

REPORT TO TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2026

SUBJECT **Regional Transportation Service Implementation Update and 2026 Work Plan**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide an update on the implementation of the Regional Transportation Service (RTS), including the 2026 work plan and progress on updating the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

BACKGROUND

Transportation is a key contributor in building a resilient, connected, and inclusive region. Recognizing this, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board identified transportation as a strategic priority for the 2023-2026 term and approved the establishment of the RTS on June 11, 2025. The service bylaw development and establishment process was supported by a comprehensive engagement process, including workshops with CRD Directors and other elected officials, and culminated through a supportive electoral approval process. Through this process it was confirmed that the RTS would initially focus on consolidating existing transportation-related functions currently delivered by Regional Planning, Regional Parks, and the Traffic Safety Commission (TSC), and updating the RTP to establish a renewed regional transportation vision, along with goals and priorities to guide long-term planning.

At the June 25, 2025, Transportation Committee meeting, staff committed to providing regular updates on the implementation of the RTS, as well as its foundational project, the RTP. The 2026 RTS work plan focuses on service consolidation, key programs, and using the RTP as the framework for future priorities. In this regard, the RTS is being implemented as reported through service establishment, through a phased and deliberate approach that prioritizes consolidating core foundational work before expansion. This report outlines the major initiatives within the 2026 work plan and reflects the full, committed capacity of staff to implement the service and respond to previous direction provided by the Board. If new priorities emerge, whether through Board direction, notices of motion, or other regional opportunities, staff will assess how best to stage or reprioritize work to accommodate these items.

Service Priorities

Regional Transportation Governance

Establishing effective governance is a foundational component of the RTS work plan and is essential to coordinated regional transportation planning and implementation. In 2026, efforts will focus on strengthening collaboration, clarifying roles, and advancing regional governance discussions. Ongoing executive-level collaboration with BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) will support alignment with provincial initiatives and major investment planning. Work is underway on two key governance initiatives:

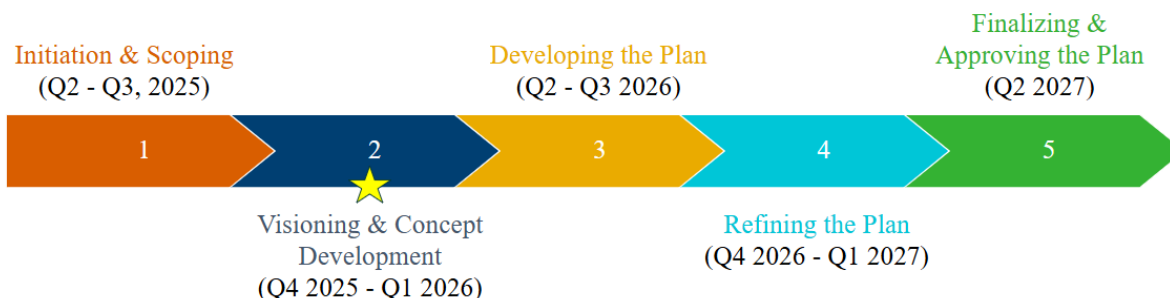
- 1) *Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC)*: RTAC will serve as the primary forum for coordination among member jurisdictions and key partners on regional transportation priorities. Subject-matter subcommittees may be established to

support focused coordination on priority areas such as rapid transit and road and trail safety. Staff have solicited a membership list for CRD Board appointment in preparation for the inaugural RTAC meeting scheduled for late January.

- 2) *Stepwise Governance*: At its July 9, 2025, meeting, the CRD Board directed staff to evaluate the merits of establishing a Transportation Commission as part of the forthcoming update to the RTP and transferring the responsibilities of the Victoria Regional Transit Commission to the CRD. In 2026, work to support this will focus on analyzing governance options, defining roles and responsibilities, and assessing resource and legislative implications. This work will be supported by strategic engagement with MOTT and BC Transit. Staff anticipate a report providing an update on this for Transportation Committee in Q2 2026 to guide decisions on future regional transportation governance.

Regional Transportation Plan

The development of the RTP is a central component of the RTS work plan and will continue to be a core focus of work for 2026. The process began in Q2 2025 with most recent milestones including engaging a consultant with expertise delivering regional-scale transportation plans, including TransLink's *Transport 2050* for the Metro Vancouver region. As illustrated in the accompanying timeline, we are now in the visioning and concept development focussing on clarifying key objectives, priorities, and strategic questions to guide the plan's development. Outcomes of this phase will ensure that technical analysis and engagement activities are well-aligned, targeted and cost-effective.



Planning is also underway for the first RTP engagement workshop in Q2 2026. The workshop will build on previous work and engagement, including the Transportation Governance Workshop held in May 2024, and will support early alignment among regional partners on the future direction of transportation in the region.

Existing Service Consolidation

Regional Trails

Since the late 1980s regional trail management was integrated with all CRD Regional Parks Service (Parks) functions (dams, parks, trails), creating operational and financial interdependencies. Building on the groundwork completed by Parks staff, the RTS is now separating these responsibilities, assuming strategic management of the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails and the E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector, while day-to-day operations remain with Parks under the RTS direction. Restructuring these decades long-standing practices has required extensive collaboration to define roles, clarify accountabilities, and

establish new systems for budgeting and reporting, reflecting the scale and intricacy of this transition.

Several functions have already transitioned, including the management of public inquiries and the triage of trail operations issues such as encampments, debris, trail damage, and risk management concerns. Most recently, the RTS team led the response to an unplanned closure of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail within Cecelia Ravine due to a failing retaining structure located on adjacent private property above the trail. The RTS staff coordinated all associated communications, third-party structural assessments, and the implementation of detour routes to ensure public safety and continuity of service.

The policy and planning function has also been transitioned including managing lease and license agreements with landowners such as the Island Corridor Foundation, BC Transportation and Financing Authority and member municipalities involved in the Lochside Trail agreement. Staff are receiving handover from Parks on how to manage and process trail-use permits, coordinating requests and referrals, and is introducing a phased approach to compliance and enforcement, as Parks rangers will no longer perform these activities. A service agreement with CRD Bylaw Services is in development to address this gap.

Three vacant staff positions were allocated to RTS from Parks to support the transfer; two positions are filled and recruitment for the third is underway. These roles will be fully allocated to supporting the management of the regional trails. As staffing is completed and capital projects are transferred, asset management coordination will ramp up including managing the annual repaving program, bridge and trestle inspection and condition assessment program, and asset management for the ~100km of regional trails.

Additionally, the RTS will begin developing a dedicated Regional Trail Regulation Bylaw in consultation with Bylaw Services, replacing the current governance under the Parks Regulation Bylaw. Planning will also begin for an update to the 2016 Regional Trail Management Plan. This multi-year process will reinforce the definition of regional trails, refine and develop standards and service levels, and involve collaboration with municipalities, landowners, First Nations and other interest holders.

Regional Transportation Planning and Programs

Alongside regional trail consolidation, the RTS will assume existing regional transportation functions and programs from Regional Planning. Key initiatives include:

- *Regional Transportation Model:* RTS will update the regional transportation model to support planning initiatives and investment decisions. The model – last comprehensively updated 10 years ago – has informed corridor planning, rapid transit, and regional growth planning. Ongoing reliability requires regular updates to population and employment inputs, as well as recalibration of travel behavior assumptions.
- *Transportation Data and Analytics:* In 2026, RTS will update population and employment projections and begin development of a new Origin-Destination Household Travel Survey for implementation in 2027. Core data collection programs, including bicycle and vehicle counts, will continue, supported by automated counters on the regional trail network.
- *Transportation Demand Management Programs:* RTS will deliver regionally coordinated programs that support sustainable travel, including commute planning, active school travel programs including Ready Step Roll, and regional transportation safety campaigns.

Regional Traffic Safety

At its November 12, 2025, meeting the CRD Board adopted the Traffic Safety Dissolution Bylaw No.1, 2025, transferring all assets and obligations of the Traffic Safety Commission to the RTS. Safety is a core mandate of the RTS and work is underway to incorporate and broaden the scope and responsibility for safety in the region. The RTAC will provide oversight and bring forward topics previously considered by the TSC through thematic subcommittees, supported by the RTS. A key element of this transition, reflected in the 2026 work plan includes transportation safety messaging. The RTS will lead traffic safety messaging and public awareness campaigns. Three new video campaigns are planned for 2026, alongside efforts to align the Regional Park's *Cruise with Courtesy* program with RTS messaging to deliver cohesive multi-modal communications.

New Business

The initiatives outlined above represent a comprehensive work plan that fully utilizes current staffing and budget to consolidate existing functions and implement the RTS. As new priorities emerge, staff will assess how best to stage or reprioritize work to accommodate these items. Examples of new business being contemplated for the 2026 work plan include:

- *Island Rail Corridor - Reconciliation Corridor Initiative:* In December 2025, a coalition of the Esquimalt (Kosapsum) and Songhees First Nations, and local governments signed a commitment to work together on a shared vision to explore the potential for passenger rail service on the Island Rail Corridor between Victoria and Langford. This agreement stemmed from the ongoing work of an intergovernmental working group which has been focusing on the CRD subregional portion of the island corridor. Scope includes the evaluation of the corridor for the feasibility of supporting passenger rail service, and the consideration of the corridor within the broader vision of the RTP.
- An initial phase of work is already underway, led by the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF) and Kosapsum First Nation to explore preliminary service plan options and ridership forecasting. The outcomes of this process are anticipated for Q1 2026, and this will inform the CRD's next step which will consider how the corridor will be incorporated into the regional transportation vision, anticipated in Q2 2026.
- *Rapid Transit Study:* At its November 12, 2025, meeting the CRD Board carried a motion that the Board support a letter to senior governments, and copy BC Transit and Island Corridor Foundation, advocating for support to jointly undertake an updated study on the feasibility and alignment of rapid transit within the CRD. CRD staff will position themselves by aligning this initiative with the overall RTP, ensuring that any advocacy for a rapid transit feasibility study complements long-term planning objectives, along with consideration to other complimentary initiatives, including the Reconciliation Corridor Initiative.
- *Regional Trail Service Level Review:* In anticipation of completing the first phase of the Regional Trestles Renewal, Trails Widening and Lighting (RTWL) Project by late 2026, additional resources may be required to operate and maintain the expanded trail infrastructure to a transportation corridor standard.

The full work plan beyond 2026 will be guided by the outcomes of the RTP process, which will establish a comprehensive set of regionally prioritized actions. These priorities will define the scope and sequencing of future initiatives, including integrated programs, capital investments, and policy measures, ensuring alignment with the region's long-term vision for transportation.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The RTS advances the CRD Board's 2023–2026 strategic priority to improve regional transportation and mobility. By consolidating transportation functions and initiating the RTP update, the service supports integrated planning and coordinated delivery of programs that enhance connectivity, safety, and sustainability across the region. These efforts align with corporate objectives for efficient service delivery and long-term infrastructure planning.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The RTP update will replace the 2014 plan. It will embed climate action as a core consideration, consistent with the CRD's Climate Action Strategy and the Board's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Financial Implications

The 2026 work plan is funded within the approved RTS and Regional Parks provisional budgets. The provisional RTS budget was approved at \$2,234,702. The regional trails portion of the provisional Parks budget, including trail management and operations, capital reserve transfers, debt servicing for the previous E&N Rail Trail and current Regional Trestles Renewal, Trails Widening and Lighting Project was approved at \$3,548,102. These provisional budgets will be consolidated within the 2026 final RTS budget.

Future initiatives identified through the RTP may require incremental budget considerations and Board approval. Governance changes, such as establishing a Transportation Commission, could have resource and legislative implications that will be assessed and reported on. In addition, operating the RTWL project area sections may require additional funds which will be identified through the service and financial planning processes.

First Nations Implications

The RTP process and governance discussions will include engagement with First Nations governments to reflect Indigenous perspectives and priorities.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The RTP will serve as a key implementation tool for the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) by supporting compact, complete communities and reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. The updated RTP will inform future updates to the RGS, reinforcing land-use objectives and regional sustainability goals.

Service Delivery Implications

Consolidating transportation functions under the RTS improves coordination and accountability for service delivery. Transitioning trail management and safety functions will require new systems, staffing considerations, and service agreements to maintain continuity and meet baseline service standards.

CONCLUSION

In 2026, the RTS will prioritize completing the transition of regional trail management, advancing the RTP and building the systems and organizational capacity needed for effective service delivery. In parallel with these core priorities, the RTS will initiate an update to the Regional Transportation Model; begin development of the Origin-Destination Household Travel Survey; expand data collection and analytics to suppose evidence-based planning and decision making; and expand transportation demand management programs and safety campaigns.

Collectively, these initiatives – along with continued planning for future trail infrastructure and exploration of stepwise governance changes – will position the RTS to deliver coordinated, data-driven, and effective service delivery to support our regional transportation goals.

RECOMMENDATION

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

Submitted by:	Patrick Klassen, MCIP, RPP, Senior Manager, Regional Planning & Transportation
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA, General Manager, Housing, Planning and Protective Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer