

Infrastructure & Water Services**Summary of Initiatives Planned for Future Years****2a-5.2 Equipment / Watershed Operator (1 FTE, Watershed Protection)**

This initiative was originally planned for 2027 and has been deferred by staff to 2028. The Greater Victoria Water Supply Area (GVWSA) has expanded in recent years with the addition of the Leech Water Supply Area, Kapoor lands, and other minor land parcels. This has significantly increased the land base and road network requiring maintenance. At the same time, operational demands have grown due to limited and costly contractor availability, more frequent severe weather and storm events, and higher expectations for resilience, response and readiness. Despite these growing demands, the number of dedicated equipment operators has decreased to just one.

To address this gap, this initiative proposes to create a new ongoing regular Heavy Equipment/Watershed Operator position in 2028. This role will support climate adaptation and ensure adequate service delivery for the Regional Water Supply. Responsibilities will include, among other things, deactivating, rehabilitating, and constructing roads in the Leech area, as well as maintaining and upgrading infrastructure (roads, bridges, culverts, ditches and weirs). Funding will be covered through capital projects (40%) and water rates (60%).

2a-5.3 Seasonal Watershed Protection (2.25 FTE, Watershed Protection)

This initiative was originally planned for 2027 and has been deferred by staff to 2028. The Watershed Protection division is responsible for maintaining the GVWSA and performing annual watershed management activities related to wildfire prevention and suppression, security, road access maintenance, vegetation and invasive species management, fuel management, and wildlife management. Due to climate change, the GVWSA has experienced a growing number of high and extreme fire rating days, rising from an average of under 60 days in 1999 to 80 days in 2024. The 2024 Old Man Lake Wildfire clearly demonstrated how challenging, time-consuming, and expensive it is to extinguish a wildfire once it has taken hold. The event underscored the critical importance of proactive watershed management and wildfire response.

To meet the requirements of the CRD's GVWSA Wildfire Preparedness Plan, the division has gradually increased staffing through auxiliary resources and overtime. However, this approach is not sustainable in the long term. This initiative proposes to create regular, ongoing seasonal positions to supplement the fulltime workforce and reduce reliance on auxiliaries and overtime. This initiative proposes to create a total of 2.25 FTE in 2028. Funding will be covered through water rates.

2b-2.7 Contract Support Service (0.25, FTE shared with other services)

This initiative was originally planned for 2027 and has been deferred by staff to 2028. The Corporate capital Delivery Services (CCPDS) division was established in 2025 through the CRD Evolves 2024-2025 initiative. Its purpose is to centralize project management for CRD capital projects that exceed a defined threshold, consolidating most capital project delivery resources into a single division. As an early step towards improving service delivery, the team has identified a need to enhance the efficiency of financial tasks related to contract management. This is in response to the growing complexity and volume of capital projects.

To support this new division, this initiative will propose to create a new regular ongoing position in 2028 responsible for the efficient processing, monitoring and compliance of the financial components of capital projects. This includes creating purchase orders, processing invoices, administering holdbacks and standing offers, and tracking and reporting for insurance purposes. The role will help ensure the timely, accurate, and compliant financial operations within the CCPDS division. The portion of the role allocated for Regional Water Supply work is estimated at 0.25 FTE. The cost of this initiative will be recovered through capital projects shared across several services.

2a-5.4 Forest Management Plan Implementation (1 FTE, Watershed Protection)

This initiative was planned for 2028 and has been deferred to 2029. The forested ecosystems within the GVWSA were significantly altered by past timber harvest activities from the 1920s and 1990s, and more recently in the Leech Water Supply Area. Although these areas have since regenerated, either through planting or natural processes, climate change is now threatening their long-term health and resilience. To ensure the sustainability of these ecosystems, a more proactive and hands-on approach to forest stewardship is required.

This initiative will propose to create a new regular ongoing position to support the implementation of a new Forest Management Plan for the GWSA. While the work on the plan will begin in 2026-2027, the new role will be instrumental in guiding the plan through its final development stages and into implementation. Currently, forest management treatments are limited to 5-50 hectares annually out of a total forested area in the GVWSA of approximately 21,000 hectares. Activities resulting from the new plan may include juvenile tree spacing and thinning, prescribed burning, and planting of climate appropriate tree species. Funding will be covered through water rates.

2b-2.5 Utility Operator (1 FTE, Water Operations) (multi-year initiative started in 2026, JDF/RWS)

The Utility Operator Program seeks to address rising operational risks and inefficiencies due to staffing shortages related to aging meter replacement and failures, transmission operations and system growth. The increasing complexity of the Regional Water Supply transmission system is causing increased emergency repairs, customer complaints, and revenue loss. A proactive response is required to ensure continued reliable service delivery.

This multi-year initiative started in 2026 with the creation of 2 FTE Utility Operator positions for the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution System in 2026 and 2027.

In 2028, staff will propose to create a 1 FTE Utility Operator position for the Regional Water Supply with a focus on strengthening the reliability of the transmission system, reducing the risk of operational downtime, and improving support for regional supply continuity. Furthermore, this additional staffing capacity will enhance operational coverage and response capability, support preventative maintenance of critical mains, valves, and control structures, and ensure resiliency during peak demand and emergency events.