

## **REPORT TO THE FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS STANDING COMMITTEE**

**MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019**

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### **SUBJECT     Reconciliation Progress Report**

### **ISSUE**

To provide the Board with an update on select corporate activities and initiatives and to submit a high-level overview of the 2019 – 2020 service planning process to highlight progress being made on the Board Priority of First Nations Reconciliation.

### **BACKGROUND**

In October 2018, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board took the important step in reaffirming its commitment to building trust and greater collaboration with First Nation governments through adopting a set of eight (8) recommendations contained within the Special Task Force on First Nations Relations Final Report. Included in this Report is the CRD's Statement of Reconciliation which recognizes that the work of Reconciliation falls to all segments of Canadian society, including the CRD. It further identified that commitment alone is not enough and that action is needed to show the CRD is taking measurable steps towards a better relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

The CRD's Statement of Reconciliation sets out a path that includes the following themes:

1. Self-Determination
2. Shared Prosperity
3. Relationship to the Land and Water

In February 2019, the CRD Board endorsed the 2019 – 2022 Board Priorities, including First Nations Reconciliation. As part of this priority, the CRD Board will take measurable steps toward developing respectful government-to-government relationships and partnerships with First Nations to foster shared prosperity. Staff are continuing to work to achieve the desired outcome of strong relationships with First Nations based on trust and mutual respect, partnerships and working together on shared goals.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

The First Nations Relations Standing Committee recommend to the Board:

Alternative 1:

That this report be received for information.

Alternative 2:

That the report be directed back to staff for additional information.

## **DISCUSSION**

The following select activities are grouped according to the CRD Statement of Reconciliation themes, though it should be noted that some may fit into more than one category.

### **Self-Determination**

**Regional Concept of Operations Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** – The creation of a Regional Concept of Operations for the Capital Region has been identified as a key priority in the Regional Emergency Management Partnership (REMP) 2017-2019 Strategic Plan and subsequent annual business plans. It has also been an initiative that local government emergency program coordinators in the region have long been trying to bring to fruition in recognition that a large-scale emergency will cross jurisdictional boundaries. A Regional Concept of Operations is a description of the mechanism or system within which a group of organizations or individuals will work in during regional emergencies.

The MOU, which is open to all First Nations within the capital region, establishes a process where the Nations, municipalities and the regional district can come together to create a united voice to expedite decision-making, information sharing and collaboration during an event of regional emergency of significance. At this time two First Nations have signed on to the MOU and staff continue to reach out to others to highlight this opportunity.

### **Shared Prosperity**

**Indigenous Model for Delivering Employment and Economic Success (IMDEES)** – The IMDEES program is an innovative program designed to support participants in achieving meaningful and lasting employment. IMDEES is run through the Victoria Native Friendship Centre and includes the CRD, local businesses, local First Nations, and post-secondary institutions as partners. The program involves working with Indigenous peoples with a previous experience of various employment barriers and works to provide them with experiential learning through work simulations and placements.

The CRD has two individuals shadowing various roles in the organization in September and plans on hosting up to a total of six participants in each of the upcoming four remaining placements. These placements will be taking in the Fisgard St. headquarters and potentially in Regional Parks or in a Recreation Centre, depending on the interests of the participants.

### **Relationship with the Land and Water**

**Archeology Standing Offer and Corporate Heritage Preservation Policy** – Archeology continues to be a significant component of First Nations Relations Division work in support of a range of CRD capital projects. The CRD recently engaged three archeology firms on a standing offer list and is in the process of supporting those firms in obtaining blanket permits for the capital region. This approach will enhance the procurement for these highly specialized services and will increase corporate capacity regarding both the legislative and cultural importance of heritage conservation.

In addition to the establishment of the standing offer list, CRD staff are in the process of scheduling a series of educational sessions to further build corporate knowledge and understanding of both the Heritage Conservation Act as well as the Corporate Heritage Preservation Policy which is being rolled out in the fall of 2019.

**Recycling Outreach Assistant** – A collaboration between Environmental Resource Management and the First Nations Relations Division with partial support through Canada Summer Jobs has engaged an Indigenous community member as a Recycling Outreach Assistant through late-summer and fall 2019. This individual works closely with both divisions and engages with First Nations communities to:

- Promote understanding around the needs around waste diversion
- Provide appropriate educational opportunities to First Nations communities
- Assist First Nations communities with their efforts in waste diversion
- Provide outreach to Indigenous events taking place in the summer and Fall of 2019
- Take on specific projects or activities that will help First Nations communities with waste diversion

Through this initiative, Environmental Resource Management and the First Nations Relations Division are working to further build accountable relationships with communities while coming to understand the needs and barriers each community faces with regards to waste management.

### **2019 - 2022 SERVICE PLANNING**

As the next First Nations Relations Standing Committee meeting is not anticipated until early 2020, the committee will not have the opportunity to engage in a review of the divisional service plan prior to provisional budget approval. This section of the report is to provide a high level overview of the anticipated First Nations Relations Divisional (FNRD) activities in 2020 to 2022. Additional information will be presented with the service plan and budget report going forward to the Governance and Finance Committee on October 2, 2019.

Two main projects that are planned for 2020 include:

- Development of a First Nations Relations Strategic Plan;
- Development a First Nations cultural curriculum for use in the Regional Parks interpretive program, to be undertaken in collaboration with Regional Parks staff.

To advance the priority of assisting First Nations in reaching their economic goals, the FNRD anticipates receiving a report on economic partnership opportunities in late 2019 or early 2020, and may look to advance certain economic partnership projects in 2020 from existing divisional project funds. Staff will report back to the committee on any planned initiatives prior to moving forward.

Divisional objectives for 2021 and beyond will be guided by the path set out in the First Nations Relations Strategic Plan, once developed, but are anticipated to include advancing objectives set out by the diversity and inclusivity work currently being undertaken by the Human Resources Division, and exploring ways to increase First Nation involvement in CRD decision-making. Looking forward to 2022, staff will work collaboratively with the Environmental Protection Division to develop an Ecological Asset Management Plan, as endorsed by the Board through its strategic plan.

It's important to note that some of these items may take years to fully explore, and staff expect that priorities may shift in response to how other levels of government come to the table in implementing provincial and federal reconciliation initiatives. The FNRD further acknowledges

that the CRD's approach must be reflexive and responsive to feedback we receive from the Nations as we go forward.

The final piece that is critical to highlight in the service planning process is around how the FNRD intends to track progress on implementation of the CRD Statement of Reconciliation. Proposed metrics include:

1. **Self-Determination:** Increase in First Nations participation in CRD decision-making processes.
2. **Shared Prosperity:** Increase in the number of agreements/partnerships with First Nations that includes, but is not limited to, provision of services and sharing of information.
3. **Relationship with Land and Water:** Increase in the number of collaborations related to taking care of the land.

This approach will help CRD staff to establish a process to ensure that the corporation is making measurable progress on Reconciliation with First Nations.

## **CONCLUSION**

The First Nations Relations Division continues to support the corporation in advancing Reconciliation in a way that both captures the recommendations of the Special Task Force on First Nations Relations Final Report recommendations as well as the Board and Corporate Priorities. Through this work, the Division supports the CRD in enhancing relationships with First Nations by streamlining the CRD's cross-departmental approach to First Nations engagement, increasing the CRD's profile as a relevant government to First Nations needs and aspirations, and providing advice to the Board, executive leadership and staff on developing relationships.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The First Nations Relations Standing Committee recommend to the Board:

That this report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Don Elliott, MUP, Manager, First Nations Relations
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