



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2020

SUBJECT 2019 Forum of All Councils Summary Report

ISSUE SUMMARY

This report provides highlights from the 2019 Forum of All Councils Summary Report (the 'Summary Report') and identifies how staff will be looking to carry the momentum forward, disseminate information to all participants and engage the First Nations in preparation for the next Forum of All Councils with the intent of supporting a higher degree of participation from First Nations.

BACKGROUND

In June 2016, the Special Task Force on First Nations Relations hosted a Forum of All Councils focused on cultural education at UVic's First People House. Over 70 local government leaders participated in the day's activities, which were witnessed by representatives from six First Nations. At the end of the event, it was identified that there is considerable value in having regularly scheduled gathering of all First Nations and local governments to build respect and familiarity, offer a forum to discuss emergent issues and provide a platform for a collective regional voice on common interests.

In November 2019, the CRD hosted 74 participants including representation from six First Nations, 13 municipalities, and 2 electoral areas in a daylong session informed by the CRD's Statement of Reconciliation (Appendix A), which included the topics of governance, shared prosperity, and relationship to land and water. Specific findings from the exercises relating to these three themes is included in the Summary Report attached as Appendix B.

On issues of governance, there were a number of areas where participants indicated they would like more collaboration. Developing shared governance frameworks was identified as the top priority followed by others including transportation, water and sewer, social justice and culture, economic development, emergency preparedness and housing.

Tourism was identified as the most common economic initiative as well as the most common economic aspiration. When looking at the best way to support this work by First Nations, cooperation and collaboration was the top response followed by funding.

Lack of jurisdiction, lack of authority and a lack of funding were identified as the key barriers when looking to sustainability manage lands and water. Better collaboration and communication were identified as the most likely way to alleviate these barriers.

An important component of the 2019 Forum of All Councils was the evaluation of its effectiveness at meeting its intended purpose. The Keynote presentation from John Jack and Russell Dyson was the highest rated item at 4.4/5. This was followed by the governance discussion at 4/5 with relationship to land and water following closely being rated at 3.9/5. The shared prosperity discussion was rated at 3.8/5.

Key feedback from the Forum of All Councils included the comment that participants appreciate the opportunity to build relationships with regional colleagues. The most common suggestion for the next forum is to include more Indigenous participants and speakers. Staff will be looking now to share the Summary Report with all participants as well as the provincial government through the Intergovernmental Working Group where CRD Staff meet with provincial staff on a quarterly basis.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the 2019 Forum of All Councils Summary Report be received for information.

Alternative 2

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That this report be referred back to staff for additional information, as directed.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Implications

As some of the key barriers are outside the control of the CRD, staff will be looking to share the information contained within the Summary Report broadly with participants while also looking to the Board Advocacy Strategy to advance specific items that may require the leveraging of a collective voice to highlight areas of opportunity to address some of the identified barriers. For those areas that are within the CRD's authority, staff will continue working with First Nations to advance work related to increased partnerships and collaboration.

Intergovernmental Implications

A clear area of opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the Forum of All Councils format is to engage First Nations earlier in the design of the activities and the structure of the day. Much of what has been identified as possible solutions relates to better communication and collaboration. CRD staff are currently working to advance this effort using a two-pronged approach that include both support for First Nations elected representatives at various CRD tables as well as enhanced and streamlined communication efforts with staff from First Nations.

Financial Implications

Funding for ongoing support of this work is included in the provisionally approved CRD Budget for the First Nations Relations Division.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The 2019 – 2022 CRD Board Priorities include Reconciliation with First Nations, specifically:

- 3a Look to First Nations for leadership in understanding how to create new regional planning and decision-making systems together on their Traditional Territories.
- 3b Seek partnerships, share information and deliver fair and equitable services in working with First Nations on achieving their economic goals.
- 3c Work with First Nations on taking care of the land and water while providing space for cultural and ceremonial use, food and medicine harvesting, traditional

management practices and reclaiming Indigenous place names.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The Special Task Force on First Nations Relations Final Report, adopted by the CRD Board on October 10, 2018 contained the following recommendation:

That the CRD Board commit to hosting an annual Forum of All Councils with political representation from all levels of government including 11 neighbouring First Nations, 13 municipalities, 3 electoral areas, the Federal government (represented by the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada) and the Province (represented by the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs).

This work also aligns closely with the CRD's Statement of Reconciliation.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the 2019 Forum of All Councils that there remains a strong desire on behalf of First Nations and local governments in the CRD to work together in meaningful, respectful ways on issues of common interest. Participants identified a number of opportunities for enhanced collaboration, some of the key barriers they face as well as proposed tools/approaches needed to support collective action. Staff will now look to engage First Nations with the intention of more collaboratively designing the day and potentially identifying a better time of year as the 2019 Forum of All Councils took place during big house season.

RECOMMENDATION

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the 2019 Forum of All Councils Summary Report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Don Elliott, MUP, Manager, First Nations Relations
Concurrence:	Kristen Morley, J.D., General Manager, Corporate Services & Corporate Officer
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

- Appendix A: Statement of Reconciliation
- Appendix B: 2019 Forum of All Councils Summary Report