

**REPORT TO REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026**

SUBJECT 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria

ISSUE SUMMARY

This report presents the 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria (the Plan) to the Regional Water Supply Commission (RWSC) for review and approval. The Plan establishes the goals, targets, and priority actions that will guide regional water conservation and demand management over the next decade in support of the Regional Drinking Water system. The Commission is asked to consider the Plan, provide strategic direction to staff on its implementation, and endorse forwarding the Plan to the Capital Regional District Board for information and public distribution.

BACKGROUND

The provision of a safe, reliable, and sustainable regional drinking water supply is a core service mandate of the Capital Regional District (CRD), as set out in the CRD Corporate Plan. The Regional Drinking Water Strategic Plan identifies water conservation as a critical demand side strategy to manage long-term demand, reduce peak system pressures, and strengthen resilience to climate change and population growth. A comprehensive Water Conservation Plan is therefore required to translate this strategic direction into coordinated, measurable actions that support effective system planning and service sustainability.

In late 2024, the CRD retained consultants, Econics and Kerr Wood Leidal, to support development of the 10-year Water Conservation Plan for the Greater Victoria Drinking Water Service (Appendix A). Clear goals, targets and an action plan (Appendix B) will ensure accountability and a clear roadmap for staff. The Plan builds on existing conservation initiatives and refocuses program delivery to improve water use efficiency among residents, businesses, and institutions, with an increased emphasis on peak demand reduction, outdoor water use, collaboration with municipal and First Nations retail water suppliers, and improved data to support accountability and decision-making.

The draft plan was presented for discussion and comments at the November 25, 2025 meeting of the Water Advisory Committee. Staff then presented and received feedback on the draft plan at a subsequent workshop with local government staff on Dec. 12, 2025. Finally, there was an internal workshop with key managers and leaders in the regional drinking water service at a workshop on February 24, 2026. The current draft plan (Appendix A) incorporated comments from this consultation process.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That the Regional Water Supply Commission:

1. Approve the 2026-2035 Greater Victoria Water Conservation Plan and direct staff to move forward with the actions identified; and
2. Direct staff to forward the 2026-2035 Greater Victoria Water Conservation Plan to the Capital Regional District Board for information.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental and Climate Implications

Implementation of the Plan will reduce overall water demand and peak system pressures, improving the sustainability and resilience of the regional drinking water system. Reductions in outdoor water use and peak demand support adaptation to warmer temperatures, extended dry periods, and seasonal demand variability, while also reducing stress on watershed resources and optimizing use of existing infrastructure.

Service Delivery Implications

The Plan provides a framework to support service delivery in alignment with the Regional Drinking Water Strategic Plan and the Regional Drinking Water Master Plan. The Plan translates strategic objectives into measurable actions and targets, which can be integrated into operational planning and performance management. Implementation results will inform regular operational reviews and five-year updates to the Regional Drinking Water Master Plan. Through ongoing performance reporting and periodic review, staff will assess effectiveness, identify emerging risks or opportunities, and recommend adjustments to conservation programs and service priorities, ensuring alignment with RWSC direction, Board oversight, and long-term service sustainability.

Social Implications

The Plan emphasizes education, outreach, and community stewardship to encourage efficient water use across residential, business, and institutional sectors. A renewed focus on targeted, community-based social marketing approaches is intended to support lasting behaviour change while maintaining public trust and understanding of the regional drinking water service. Past experience indicates a high level of public awareness and support for water conservation in the region, and Plan implementation builds on this foundation by providing clear expectations and practical tools for water users.

First Nations and Intergovernmental Implications

Regional water conservation requires participation and engagement with local governments and First Nations. Key aspects of demand management take place at the water distribution system level and depend on the collaborative efforts of local government, First Nations, and retail water suppliers across the region. These efforts include management of non-revenue water, rate setting, land use development, planning and various other activities. All retail water suppliers benefit from reduced consumption and improved management of non-revenue water through lower capital and operational costs, and fewer service interruptions and unscheduled emergency callouts. Better consumption data also helps optimize local infrastructure and development planning.

The Plan focuses efforts on establishing a regional community of practice in collaboration with retail water suppliers to promote innovative non-revenue water management and improved understanding of community water use through research and monitoring. This will include sharing expertise, improved data quality, data accuracy and data sharing, and utilizing best practices. A renewed emphasis on collaboration will foster regular dialogue through workshops, technical exchanges, and joint pilot projects focused on leak detection, meter accuracy and system auditing.

Financial Implications

The Plan will provide information and strategies for residents, businesses, and institutions to conserve water, reduce water bills and contribute to the long-term sustainability of this public service.

The 2026 budget for demand management is \$882,534. With current budget allocation, staff can deliver existing programs as well as complete priority projects identified for immediate implementation in the Plan. Longer-term actions will follow an adaptive management framework; building on knowledge gained from pilot projects and surveys and allowing actions to be adjusted based on new data, progress reviews, community feedback, and cost-benefit analyses. This framework aims to ensure the plan remains responsive, resilient, and effective in advancing long-term water sustainability.

This Plan will also be used by the CRD and our partners to fulfill eligibility conditions for water conservation planning in provincial and federal water infrastructure grants and funding applications.

CONCLUSION

The Capital Regional District has a mature regional drinking water system that uses a multi-barrier approach to produce a sustainable, safe supply of drinking water for our growing region. The 2026–2035 Greater Victoria Water Conservation Plan (the Plan) provides a clear, long-term framework to guide regional water conservation and demand management in support of a sustainable and resilient drinking water system. The Plan translates strategic direction into measurable targets and actions that will inform service delivery, system planning, and performance monitoring over the next decade. Approval of the Plan enables the Regional Water Supply Commission to provide strategic direction to staff and ensure alignment with Board priorities and long-term planning objectives. Moving forward, implementation of the Plan, supported by regular reporting and review, will help manage future demand pressures, support and inform capital planning, and strengthen the region’s ability to respond to climate change and population growth.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional Water Supply Commission:

1. Approve the 2026-2035 Greater Victoria Water Conservation Plan and direct staff to move forward with the actions identified; and
2. Direct staff to forward the 2026-2035 Greater Victoria Water Conservation Plan to the Capital Regional District Board for information.

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ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan for Greater Victoria (April 2026)
- Appendix B: Summary of 2026-2035 Water Conservation Plan Goals, Targets and Actions