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## REPORT TO FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2023

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**SUBJECT**     **Service Planning 2024 – First Nations Community Need Summary**

### **ISSUE SUMMARY**

To provide strategic context and an overview of services, initiatives and performance data related to the First Nations Community Need.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Board approved the 2023-2026 Board Priorities on March 8, 2023. Staff then developed the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan which was approved by the CRD Board on April 12, 2023.

The CRD Corporate Plan presents 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 2024 planning cycle marks the first year of the implementation of the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan. The CRD's annual service plans, known as Community Need Summaries, provide an overview of the operational and strategic context, services levels, initiatives, and performance data for each Community Need. They also provide details of the initiatives, associated staffing, timing and service levels required to advance the work in future years.

The First Nations Community Need Summary is attached as Appendix A. The desired outcome is strong relationships with First Nations based on trust and mutual respect, partnerships and working together on shared goals.

The CRD reports on the progress of its initiatives and services on a regular basis. The Board receives updates about the Board Strategic Priorities through the Chief Administrative Officer Quarterly Progress Reports. The Board also receives an overview of progress made on delivering the Corporate Plan twice a year at the strategic check-in and provisional budget meetings, which take place in the spring and fall respectively. The next strategic check-in will take place in spring 2024. During the year, standing committees and commissions also fulfill an oversight and advisory role in relation to the work.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

#### *Alternative 1*

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That Appendix A, Community Need Summary – First Nations, be approved as presented and form the basis of the Provisional 2024-2028 Financial Plan.

### *Alternative 2*

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That Appendix A, Community Need Summary – First Nations, be approved as amended and form the basis of the Final 2024-2028 Financial Plan.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### *Governance Implications*

In 2024, staff have prioritized programs and initiatives that:

- Advance 2023-2026 Board Priorities or Corporate Plan initiatives;
- Operationalize capital investments; and/or
- Are necessary to maintain a core service level following a regulatory change or where there is a safety risk to customers, communities, or staff.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) has reviewed and assessed all initiative business cases and confirmed alignment with the criteria. ELT has determined that the consolidated package of work is appropriate and a proportional response to the CRD Board's and communities' expectations of the organization.

### *Financial Implications*

To exercise constraint and cost containment, the CRD Board directed staff to keep the core inflationary adjustment to 3.5% through the 2024 Service and Financial Planning Guidelines. Staff and management have taken the necessary steps to mitigate the financial impact of proposed initiatives as well as cost escalation and high inflation rate experienced in 2022 through to 2023.

Financial and staff impacts for initiatives will be summarized and included in the provisional budget which will be presented at the Committee of the Whole meeting scheduled for October 25, 2023. Starting this year, this will also include a five-year forecast of staffing level changes, which will be reviewed annually.

### *Service Delivery Implications*

Appendix A includes information about existing service delivery, operational considerations and performance. Additional information has been provided below about the proposed changes for 2024.

Staff are proposing to advance two new initiatives for the First Nations Community Need that have financial implications for 2024, as shown in Table 1. The initiatives advance Board or Corporate Plan Priorities.

Table 1. First Nations Community Need Initiatives (2024)

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Implementation year(s)</b>	<b>Staff impacts (2024)</b>	<b>Incremental cost (2024)</b>	<b>Funding source</b>
15a-1.1 Government-to-Government relationships building	2024–2028	-	\$250,000	Requisition
15a-1.2 First Nations Relations Staffing	2024–ongoing	1 New Ongoing	\$82,633	Requisition

The information in Table 1 reflects the initiative business case costs which ELT reviewed as part of their annual assessment of initiatives.

**15a-1.1 Government-to-Government Relationship Building**

Many Nations in the region have identified capacity funding as a critical component to building respectful intergovernmental relationships. The CRD has received several direct funding requests from local First Nations in the past year, to support Nations in responding to CRD requests for input and participating in CRD initiatives.

The CRD Board approved a one-time budget increase of \$250,000 in 2023 as capacity funding to support government-to-government relationship building with those Nations with whom the CRD is already engaged in ongoing dialogue related to CRD service delivery, where the CRD has or is actively negotiating service agreements or traditional use agreements. Outcomes from this initiative are anticipated to include requests from First Nations for ongoing capacity funding to support regular intergovernmental meetings.

Initiative 15a-1.1 looks to continue this work and seeks to increase the core budget by \$250,000 annually until 2028 as capacity funding to support ongoing relationship building while longer-term requests are considered.

**15a-1.2 First Nations Relations Staffing**

First Nations, the Province, and the CRD Board all have increasing expectations regarding First Nations engagement and collaborative decision-making across service delivery planning, operations, and governance. To implement reconciliation-related Board Priorities and to stay responsive to the changing legal context will require increasing capacity to effectively support and advise across CRD Divisions, to provide oversight to numerous First Nations engagement initiatives, and to coordinate an increasing number of ongoing meetings and negotiations with Nations.

Initiative 15a-1.2 seeks to create one new regular ongoing position in the First Nations Relations Division to increase capacity in the team to support this critical work. Note that the cost of the new position for 2024 reflects a half year implementation of that role. The full impact of the position on an ongoing basis will be reflected in the 2025 budget. One additional position is planned for 2025; further information will be submitted for Board approval next year.

**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.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:  
That Appendix A, Community Need Summary – First Nations, be approved as presented and form the basis of the Provisional 2024-2028 Financial Plan.

Submitted by:	Caitlyn Vernon, MES, Manager, First Nations Relations
Concurrence:	Kristen Morley, J.D., General Manager, Corporate Services & Corporate Officer
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT**

Appendix A: Community Need Summary – First Nations