

**REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2020**

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**SUBJECT**     **Capital Regional District Climate Action – 2019 Annual Report**

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To present the Capital Regional District's (CRD) draft 2019 Climate Action Annual Report, which identifies progress toward CRD's Corporate Climate Action Strategy, CRD's Regional Climate Action Strategy and BC Climate Action Charter commitments.

**BACKGROUND**

The CRD signed the BC Climate Action Charter in 2007 and committed to achieving carbon neutrality within corporate operations by 2012. Subsequently, the CRD adopted a target in 2008 to reduce greenhouse (GHG) emissions 33% by 2020 from a base year of 2007. The Regional Growth Strategy includes a target to reduce regional GHG emissions by 61% by 2038, from a base year of 2007.

In 2016, the CRD approved the Corporate Climate Action Strategy and the Regional Climate Action Strategy in 2017. In February 2019, the CRD declared a climate emergency.

Since 2012, the CRD has been reporting annual corporate GHG emissions and a summary of corporate and community focused activities through the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP), a provincially-funded conditional grant program that provides funding to BC Climate Action Charter signatories equivalent to 100% of the carbon taxes they pay directly. To be eligible for the program, Charter signatories must report publicly on their progress toward meeting their climate action goals.

In February 2019, the CRD declared a climate emergency. A number of actions have been undertaken since the declaration (see Appendix A).

As an immediate response in 2019, the Board approved a \$95,000 Climate Action service increase. The CRD then successfully received an additional \$50,000/year BC Hydro Sustainable Communities Community Energy Manager grant to supplement the salary of a new two-year term Community Energy Specialist position. Since October 2019, this has allowed the CRD to collaborate with local governments on numerous regional initiatives related to residential building retrofits, electric vehicle charging policy and locally relevant data procurement. The increase was also able to support the development of a regional and local government community GHG emissions inventory. The final results are due in May 2020 and the CRD will share detailed results directly with local governments, post them on the CRD website, and use results to inform forthcoming policy and planning efforts.

Reporting through the Environmental Services Committee, the CRD established the Climate Action Program in 2009. The program works to implement the Climate Action and Adaptation Service Establishment Bylaw, 2008, and directly supports regional collaboration through the administration of the CRD Climate Action Inter-Municipal Working Group and CRD Climate Action

Inter-Municipal Task Force with membership from staff and elected officials.

Key roles of the Climate Action service include providing direct support to local governments, identifying and facilitating partnerships with private, public and non-profit sectors, informing senior level government programs and policies, providing scientific information, data and indicators, and supporting the CRD's corporate climate action related activities.

Staff participate on and share information from a number of local government and climate-related networks. Staff manage various regional climate-related projects, often supported by inter-municipal project teams and funded in part through grants.

Throughout 2019, multiple departments and divisions contributed to corporate, local and regional climate goals. Activities focused on planning and policy initiatives, infrastructure development, asset management and educational programming.

A consolidation of the corporate and community-related actions is provided in the draft CRD Climate Action 2019 Annual Report (see Appendix A). The report satisfies the annual reporting requirements related to the CRD's Corporate Climate Action Strategy, the CRD's Regional Climate Action Strategy and the provincial Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP) associated with the CRD's BC Climate Action Charter commitment.

Due to delays accessing a new provincial greenhouse gas reporting tool, the CRD's 2019 operational GHG emissions are not currently available. Based on preliminary analysis, it is expected that results will be similar to 2018, which was approximately 2,300 Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. This would represent an 18% reduction from 2007 levels. The CRD has been carbon neutral in its operations since 2012. For 2019, carbon neutrality will again be achieved by applying historical carbon credits (pre-2015) that were generated through methane destruction from the Hartland landfill gas capture system.

Staff will complete all CARIP reporting requirements, submitting reports to the Province by the deadline (currently June 1, 2020). Staff will then add results to the CRD Climate Action 2019 Annual Report and post on the CRD website.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### *Alternative 1*

1. That the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board receive the draft 2019 Climate Action Annual Report for information; and
2. That staff complete all CARIP reporting requirements, incorporate them into the Capital Regional District Climate Action 2019 Annual Report, and submit to the Province by the reporting deadline (currently June 1, 2020) and post on the CRD website.

### *Alternative 2*

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

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### *Social Implications*

In 2019, projects and programs delivered in the community across the region included, but are not limited to: leading the Ready, Step, Roll – Active School Travel Planning initiative; providing top-up fuel switching incentives as part of the provincial Better Homes Program; continued supporting the Cool It! Climate Leadership Training in local schools; initiated the solid waste management planning process; and began execution of a regional-scale sea-level rise modelling and mapping project. Further details are provided in Appendix A.

### *Financial Implications*

In 2019, the annual budget for the Climate Action service under Bylaw No. 3510 was approximately \$470,000 (which nears the current bylaw maximum requisition limit). This includes a two-year Board-approved increase of \$95,000 to accommodate a two-year term Community Energy Specialist position and key projects. Once complete, regional requisition associated with the regional climate action service reverts to accommodate two full-time staff positions.

In addition, to support corporate climate action, the organization allocates one full-time staff position, partially funded by CRD's CARIP refund (approximately \$60,000 to \$70,000 annually). The CRD has established a corporate-focused Climate Action Reserve Fund, earmarked for energy studies at key facilities to reduce long-term energy costs and reduce emissions and allocated \$100,000 from the general revenue to this fund in 2019, with another \$100,000 planned for 2020.

The service relies heavily on external grants and partnerships to undertake community and corporate projects. New or previously obtained grants that supported work throughout 2019 included: \$350,000 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund grant to support corporate fleet fuel switching, \$705,000 National Disaster Mitigation Fund grant to undertake coastal flood hazard (sea level rise and tsunami) mapping, two-year \$50,000 BC Hydro Community Energy Manager grant to supplement the salary of the new Community Energy Specialist position, and \$5,000 equivalent BC Hydro Sustainable Scholars grant to support a research student. The CRD is a key partner and received the FCM: Transition 2050 grant (\$400,000 to a non-profit partner for a Vancouver Island-based residential energy retrofit initiative).

### *Intergovernmental Implications*

Climate action is critical for regional municipalities, electoral areas and the CRD. This is explicitly acknowledged through the Board's current strategic priorities and climate emergency declaration, the numerous targets, policies and actions found in official community plans across the region, the Regional Growth Strategy and consecutive CRD corporate strategic plans. Climate change is a critical issue facing our region.

The CRD Climate Action service has a regional collaboration mandate and directly supports local governments and the CRD in reaching their mitigation and adaptation targets, policies and goals. The service will continue to work with internal and other regional stakeholders to identify other climate action opportunities and advance initiatives in collaboration.

### *Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities*

The CRD embedded the climate emergency declaration and leadership intentions to greatly accelerate GHG emissions reductions in the 2019-2022 CRD Board priorities. In addition to the three Board priorities related to climate change, the 2019-2022 CRD Corporate Plan includes 11 additional initiatives related to climate action.

### *Environmental & Climate Implications*

While the CRD's corporate emissions portfolio is not complete, it is anticipated that results will be similar to 2018, which were approximately 2,300 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. Typically, approximately half of the CRD's corporate GHG emissions are sourced from fleet and the other half from the CRD's buildings, with natural gas use at the five main facilities accounting for the majority (Panorama Recreation Centre, SEAPARC Recreation Centre, Integrated Water Services, CRD Headquarters and the Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Treatment Plant). GHG emissions associated with Hartland Landfill and Capital Region Housing Corporation are not included in this total, as they are excluded from the provincial reporting framework.

Regardless of GHG emission reductions today, the capital region will continue to experience the impacts of climate change. Climate adaptation planning and implementation will be a key aspect of future service delivery.

### *Regional Growth Strategy Implications*

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) includes a target to reduce GHG emissions by 61% by 2038, from a base year of 2007. CRD climate action activities completed in 2019 align with the principles of the RGS.

### *Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

Climate actions completed in 2019 align with the CRD Corporate Climate Action Strategy, CRD Regional Climate Action Strategy, Regional Growth Strategy, Board Priorities and CRD Corporate Plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Capital Regional District declared a climate emergency, has identified climate change as a strategic priority and continues to accelerate corporate mitigation and adaptation activities and work towards meeting GHG emissions reductions targets. The draft 2019 Climate Action Annual Report outlines actions the CRD has undertaken to advance the corporate and regional climate strategies and commitments as a signatory to the BC Climate Action Charter. After it is received by the Board and updated with additional GHG emissions information, the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP) report will be submitted to the Province as required by the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Reporting Program.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board receive the draft 2019 Climate Action Annual Report for information; and

2. That staff complete all Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program reporting requirements, incorporate them into the Capital Regional District Climate Action 2019 Annual Report, and submit to the Province by the reporting deadline (currently June 1, 2020) and post on the CRD website.

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**ATTACHMENT**

Appendix A: Draft Capital Regional District 2019 Climate Action Annual Report