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REPORT TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025

SUBJECT **Service Planning 2026 - Community Need Summaries**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide strategic context and an overview of Capital Regional District (CRD) services, initiatives and performance data by Community Need as set out in the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan.

BACKGROUND

The CRD Board (Board) approved the 2023-2026 Board Priorities on March 8, 2023. Subsequently, staff developed the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan which was approved by the CRD Board on April 12, 2023. The CRD Corporate Plan outlines the work the organization needs to deliver over the four-year term, along with the critical regional, sub-regional, and local services, to meet the region's most important needs (i.e., Community Needs) and advance the Board's Vision and Priorities. Board Priorities, Corporate Plan initiatives, and core service delivery form the foundation of the five-year financial plan.

The Board approved the 2026 Service and Financial Planning Guidelines on May 14, 2025. The Board also received an information report outlining the steps of the 2026 service planning process on September 10, 2025.

The 2026 planning year marks the final year of implementation of the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan. Much of the work envisaged through the CRD Board Priorities and the Corporate Plan continues to progress, and some initiatives have been completed or integrated with core operations. The CRD's annual service plans, known as Community Need Summaries, provide an overview of the operational and strategic context, service levels, initiatives, and performance data for each Community Need. Appendices A and B provide details on all initiatives. Appendices C to R provide the Community Need Summaries for 2026.

Through the annual service planning process, staff capture information about new initiatives in an internal planning document called an Initiative Business Case (IBC). IBCs are submitted when an initiative is being advanced that is new and/or over-and-above core service delivery, requires new funding over-and-above existing core budgets, or requires new staffing capacity. IBCs are also required for any other staffing adjustments, such as conversion of existing term or auxiliary positions to regular ongoing. IBCs capture all the relevant information about a new initiative in a consistent manner to support evidence-based decision-making.

Incremental Initiatives in 2026

Staff have identified six new initiatives starting in 2026 that support the 16 community needs that will have incremental budget impacts. In addition, several Commissions and the Board have directed staff to include five more initiatives[1] in 2026 to advance strategic priorities. Their direction is summarized in Table 1, with supporting staff reports provided in Appendices S to U. A further 22 initiatives are forecasted to start in 2027, followed by four more in 2028, and one in 2029. Initiatives are phased over multiple years to ensure that there is sufficient organizational capacity to progress the work proposed. All forecasted initiatives will be re-evaluated annually through the service planning process.

The key drivers for the proposed initiatives are:

1. Initiatives that advance 2023-2026 Board Priorities or the Corporate Plan, or other key strategic planning documents, such as the Regional Water Supply Master Plan;
2. Initiatives that operationalize capital investments; and/or
3. Initiatives that are necessary to maintain a core service level following a regulatory change or where there is a safety risk to customers, communities, or staff.

Appendix A presents a multi-year overview of the initiatives. It outlines previously approved initiatives which will continue to advance into 2026, as well as new proposed initiatives for 2026 and beyond. To ensure transparency, this appendix also highlights 13 initiatives planned for 2026 that appeared in last year's multi-year plan but have since been re-assessed and either removed or deferred by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Appendix B contains qualitative descriptions of all initiatives included in this report.

Through the service planning and provisional budget review process, standing committees and commissions with delegated authority over service budgets can direct staff to make changes to service plans. The changes directed are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Changes to service plans directed by the Board, standing committees and commissions.

Direction	Staff response
At the **Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission** meeting on July 8, 2025, the following motion arising related to the **Water Community Need** was carried: *"That staff be directed to include the proposed Utility Operator and Operations Coordinator positions in the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution service budget for 2026."*	The initiatives have been included in Appendices A, B and R. The supporting staff report is available for information in Appendix S.

[1] One of these initiatives, 10b-2.2 Scale Up Regional Participation in the Performing Arts Facilities, is subject to approval of a new service by the electors.

Direction	Staff response
At the **Regional Water Supply Commission** meeting held on July 16, 2025, the following motion arising related to the **Water Community Need** was carried: *"That staff be directed to include the proposed positions for the Dam Safety Program (2 FTE), Master Plan Program (4 FTE), Operations Coordinator (0.5 FTE) and Reliability Engineer (1 FTE) in the Regional Water Supply 2026 budget, and that staff be directed to incorporate future years' FTEs into the 2027-2030 financial plan for annual review."*	The initiatives have been included in Appendices A, B and R. The supporting staff report is available for information in Appendix T.
At the **CRD Board** meeting on October 8, 2025, the following recommendation related to the **Arts & Recreation Community Need** was carried: *"1. That Bylaw No. 4704, "Performing Arts Facilities Service Establishing Bylaw No. 1, 2025", be introduced and read a first, second, and third time; and* *2. That participating area approval be obtained for the entire proposed service area by alternative approval process; and* *3. That Bylaw No. 4704 be forwarded to the Inspector of Municipalities for approval."*	For planning purposes, this initiative has been included in Appendix A, B and D. Its advancement is subject to the approval of a service establishment bylaw by the Board and the electors. The proposed performing arts facilities service is designed to absorb the functions of the existing Royal Theatre service and McPherson Playhouse service. The supporting staff report is available for information in Appendix U.

Pause on New Staffing Requests for 2026

On March 12, 2025, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) informed the Board that staff had been directed to pause all new staffing requests for 2026, unless otherwise directed by the CRD Board or a Commission with delegated authority. This decision was made in response to challenging economic conditions and in recognition of the significant number of staffing requests already approved for 2025. This pause will allow the organization to focus on filling current vacancies and onboarding the positions approved for 2025, before reassessing staffing capacity in the future.

As a result, all planned new staffing requests for 2026 were either removed or postponed. The only staffing adjustments included in budgets for 2026 are as follows:

- Inclusion of a five-year extension for three **term** positions in the Regional Housing division to support the advancement of capital projects and meet recent Community Housing Fund grant commitments for four projects. These roles must be maintained to manage current projects and respond quickly and strategically to new funding and development opportunities. For more information, refer to 5a-1.7 Housing Capital Project Delivery Terms in Appendix B.

- Inclusion of a five-year extension to a **term** position in the Environmental Innovation division, formerly the Climate Action Program. This role must be maintained to see the electric vehicle infrastructure program and other climate action initiatives to their conclusion in order to meet grant funding commitments. This position was originally slated for conversion to regular ongoing but was revised in alignment with the corporate direction. For more information, refer to 6a-1.1 Implement Climate Action Strategy (Revised) in Appendix B.

- The CRD Board endorsed an initiative during the 2025 service planning cycle to **convert** six salaried electoral area Chief Fire Officer positions (5.2 Full Time Equivalent) into regular ongoing CRD staff positions, subject to a compensation and benefit review, which has now been completed. The conversions, which are included in 2026, are necessary to regularize a challenge identified in the 2023 Fire Services Governance Review report. For more information, refer to 16g-3.3 Electoral Area Fire Chief Conversion to CRD staff (Revised) in Appendix B.

In addition, since March, three Board/Commission motions have been carried to include new staff positions in 2026, and they are listed in Table 1.

The CAO also emphasized that essential services would not be compromised. To address critical staffing needs, a targeted strategy was developed to reallocate existing vacancies, where feasible. As part of this approach, vacant positions were repurposed to support priority areas, including a second Deputy Corporate Officer role in the Legislative Services division, and Financial Analyst and Financial Officer roles in the Financial Services division.

Additional Commitments

On April 30, 2025, the Board directed staff to expand on the recently developed regional service profile documents by creating additional service profiles for sub-regional services with a minimum of a $1 million budget. This is provided in Appendix V.

On October 1, 2025, the CAO made a commitment to the Governance and First Nations Relations Committee to provide an outline of resource transfers across service budgets resulting from CRD Evolves 2024-2025, the creation of the Environmental Innovation division and the establishment of a Regional Transportation Service, which all took place in 2025. This is provided in Appendix W.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The ELT has assessed all proposed initiatives for 2026 and has determined that the overall package represents an appropriate and proportional response to meet the expectations of the CRD Board and communities in consideration of current economic and operational conditions. Forecasted initiatives for future years were evaluated by General Managers.

Two of the initiatives[2] proposed for 2026 were not originally listed in the CRD Corporate Plan but were later identified by staff as necessary to maintain services levels and meet community expectations. If approved by the Board, these initiatives will be added to the Corporate Plan Addendum, which captures initiatives identified after the plan's publication.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of the Community Need Summaries, core service level adjustments, and new initiatives are addressed in the CRD 2026 Financial Plan Provisional Approval report, to be presented at the same meeting as this report. Since 2023, this report has included a five-year forecast for staffing level changes, which is updated annually.

Regional and sub-regional commissions have considered the financial implications of the relevant proposed programs of work, including the Regional Water Supply Commission, Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission, Saanich Peninsula Wastewater and Water Commissions, Sooke and Electoral Area Parks and Recreation Commission, the Peninsula Recreation Commission, and the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission. Some local service committees and commissions will be reviewing their provisional budgets between now and the end of the year; any recommended amendments will be reflected in the final financial plan in March 2026.

Staff also brought forward operating and capital budget reports in the fall to standing committees and commissions for most services with an annual budget of $5 million or more, including the Core Area Liquid Waste Management, Regional Parks, Environmental Resource Management, Legislative and General Government and Facilities Services, and Land Banking and Housing.

Service Delivery Implications

Appendix A presents a multi-year overview of planned initiatives for 2026 and beyond. The initiatives are grouped thematically to offer an improved view of upcoming activities and changes in the short and medium term. For each grouping, staff have provided background information about the approach taken, as well as a description of each initiative. Presenting initiatives in this manner is a new approach introduced last year in support of the provisional budget process. Appendix B presents a short summary for each new initiative.

Climate, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, and First Nations Implications

The evaluation of all initiatives included considerations of impacts on Climate Action, First Nations Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

CONCLUSION

CRD staff are progressing initiatives identified in the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan, including the Board Priorities. The CRD Board and commissions with delegated authorities determine resourcing through the annual review and approval of the provisional financial plan. To support decision-making, staff provide recommendations on funding, timing, and service levels through the service and financial planning processes.

[2] Highlighted in the Community Need Summaries for Climate Action and Open Government.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Submitted by:	Fran Lopez, Manager, Strategic Planning
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Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: New Initiatives (2026-2030) - Overview
Appendix B: New Initiatives (2026-2030) - Descriptions
Appendix C: Advocacy
Appendix D: Arts & Recreation
Appendix E: Business Systems & Processes
Appendix F: Climate Action
Appendix G: First Nations
Appendix H: Housing & Health
Appendix I: Local Government
Appendix J: Open Government
Appendix K: People
Appendix L: Planning
Appendix M: Regional Parks
Appendix N: Safety & Emergency Management
Appendix O: Transportation
Appendix P: Solid Waste & Recycling
Appendix Q: Wastewater
Appendix R: Water
Appendix S: 2026 Service Delivery – Staffing Requirements Staff Report (Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission)
Appendix T: 2026 Service Delivery – Staffing Requirements Staff Report (Regional Water Supply Commission)
Appendix U: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Options for a New Performing Arts Facilities Service (CRD Board)
Appendix V: CRD Sub-Regional Services Profiles
Appendix W: Overview of resource transfers across services
Presentation: Service Planning 2026