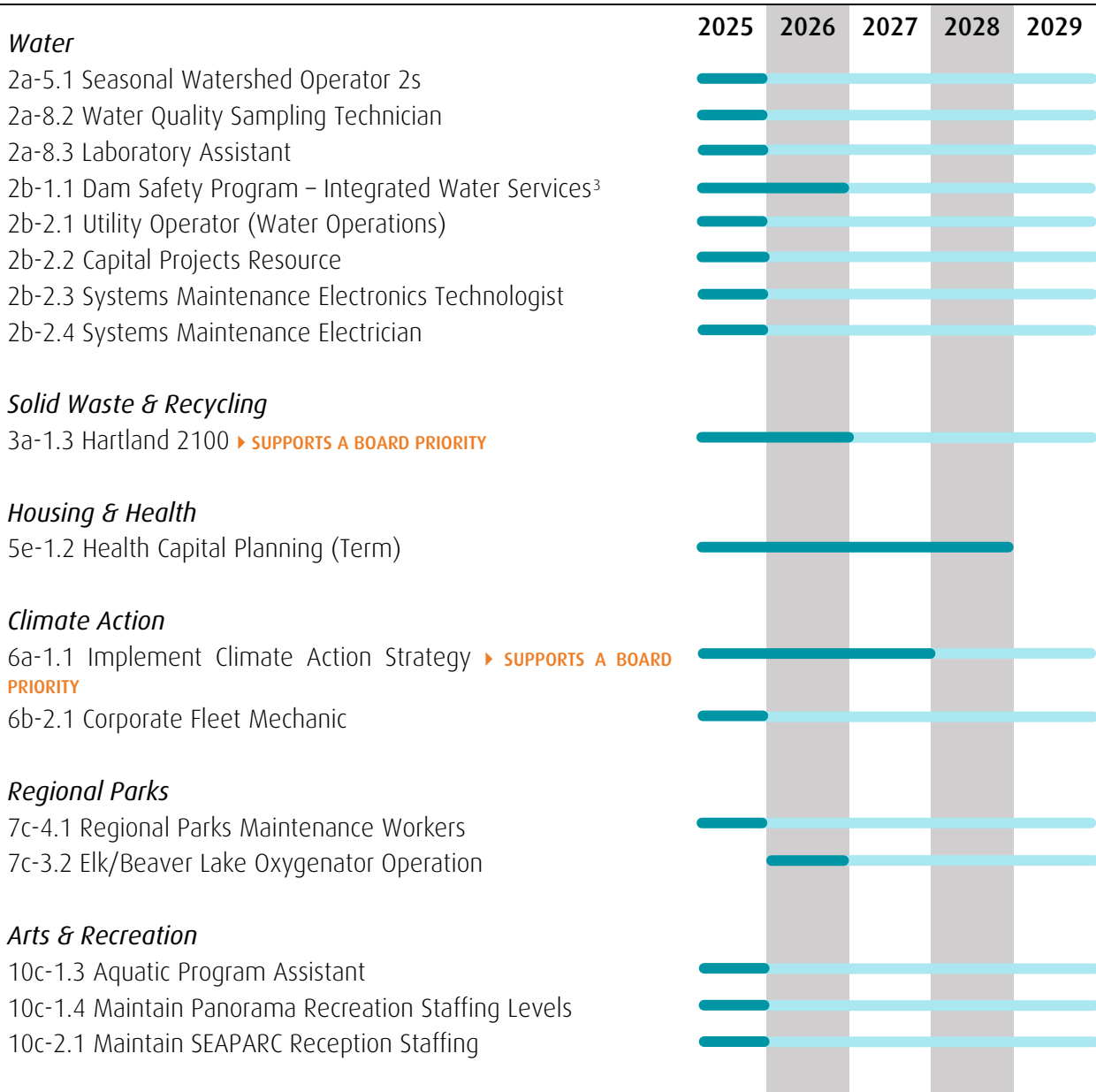
In addition to delivering 200+ core services at regional, sub-regional, and local levels, staff also advance new initiatives annually, guided by the Board Priorities and CRD Corporate Plan, to further improve or enhance service delivery, explore new service or program opportunities, and conduct one-time studies and other initiatives for the benefit of the region.

This grouping of initiatives highlights the services experiencing growth where resource adjustments are needed to keep up with demand and initiatives seeking to improve or enhance existing services and programs. Some resource adjustments are also forecasted for future years. The latest service growth data for each community need, as well as the operational factors that are driving the growth, can be found in the Community Need Summaries.

As a principle, staff have continued to focus efforts on absorbing cost pressures to remain within inflationary targets while prioritizing core service delivery, as they did in previous years.

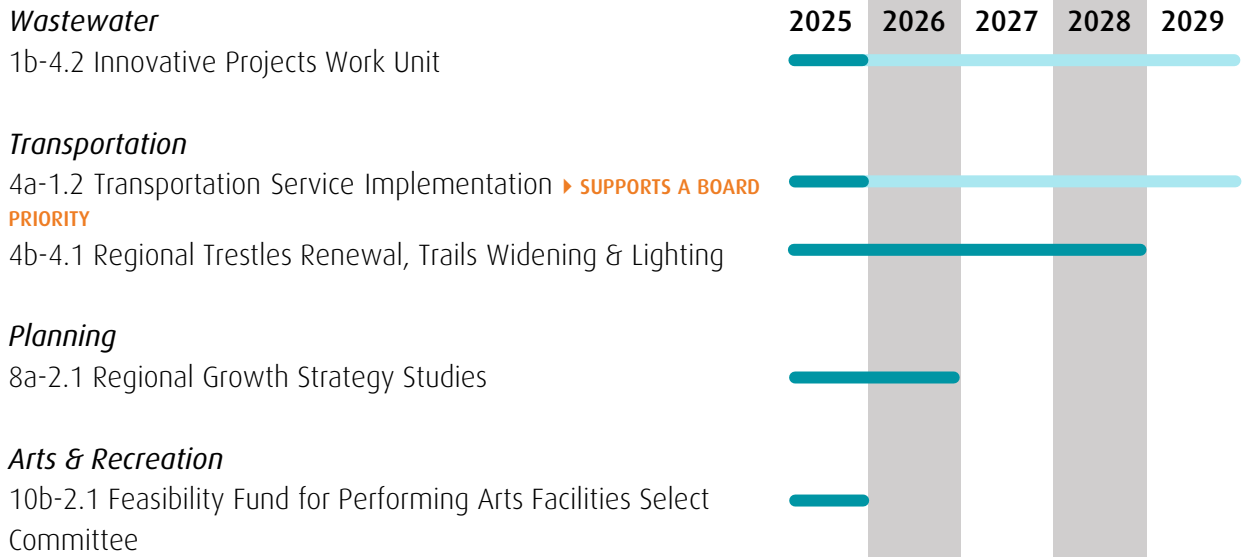
Roadmap of New Initiatives

*Service resource adjustments to keep up with demand and maintain service levels*



<sup>3</sup> This multi-year initiative was approved by the CRD Board through the 2024 provisional budget review.

*Services and programs improvement(s) and/or expansion(s)*



Legend:

- Implementation activities
- Operationalized/absorbed in core service

### 3: Strengthening the Corporate Foundation

#### Background

Operational services are supported by several administration services known as internal support services. These internal corporate functions facilitate coordinated and collaborative organizational governance and service delivery through a suite of internal professional services, including Finance, Human Resources (including Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility support), Occupational Health and Safety, First Nations, Legal, Information Services and Technology.

Support services are essential to the CRD as they provide essential business services and drive numerous value-adding enhancements. These include standardizing and streamlining processes common to all, such as procurement, providing access to experts with skills and knowledge that improve decision-making, such as recruitment and retention of staff, and enhancing governance.

As operational services grow, the demand for support services grows in tandem. This growth materializes as an additional draw on existing services and processes, consuming more staff capacity. It also manifests as additional staff time spent supporting the delivery of one-off operational initiatives and projects. More information about these services can be found in the Business Systems & Processes, People and Open Government Community Need Summaries.

This grouping of initiatives highlights how support services are responding to these pressures. The initiatives listed below either increase capacity to maintain service levels or identify new ways to enhance and improve service delivery for the benefit of all CRD services. Together, these initiatives are strengthening the foundation of support services.

#### Roadmap of New Initiatives

##### *Enhancing capacity to support organizational growth*







*Improve support service delivery for the benefit of all CRD services*



Legend:

- Implementation activities
- Operationalized/absorbed in core service

<sup>4</sup> This multi-year initiative was approved by the CRD Board through the 2024 provisional budget review.

## 4: Futureproofing Through Technology Investments

### Background

Over the last decade or more, we have recommended the prioritization of direct investments in operational service improvements and infrastructure over corporate administration functions. Consequently, the CRD has experienced a slow degradation of internal capacity related to technology, business applications and IT infrastructure.

In recent years, the CRD Board approved additional staffing resources for the Information Technology & GIS division, now called Technology & Digital Transformation, to keep pace with operational growth. However, no equivalent resources were allocated to modernize our use of technology, digital tools, business processes and back-office infrastructure to promote innovation, collaboration, and improve operational efficiency and delivery. Delaying investments in our technology infrastructure and capacity adds pressure to the team and increase risks, especially with cyber threats targeting organizations in our province.

Significant changes are necessary to address the legacy gaps identified and staff are developing two new complementary strategic plans to guide the CRD's approach and ensure alignment with broader organizational goals. The plans will focus on:

1. Investing in foundational technologies and shared platforms to close legacy gaps, mitigate risks associated with outdated assets, and ensure a resilient and future-proof infrastructure.
2. Enhancing service delivery and operational excellence by leveraging technology to streamline processes, reduce inefficiencies, and elevate overall performance.
3. Transforming the customer experience by implementing advanced tools and user-friendly interfaces that simplify interactions and strengthen engagement with the CRD.
4. Strengthening cybersecurity, privacy, and business continuity with robust solutions that protect data, ensure compliance, and maintain seamless operations in the face of potential disruptions.
5. Secure data management and driving insights through advanced analytics, enabling informed decision-making and fostering a data-driven culture.
6. Empowering employees with comprehensive training and support, cultivating digital literacy, and nurturing a culture that embraces continuous learning and technological growth.
7. Creating a modern workplace environment by equipping staff with innovative tools and applications that enhance productivity, collaboration, and job satisfaction.
8. Establishing a forward-looking approach to emerging technologies, ensuring their benefits are realized and align with organizational goals and values.

The initiatives envisioned in this grouping align with early drafts of both strategies and other supporting corporate strategic plans. Together, they present a multi-year roadmap of critical improvements to digital tools, foundational technologies, support for staff and service users, and business applications.

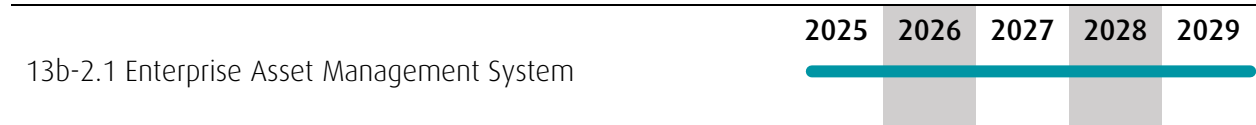
In developing the phasing for the roadmap, the ELT considered the risks associated with each initiative and has identified the risks the organization can accept and or mitigate through short term plans for a while longer. If conditions change and action is needed sooner, the ELT will re-evaluate the roadmap and present a revised approach to the CRD Board.

**Roadmap of New Initiatives**

*Investing in foundational technologies and shared platforms to address legacy gaps and mitigate risks associated with end-of-life assets and technologies*



*Enhancing service delivery and operational excellence by leveraging cutting-edge technology to streamline processes, reduce inefficiencies, and elevate overall performance*



*Transforming the customer experience by implementing advanced tools and user-friendly interfaces that simplify interactions and strengthen engagement with the CRD*



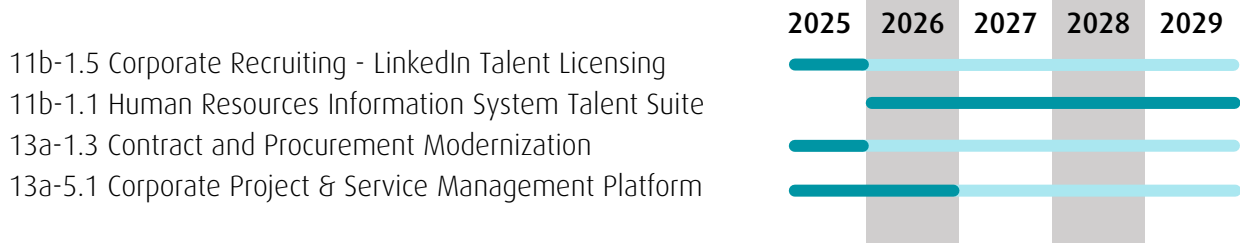
*Strengthening cybersecurity, privacy, and business continuity with robust solutions that protect data, ensure compliance, and maintain seamless operations in the face of potential disruptions*



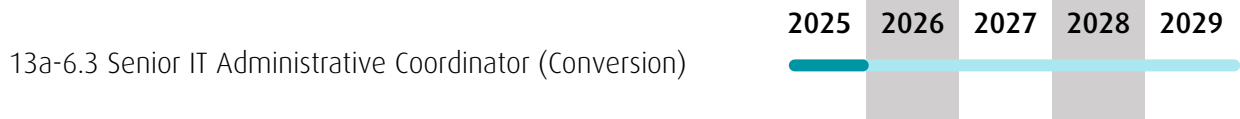
*Secure data management and driving insights through advanced analytics, enabling informed decision-making and fostering a data-driven culture*



*Creating a modern workplace environment by equipping staff with innovative tools and applications that enhance productivity, collaboration, and job satisfaction*



*Divisional Support, Contract and Budget Oversight*



Legend:

- Implementation activities
- Operationalized into core service

## 5: Supporting the Electoral Areas

### Background

The CRD serves as the local government for three electoral areas in the capital region, namely Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring Island, and the Southern Gulf Islands. It provides a range of services typically offered by local governments to these three unincorporated areas, although not all services are covered. The electoral areas also leverage the expertise and resources of operational departments as required, including for the operation of various local services, such as utility services. More information about services provided for the electoral areas can be found in the Local Government Community Need Summary.

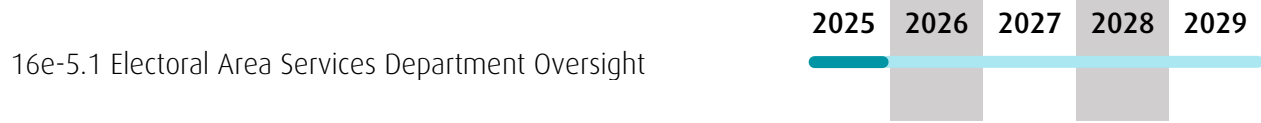
On September 11, 2024, the CRD Board directed staff to create a new Electoral Area Services department. This move would consolidate the oversight of most electoral area-specific services under the oversight and leadership of a new General Manager. Planning for this change is underway (see initiative 16e-5.1 Electoral Area Services Department Oversight), and implementation will start in Q3 of 2025.

The establishment of a new department and consolidation of numerous services represents a considerable organizational change. The grouping of initiatives presented here is therefore focused on 2025 only. The proposed adjustments are focused on adjusting service levels to address gaps where service level expectations have outstripped the capacity available. In addition, staff are advancing changes to fire services to address recommendations from the October 2023 Fire Safety Governance Review.

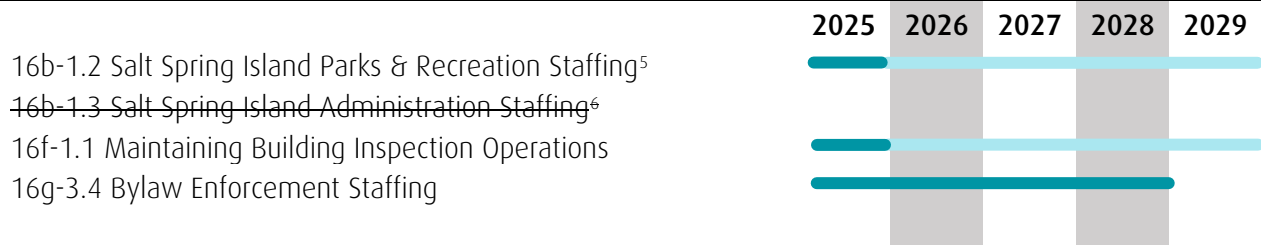
Once in place, the new General Manager will evaluate opportunities for changes and develop the future years of the roadmap. Like other groupings, it is expected that a revised roadmap of initiatives will be shared with the CRD Board next year.

Roadmap of initiatives

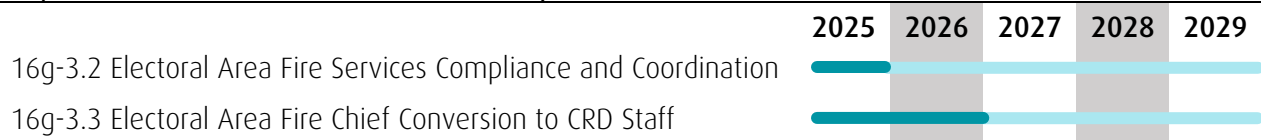
*Establishment of Electoral Area Services department*



*Maintain service levels*



*Implementation of October 2023 Fire Safety Governance Review*



Legend

- Implementation activities
- Operationalized/absorbed in core service

<sup>5</sup> As directed by the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission, the scope of this initiative has been revised. Please refer to the initiative description for more details.

<sup>6</sup> As directed by the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director, this initiative has been removed from consideration for 2025.