

August 2023

Advocacy Strategy for the Capital Regional District

Responding to community needs, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board of Directors identify priorities and set the strategic course for the CRD over a four-year period, including an annual check-in and review of Board Priorities. For the 2023-2026 mandate, the CRD Board agreed to focus on five strategic priorities. As regional leaders, members of the CRD Board have and continue to be active in their advocacy on several policy initiatives that flow from these priorities.

To be effective in gaining the support of senior orders of government, local government, and partners, the Priorities agreed to by the Board will remain the basis of the advocacy strategy, unless updated by the Board annually, or supplemented by resolutions of the Board to advocate on specific initiatives. A successful advocacy strategy should be targeted, focused, and requires message discipline and consistency. Those we are advocating to need to understand what our priorities are and that we are committed to advancing them. The Board Priorities are organized under five themes with defined initiatives and desired outcomes. Role clarity, clear communication and reporting is essential for both elected officials and staff to enhance effectiveness and portray the strength of common cause.

Board Priorities (2023 – 2026 Term) and associated outcome statements

Transportation

Residents have access to convenient, green, and affordable multi-modal transportation systems that enhance livability.

Housing

Residents have access to affordable housing that enhances livability.

Climate Action & Environment

Progress on adaptation, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and triple-bottom line solutions that consider social, environmental, and economic impacts.

First Nations

Strong relationships with First Nations based on trust and mutual respect, partnerships and working together on shared goals.

Governance

Effective advocacy coordinated and collaborative governance, and leadership in organizational performance and service delivery.

A key initiative within the Governance priority is to “Influence regional issues and advocate in a consistent, focused way that aligns with the Board strategic priorities”.

Within the legislative framework which the Board and administration of the CRD, Capital Regional Hospital District (CRHD) and Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC) operate, the Board, its members and staff must work collaboratively to address multi-jurisdictional issues that impact the wellbeing of the region’s residents. Board governance includes region wide general government and legislated authority as well as mandated and agreed on participant based sub-regional and local service delivery responsibilities that require infrastructure, regulatory, legislative, financial, and operational support, to evolve and remain efficient and effective.

Residents and rate payers expect progressive action by the CRD to solve problems and advance regional, sub-regional, and local priorities within its mandate in partnership and collaboration with other authorities. As orders of government, the CRD and CRHD are delegated powers to operate by the Province of British Columbia and as corporate entities and publicly accountable authorities, can enter into agreements, partnerships with other public authorities, other corporate entities, and individuals. The CRHC is a wholly owned non-profit corporation of the CRD. Each entity may delegate or direct certain responsibilities including advocacy, however decisions of record, including the priorities for advocacy are established by resolution of each individual Board.

Advocacy Strategies

For issues that require regional action outside the CRD’s mandate, the Board can leverage the collective voice of its members, partners, and staff to contribute its experience and resources to advance solutions and achieve greater outcomes. As a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Union of British Columbia Municipalities and Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities, and with member, director, or staff representation in a variety of other organizations, the CRD has an opportunity advance our priorities and initiatives or seek the support of these bodies as part of its advocacy strategy. Through its governance and service delivery mandate, the CRD also has the opportunity to directly advocate to the Provincial and Federal Government, government Ministries, appointed bodies and agencies and to partner with other entities. There may also be an opportunity this term to work more closely with First Nations on issues as outlined in the Board priority.

Board Advocacy

Agreed on Board Priorities are the basis of the Board advocacy and the process for adding to those priorities is by Board resolutions with follow up actions typically directed through the Board Chair or the Executive Leadership Team. The Board Chair may ask for the support of other Directors to assist with efforts based on relationships, expertise, and experience or participant jurisdiction and geography. While the Board collectively has responsibility for the interests of the electoral areas, it has included or may delegate specific advocacy to the electoral area Directors for those areas. The Board may decide this term to pursue a focused more assertive strategy on a particular matter of importance at selected times during this term.

Inter-Regional Municipal and Electoral Area Advocacy

Board Priorities are only as strong as the support for them in our communities and working with the municipalities and electoral areas to ensure they support Board initiatives is key. The Board Chair, working directly with Board members, and the CAO working directly with Municipal CAOs should engage with elected officials and senior CRD, municipal and electoral area staff to ensure that there is a clear understanding of Board priorities, while identifying and responding to any divergent priorities to ensure alignment within any advocacy initiatives. The Advocacy Strategy needs to align with the Board approved Intergovernmental Relations Policy.

Corporate Advocacy

The CAO will lead corporate advocacy based on Board direction and the Corporate Plan. The CAO will lead the staff efforts on how best to drive initiatives forward with the right agreements and protocols with other organizations and has delegated authority from the Board to enter into agreements including memorandums of understandings with other agencies. The CAO will work closely with the Chair and play a major role in supporting the Chair and Board in advocacy efforts and will update the Board quarterly.

An advocacy strategy must be flexible, nimble and pivot on emerging issues or opportunities and the CAO will respond to and assign specific priorities and strategies for action. The Board Priorities Quarterly Dashboard progress report tracks resolutions of the Board, current initiatives, and planned actions related to advocacy as well as other priorities.

Advocacy can include formal letters, requests for meetings, presentations, partnering with agencies, campaigns, advisories, and announcements. Strong relationships with media who cover the CRD are essential to an effective advocacy strategy and engagement and outreach to editorial boards and media briefings, releases, and advisories as well as the CRD website and social media posts are effective tools.

Service Mandate and Operational Advocacy

Under the direction of their General Manager, CRD staff participate in many conversations with regulators and policy makers on efficient and effective service delivery approaches, and with organizations that engage with senior orders of government on policy and implementation. The Executive Leadership Team will coordinate communications with senior orders of government on policy and implementation to ensure alignment with Board direction, service mandate, and consistency of messaging in any advocacy.

Over the past few years, local government associations and related organizations have increased their role in advocacy for the municipal sector. The CRD needs to stay active in these organizations and drive our issues into and through their process. At times, senior orders of government will only consider policy changes that have been approved by these voices for our sector.

Potential Advocates

The following parties have been recognized as potential advocates and have been categorized based on each stakeholder's potential ability to influence the CRD's work (positively or negatively) or according to each stakeholder or group's interest in CRD and whether they are internal or external to the organization.

A Primary Level stakeholder or group interest has or may be identified as a result of a delegated authority, partnership agreement, contract or operating agreement, funding agreement, grant, or other formal relationship or understanding with the CRD.

A Secondary Level stakeholder or group interest has or may be identified as a result of receiving a service or benefit, in a contract, operating agreement, funding agreement or through a secondary or related affiliation with a primary group or stakeholder or having a mandate aligned with the CRD.

Internal stakeholders or groups include individuals or groups that have a duty or direct affiliation with the CRD or whose organizations participate directly or have a formal relationship with the CRD.

External stakeholders or groups include individuals or groups whose decision-making authority either directly impacts the CRD at a Primary Level or whose decision-making authority influences the CRD at a Secondary Level.

This categorization provides a focus for advocacy and communications activity by identifying primary and secondary advocacy relationships and the preferred approach for advocacy.

Advocacy Internal/External Stakeholders

| Advocacy | Internal | External |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Primary Level</p> | <p>Board Members and, Alternates</p> <p>Member municipal councils</p> <p>Delegated CRD Commission Members including First Nations Members</p> <p>Local Area Elected Officials</p> <p>Local Area CAOs</p> <p>Local Area Senior Staff</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premier’s office • Province: Ministers, Ministers’ offices, and Deputy Ministers of select Government of BC ministries and Opposition Leaders • Vancouver Island Region MLAs • Federal Government: Vancouver Island Region MPs, Ministers, and staff of select ministries • First Nations |
| <p>Secondary Level</p> | <p>Agencies and organizations, including First Nations who have entered into formal agreement with the CRD.</p> <p>CRD representatives appointed to an affiliated governance body</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations • Federation of Canadian Municipalities • Union of BC Municipalities • Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities |
| <p>Operational Level</p> | <p>ELT and designated staff who participate in various external initiatives, committees, and groups as a representative of the organization.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership in various Professional Associations, Boards and Groups • Engagement work with Federal, Provincial, Institutional and Local Government staff. • Engagement with Crown and Non-profit bodies aligned and mandated to advance similar priorities. |

Advocacy Approach

| Advocate | Objectives | Methods |
|---|---|---|
| <p><u>Board</u> Includes Board Members and Alternates</p> | <p>Advance Board priorities and actions required by other orders of government to address regional issues.</p> | <p>Board resolutions reported and conveyed to the media and appropriate party by way correspondence and follow up meetings as required.</p> |
| <p><u>CRD Member Representatives</u> Member municipalities and Local Area Elected Officials. Designated CRD Commissions and Commissioners, including Frist Nations Members</p> | <p>Coordinate actions based on shared interests and in support of shared goal to improve regional outcomes.</p> | <p>Advance Board and Corporate priorities as identified by the CRD Board and included in the Corporate Plan and other approved CRD Strategies when aligned with municipal and commission interests.</p> |
| <p><u>Intergovernmental Relations</u> A framework for establishing and maintaining effective relationships with other orders of government,</p> | <p>Convey one regional voice on issues.</p> | <p>Ensure municipal partners are aware and involved as appropriate in advocacy efforts.</p> |
| <p><u>Partnerships</u> Agencies and organizations, including First Nations, who have entered into formal agreement with the CRD and/or a CRD representative is appointed to a governance body of that organization.</p> | <p>Identify shared interests as a result of delegated authority, partnership agreement, contract or operating agreement, funding agreement, grant, or other formal relationship or understanding.</p> | <p>Advance Board and Corporate priorities as identified by the CRD Board and included in the corporate plan and other approved CRD Strategies when aligned with agencies and organization’s interest.</p> |
| <p><u>Staff</u> ELT and designated staff who participate in various external initiatives, committees, and groups as a representative of the organization when adhering with corporate policy and/or by professional affiliation.</p> | <p>Communicate formal CRD policy or position and share professional expertise. Act on behalf of the organization to advance initiatives in support of Board and Corporate Priorities.</p> | <p>Advance Board and Corporate Priorities as identified by the CRD Board and included in the Corporate Plan and other approved CRD Strategies when aligned with external agencies and organization’s interests.</p> |