

Regional Water Supply Strategic Plan Update

Regional Water Supply Commission Workshop

July 17, 2024

Summary of Workshop Feedback



Prepared by Joanna Winter, July 2024

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Workshop Overview and Comments

Session Overview

Joanna Winter was engaged by the Capital Regional District to assist with a process to update the 2017 Water Supply Strategic Plan. The Regional Water Supply Commission had requested staff to develop recommendations for an updated Strategic Plan, but not to create a whole new plan.

At an April 30th workshop, management staff reviewed the existing plan and developed recommendations for updated Commitments, with accompanying Priorities to help achieve the Commitments.

On May 28, a workshop was held during a scheduled meeting of the Water Advisory Committee. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the proposed updates to the 2017 Water Supply Strategic Plan and receive input from the committee in order to develop recommendations to the Regional Water Supply Commission to inform its own strategic planning workshop to be held on July 17, 2024.

The Regional Water Supply Commission held its workshop during the regular Commission meeting on July 17, 2024. The Workshop process is attached in the Appendices.

During the Commissioner input portion of the workshop, Commissioners were asked to add substantive new priorities and/or actions, or propose amendments to the draft priorities and actions as presented. During the follow-up discussion, suggestions were separated into actionable items and those which could be construed as comments or principles. All suggestions will be summarized in detail in this report.

Follow-up items for staff are noted throughout this document in italics.

Guiding Principles

The following proposed guiding principles were presented to the group. In the 2017 Strategic Plan, these were referred to as “Focus Areas”.

Empowering Staff For Sustainable Water Management

Supporting A Growing Region With Reliable Service

Respecting And Adapting To The Changing Environment

Managing Our Resources Effectively And Efficiently

Proactively Managing Internal And External Risks – Balancing

Fostering Collaborative Relationships With Customers And Partners To Improve Our Service.

During discussion on the commitments, priorities and actions, there were a number of comments about the importance of ensuring awareness of, adaptation to and compliance with federal and provincial legislative changes as they arise. It was suggested that consideration be given to acknowledging this in a guiding principle; although awareness of all legislation is integral to staff responsibilities, the general public may be reassured to see this explicitly stated in the Strategic Plan.

Mission Statement

The draft mission statement as developed by staff was presented for review and comment. The 2017 version of the Strategic Plan did not include a mission statement and staff felt it was important to include one in order to provide a clear overall purpose.

The General Manager, Integrated Water Services presented the Mission Statement, and asked for Commission input on a concern expressed by the Water Advisory Committee that the use of the term *drinking water* is too narrow in scope and should be expanded to include all water

Together we provide reliable, high-quality drinking water to help ensure the health and sustainability of the growing communities we serve today and in the future

Discussion included changing the term *drinking* to *potable*, *tap* or *drinkable* water.

Staff agreed to review these suggestions and consider appropriate wording changes to the mission statement.

As noted in the chart in the next section, these suggested changes could be incorporated into wording of Commitments and some Priorities.

Commitments, Priorities & Actions

The facilitator pointed out that another term for “Commitments” in strategic planning is “Goals”. These are broad statements that guide the development of more specific “Priorities” (or “Objectives” to help achieve the goals. “Actions” are the actual work of implementing the Strategic Plan.

Commissioners were tasked with placing suggestions for amendments or new actions on the printouts displayed around the room. The *Comments* column in the following table contains each suggestion made during this exercise.

The group reviewed and discussed each comment/action noted. The *Follow-up* column contains specific commitments to action or further review that arose from discussion.

Commitment 1:	
Provide high quality, safe drinking water	
Comments	Follow-up (if required)
Change wording to “Provide High quality safe water” (delete ‘drinking’)	<i>Staff to review</i>
Priority 1:	
Protect and manage the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area for the protection of long-term sustainable high-quality source water	
Comments	Follow-up (if required)
Develop a policy that defines the parameters and requirements for consideration of renewable energy or environmentally sustainable enterprises in the Greater Victoria Watershed Area	<i>Incorporate as a new, longer-term action</i>
I always question the validity of the data and projections	
Update the risk assessment analysis (longer term) for multiple risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth • Cyber-security • Seismic activity • Terrorist activity • Climate change/forestry impacts 	This is foundational activity and staff undertake ongoing questioning of baseline statistics being used
Consider loss of tree canopy due to drought conditions	Ongoing activity
Begin exploring agreements with First Nations on land titles while the CRD retains operation use/access	<i>Staff will review this suggestion, but it was generally agreed that this activity should take place at the Board level</i>

<p>Priority 2:</p> <p>Ensure drinking water quality with a multi-barrier risk-based approach</p>	<p><i>Earlier comments apply to the use of 'drinking' throughout the Strategic Plan</i></p>
Comments	Follow-up (if required)
<p>Concern about the impact of multiple users, climate plans, electrification on river flow, fish, drinking water and water for agriculture etc.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing concern for the Water Service. <i>Staff will review the document to see whether language could be enhanced</i></p>
<p>Priority 3:</p> <p>Advance our understanding of the water supply area and source water to prepare for the future</p>	
Comments	Follow-up (if required)
<p>Water supply is rainfall, not infrastructure</p>	<p>Comment. No action required</p>
<p>Emergency supply options – tankers, desalination</p>	<p>This forms part of a longer-term discussion with other parties – local governments, provincial government with respect to risk management</p>
<p>Mimic natural forest ageing – leave logs in the ground with thinning</p>	<p>This must be balanced with the need to reduce risk of wildfire</p>
<p>Don't wait for municipalities – need for CRD to collect reliable data to based decisions on while also checking in with municipalities and other local governments. Of course, working closely is key but do not rely on what CRD water service cannot control</p>	<p>Staff confirmed that using reliable data on all assumptions is foundational to their work in this area</p>
<p>Water conversation – this region uses four time more water than European areas</p>	<p>Comment. No action required</p>
<p>Start exploring multi-jurisdictional legislative overlaps that may arise. This can help inform potential complexities for the next Strategic Plan (e.g., Canada Water Agency)</p>	<p><i>See note under Guiding Principles regarding alignment with changing legislation at all levels of government</i></p>

<p>Commitment 2:</p> <p>Provide an adequate, reliable, long-term supply of drinking water</p>	<p><i>Earlier comments apply to the use of drinking throughout the Strategic Plan</i></p>
<p>Comments</p> <p>Add to this commitment recognition of water for other uses such as outdoor watering, agriculture, commercial, cleaning, etc. * Since we are providing this service it should be acknowledged formally (or we could change our scope)</p>	<p>Follow-up (if required)</p> <p><i>Earlier comments apply to the use of 'drinking' throughout the Strategic Plan. Staff will review the document for appropriate references to multiple uses of the region's water supply</i></p>
<p>Delete the word 'drinking' from this commitment</p>	<p><i>Earlier comments apply to the use of drinking throughout the Strategic Plan</i></p>
<p>Priority 1:</p> <p>Continuously plan and prepare for future water supply needs.</p>	
<p>Comments</p> <p>Alternate water sources e.g. desalination</p>	<p>Follow-up (if required)</p> <p>Previously addressed. No action required</p>
<p>Assist municipalities to enable post-disaster potable water strategies</p>	<p>Addressed in Commitment 3 Priority 3: Foster partnerships with municipalities and First Nations to develop a robust integrated drinking water plan for emergency response and natural disasters.</p>
<p>Long-term supply of water for agriculture</p>	<p>It is understood that all references to water supply include agriculture in this document; as noted above, staff will review the document for references to multiple uses of water</p>
<p>Priority 2:</p> <p>Enhance public connection to, confidence in and responsibility for water supply and value of water</p>	
<p>Comments</p> <p>Explore other innovative public engagement strategies to help increase public participation. Emphasize in-person information sessions. Provide in-person public participation opportunities</p>	<p>Follow-up (if required)</p> <p><i>These suggestions will be taken into account during planning for the public engagement on the Strategic Plan and other opportunities for public engagement</i></p>
<p>Share climate and risk modelling with the public so that they understand why costs and project are needed; to increase</p>	<p>Previously addressed in the comments. No action required</p>

public trust and help them to understand what is needed and why	
Possible adequate supply of water for Sooke and Goldstream rivers for fall salmon returns	Ongoing program. No action required
Priority 3: Optimize our available water supply through adaptive demand management strategies	
Comments	Follow-up (if required)
Perhaps offer incentives for those homes with gravel lawns rather than grass	Comment. No action required
Priority 4: Implement a sustainable and equitable long-term financial plan	
Comments	Follow-up (if required)
Develop a very long-term capital asset budget that includes climate costing scenarios and potential cost-recovery opportunities	<i>This is in the Master Plan but could be considered for a long-term action</i>
Make a commitment to communities, residents, rate payers, developers etc. that there is always a commitment to act in a manner of fiscal responsibility, accountability for any Strategic Plan	Foundational. No action required
Overall I continue to hear that this is an adaptive plan and a guide – suggest to put this in the title – Example: This is a living document, adaptable guide, planning guide, to suggest these can be opportunities to be flexible when needed or to change the course if needed or change direction is a better way is shown	<i>Consider this type of language in an introduction to the final document</i>

<p>Commitment 3: Provide efficient, effective and innovative operations of the drinking water supply system</p>	<p><i>Earlier comments apply to the use of 'drinking' throughout the Strategic Plan</i></p>
<p>Priority 1: Make evidence-based infrastructure decision to ensure reliable system performance and long-term sustainability</p>	
<p>Comments</p>	<p>Follow-up (if required)</p>
<p>Add 'community-responsive' after 'evidence-based'</p>	<p><i>Staff will consider this suggestion</i></p>
<p>Emphasize sustainable (green) technology</p>	<p><i>Staff will consider this suggestion</i></p>
<p>Align plans with changing provincial and federal legislation</p>	<p><i>See note under Guiding Principles regarding alignment with changing legislation at all levels of government</i></p>
<p>Priority 2: Assure long-term sustainability and capacity of water management operations through sufficient resources, robust processes, strategic partnerships, effective tools and continuous innovation</p>	
<p>Comments</p>	<p>Follow-up (if required)</p>
<p>Determine a standard of 'innovation' – are we open to collaborating with SpaceX? Or sticking to more 'tried and true' methods, which may be less 'leading edge'?</p>	<p>Comment. No action required</p>
<p>Seek opportunities to build localized supply chain/redundancies e.g. work with SIPP</p>	<p><i>Applies to CRD as a whole. Staff will review for possible addition to existing language in Strategic Plan</i></p>
<p>Seek opportunities to reduce power requirements to run water supply treatment and distribution</p>	<p><i>Staff will review for possible addition to existing language in Strategic Plan</i></p>
<p>Priority 3: Enhance the security and sustainability of the water supply by effectively managing risks and enhancing emergency response capabilities</p>	
<p>Comments</p>	<p>Follow-up (if required)</p>
<p>Desalination r</p>	<p>Previously addressed. No action required</p>
<p>Investigate options for supply from other sources (e.g. coastal river systems)</p>	<p>Previously addressed. No action required</p>

Priority 4: Attract, develop and retain a diverse, knowledgeable and empowered workforce	
Comments	Follow-up (if required)
Include succession planning and promotions for innovation	<i>Although this applies more appropriately to the overall CRD HR strategy, staff will consider incorporating more explicit language about succession planning</i>
Create First Nation job shadowing/internships opportunities to strengthen relationships and incorporate traditional knowledge	This is already explicit in the CRD's HR strategy

Voting on Priorities

Each Commissioner was provided with 10 dots that they could use to vote for those actions that they believed were the highest priority. This exercise was done to provide staff with an indication of Commission priorities, although it was pointed out that longer-term actions with a higher number of votes would not necessarily be moved up to the medium- or near-term. The actions below are listed in the order of the votes which they received. Actions receiving no votes are not listed.

It is important to note that, due to lack of time, this exercise was carried out after the close of the Commission meeting, at the request of Commissioners who were eager to provide input on the actions. The input noted below does not represent all Commissioners, but is included for the record. Commissioners may wish to redo this exercise at a future meeting where all of those who wish can provide input.

Action	Commitment/Priority	Votes Received
Mature our asset and maintenance management processes to maximize data driven decision making	Commitment 3, Priority 1, Medium-term	6
Foster partnerships with municipalities and First Nations to develop a robust integrated drinking water plan for emergency response and natural disasters	Commitment 3, Priority 3, Near-term	6
Undertake post-wildfire and sediment delivery modelling to inform water treatment and water quality preparedness plans and filtration design prior to and after the introduction of alternate water sources. (Link	Commitment 1, Priority 3, Longer-term	4

Action	Commitment/Priority	Votes Received
hydrodynamic model and water quality model)		
Continue to monitor the watershed and implement climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives to reduce the impacts associated with the magnitude and rate of projected climate change on ecosystems, water quality and infrastructure in the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area and update strategies where needed.	Commitment 1, Priority 1, Near-term	3
Explore opportunities for integrating First Nations traditional ecological knowledge and perspectives in the protection and stewardship of the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area	Commitment 1, Priority 1, Longer-term	3
Define a strategy to increase additional water resources, building on alternatives outlined in Master Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Refine strategy and infrastructure needs to access additional capacity within existing CRD land to meet 2050 projected demands b. Define ultimate water resources capacity within existing CRD owned watershed lands 	Commitment 2, Priority 1, Medium-term	3
Cultivate strategic partnerships with skilled contractors and consultants through long-term agreements ensuring access to expertise and resources for timely responses to procurement opportunities to meet capital needs	Commitment 3, Priority 2, Medium-term	3
Update risk assessment analysis for multiple risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth • Cyber-security • Seismic activity • Terrorist activity 	Commitment 1, Priority 1 * This received three dots, but during discussion prior to voting, it was agreed that this	3

Action	Commitment/Priority	Votes Received
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change/Forestry impacts 	is a foundational approach always undertaken by staff	
Protect water supply and ecosystems from contaminants and invasive plants, animals, and pathogens	Commitment 1, Priority 1, Near-term	2
On a prescribed timeframe, routinely update assumptions and future growth projection as it is related to the Master Plan and Development Cost Charge Programs	Commitment 2, Priority 1, Near-term	2
In collaboration with municipal partners, develop a regional strategy and standards regarding storage capacity (reservoirs) within the transmission and municipal distribution systems.	Commitment 2, Priority 1, Medium-term	2
Develop and promote curriculum within schools on drinking water	Commitment 2, Priority 2, Near-term	2
Continue with public engagement through official channels like the Water Advisory Committee	Commitment 2, Priority 2, Near-term	2
Continue to engage First Nations and put in place Bulk Water Agreements supporting development of stronger government to government relationships	Commitment 2, Priority 4, Near-term	2
Identify grant and partnership opportunities to fund future filtration infrastructure needs	Commitment 2, Priority 4, Medium-term	2
Foster partnerships with technology providers and research institutions to stay at the forefront of innovation in water management	Commitment 3, Priority 2, Medium-term	2
Explore opportunities for Mutual Aid Agreements	Commitment 3, Priority 2, Medium-term	2
Include succession planning and innovation promotion in the Strategic Plan	Commitment 3, Priority 3 * This was not actually identified as a new Action	2
Expand opportunities for traditional knowledge and First	Commitment 1, Priority 1, Medium-term	1

Action	Commitment/Priority	Votes Received
Nations input in stewardship of watershed lands		
Continue to enhance capabilities in wildfire prevention, preparedness, early detection, suppression, forest fuel reduction and post-wildfire emergency rehabilitation measures to reduce and mitigate the potential impacts of a large-scale wildfire in the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area on water quality and supply	Commitment 1, Priority 1, Medium-term	1
Develop a policy that defines the parameters and requirements for consideration of renewable energy or environmentally sustainable enterprises in the GVWSA	Commitment 1, Priority 1, Longer-term *New Action	1
Develop a management strategy specific to non-catchment lands	Commitment 1, Priority 1, Longer-term	1
Continue to update and expand the drinking water safety plan	Commitment 1, Priority 2, Near-term	1
Continue baseline water sampling and data collection projects which support future infrastructure design	Commitment 1, Priority 2, Near-term	1
Ongoing water quality monitoring program in source and treated water to verify proper system operations and identify potential water quality risks	Commitment 1, Priority 2, Near-term	1
Complete modelling of climate change effect on forests and effectiveness of fuel reduction treatments to help guide management of the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area forests into the future	Commitment 1, Priority 3, Near-term	1
Develop reservoir inflow and circulation models and conduct analyses to improve the understanding of these linkages and how they affect drinking water quality and the health of aquatic ecosystems	Commitment 1, Priority 3	1

Action	Commitment/Priority	Votes Received
Leveraging Internet of Things, create a digital 'dashboard' with real time reporting on key weather, stream flow, reservoir level, reservoir release and other water quality and supply data to facilitate internal awareness and decision-making and communication with outside regulators and stakeholders. Links to public engagement	Commitment 1, Priority 3, Longer-term	1
Work collaboratively with Municipal partners to clarify and define service level related to water supply and lines of demarcation	Commitment 1, Priority 2, Medium-term	1
Continue to evolve and promote public tours of the watershed	Commitment 2, Priority 2, Near-term	1
Develop a long -term media/communication strategy that engages the public on efforts to protect and improve the resilience of drinking water treatment and supply	Commitment 2, Priority 2, Medium-term	1
Develop and evolve policy and bylaws to support effective demand management and maximizing water supply	Commitment 2, Priority 3, Medium-term	1
Continuous refinement of policy and practices to facilitate optimal supply and demand management	Commitment 2, Priority 3, Longer-term	1
Continue to refine the long term financial plan	Commitment 2, Priority 4, Medium-term	1
Refine asset class specific maintenance plans to optimize and extend asset life	Commitment 3, Priority 1, Medium-term	1
Expand critical spares program to continue to reduce system downtime or service interruptions	Commitment 3, Priority 1, Longer-term	1
Participate in industry associations to leverage applicable operational experience and best practices that can add value to our system	Commitment 3, Priority 2, Near-term	1

Action	Commitment/Priority	Votes Received
Continuously evaluate and integrate innovative solutions, such as smart meters, leak detection technologies, and renewable energy sources, to enhance system resilience and sustainability.	Commitment 3, Priority 2, Medium-term	1
Continuously evaluate and integrate innovative solutions, such as smart meters, leak detection technologies, and renewable energy sources, to enhance system resilience and sustainability.	Commitment 3, Priority 2, Medium-term	1
Explore the technology, tools and sensors that can further inform and enhance specific asset class maintenance plans	Commitment 3, Priority 2, Longer-term	1
Include succession planning and innovation promotion in the Strategic Plan	Commitment 3, Priority 4 * This was not actually identified as a new Action	
Enhance personal and professional development opportunities to better support career advancement, including formal and informal mentorship opportunities	Commitment 3, Priority 4, Medium-term	1
Ongoing training for management through the CRD's iLead program in partnership with Royal Roads University	Commitment 3, Priority 4, Medium-term	1

Next Steps

Due to the lengthy discussion on the proposed changes and comments on Priorities and Actions, there was not time to complete the workshop and review the proposed next steps. It was agreed that staff will review the notes from the workshop and bring a revised draft of the Strategic Plan to the Commission's September meeting for review and adoption. Unfortunately, the Commission was not able to review the proposed step of public consultation on the draft Strategic Plan. It was intended that this would commence in November; however, advance planning is required in order to meet this timeline.

When public consultation is completed, any suggestions would be incorporated into a revised draft of the Strategic Plan, which would be brought back to the Commission for endorsement and referral to the Capital Regional District Board.

Schedule 1: Workshop Process

Premise:

In addition to looking at Commitments, and the Priorities under each Commitment, the Commission will have an opportunity to consider proposed near-, medium- and longer-term Actions. The following approach is intended to maximize use of the time available.

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Review | 20 minutes |
| Joanna and Alicia will go over the slide deck for information and context | |
| 2. Input (Interactive Session) | 10 minutes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will be asked to write on sticky notes any Actions they feel are missing and/or any changes they would like to see in Commitments/Priorities (with the main focus being on the Actions) • Actions must be clearly worded and labelled as near-, medium- or long-term | |
| 3. Discussion | 35 – 45 minutes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group will discuss each proposed addition or change (author may make a pitch as to why they wish this included, as necessary) | |
| 4. Vote | 5 minutes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By show of hands, members will vote on changes they wish to include in the draft Water Supply Strategic Plan • Items receiving a majority vote will be included | |
| 5. Prioritize (Interactive Session) | 5 minutes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using 10 sticky dots provided, members will indicate the actions they feel are most important • These are not necessarily ones to be done first, as some will require groundwork before they can be undertaken | |
| 6. Discussion (as time permits) | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group will discuss the five (or so) Actions that receive the most dots to better understand priorities • This exercise will provide important feedback to staff | |
| 7. Next Steps | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of next steps by Alicia | |
| 8. Resolution | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the discussion, the Chair can introduce the recommendation contained in the staff report | |