

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2021**

SUBJECT **Capital Regional District Climate Action – 2020 Annual Report**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the Capital Regional District's (CRD) 2020 Climate Action Annual Report, which identifies progress toward the CRD's Corporate Climate Action Strategy, the 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. The Board has embedded the declaration and leadership intentions to greatly accelerate greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the 2019-2022 CRD Board priorities. Staff are currently updating the CRD's climate action strategies with a 'climate emergency' lens.

Under Bylaw 3510, the CRD established a climate action service in 2009 to act as a resource and facilitator for local governments, citizens and organizations in the capital region on energy and climate issues. The service administers two inter-municipal climate action committees and directly assists CRD services, local governments and other regional stakeholders on policy, planning, data and capacity building efforts and leading regional programs.

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, 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.

Despite challenges related to COVID-19 throughout 2020, multiple CRD services contributed to corporate and regional climate goals. Some of the key highlights include:

- Advanced the development of a new Solid Waste Management Plan and Hartland Landfill renewable natural gas utilization project.
- Developed strategies and piloted a program to support regional energy retrofits in buildings, and provided fuel switching top-ups.
- Completed a regional greenhouse gas inventory for the region and its local governments.

- Completed the coastal flood inundation mapping project to assist planners and emergency managers to better understand future coastal flooding impacts due to rising sea levels and tsunamis.
- Advanced various efforts to transition CRD's fleet to low emission vehicles, including e-bikes.

A consolidation of the corporate and community-related actions is provided in the CRD Climate Action 2020 Annual Report (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 associated with the CRD's BC Climate Action Charter commitment.

In 2020, the CRD completed a community energy and GHG emissions inventory to provide a more complete picture of the region's energy and GHG emissions consumption. The study, conducted for the 2018 year, shows that the capital region emits approximately 1.7 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually. Results were presented to the CRD Board on August 12, 2020.

In 2020, CRD operations produced 2,512 tonnes of CO₂e. This represents an 11% decrease compared to 2007 levels. As such, the CRD did not meet its 2020 corporate GHG emissions reductions target. This was due, in part, to lack of renewable gas supply for use of corporate buildings, delays in electric vehicle technologies for the corporate fleet, the inability to source funding for key retrofit projects and the expansion in CRD services over this time (resulting in an approximate 24% increase in fleet size and 19% in staffing). With the Mcloughlin Point Wastewater Treatment Plant coming on line, overall corporate emissions are expected to increase in 2021.

Since 2012, the CRD has been carbon neutral in its operations (as defined by the provincial reporting framework). For 2020, 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.

The CRD is developing a renewed climate action strategy which will be brought to the Board for approval in fall 2021. The new strategy will build upon and ultimately replace the existing CRD climate action strategies, and reflect existing Board priorities (including their climate emergency declaration) to provide a clear path forward for how the CRD, under its service mandates, will show leadership on climate action, both for the CRD's corporate operations and for its community focused services. The plan will address both climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Staff reviewed all of the annual progress reporting associated with the 2016 corporate strategy and 2017 regional strategy. The corporate strategy identified a total of 47 actions across seven broad goal areas. The regional strategy identified a total of 48 actions across eight broad goal areas. Twenty-two CRD services, representing all five CRD departments, were identified as having a lead or support role for the actions. Across both strategies, 82% of planned actions are either complete, in progress, or ongoing and 18% are on hold or delayed with no planned timing. Successes related to various community-GHG reduction programs, regional research and data acquisitions, implementation of corporate planning procedures, various corporate retrofit and fleet transitions, and a number of CRD and local government capacity building and policy development initiatives.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Environmental Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That the 2020 Climate Action Annual Report be received for information; and
2. That staff complete all Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program reporting requirements and submit to the Province by the reporting deadline (currently June 1, 2021) and post on the CRD website.

Alternative 2

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

IMPLICATIONS

Social Implications

In 2020, CRD advanced many projects and programs that were delivered in the community across the region and adjusted as required as per COVID-19 protocols. Some included, but are not limited to:

- leading the Walk and Roll to School Week, implementing the Ready, Step, Roll – Active School Travel Planning initiative;
- launching the Bring it Home 4 Climate Program and providing top-up fuel switching incentives as part of the provincial Better Homes Program;
- supporting the Cool It! Climate Leadership Training in local schools; and
- executing the regional-scale sea-level rise modelling and mapping project.

A full list is provided in Appendix A.

Financial Implications

In 2020, the Climate Action service operated on an annual budget of approximately \$577,000, which included three full-time employees and one two-year, full-time term position (co-funded by BC Hydro Sustainable Communities) which will likely be renewed in late-2021. In addition, the corporation provides an annual stipend of \$100,000 towards a fund to support key corporate focused climate action planning activities. The program's core budget is provided through an annual requisition from all of the municipalities and electoral areas, and supplemental funding from corporate services. The program also relies on external grants and partnerships to undertake community climate action programming.

In 2020, external sources accounted for approximately \$485,000 in additional funding to support staffing and completion of key projects.

Intergovernmental Implications

Climate action 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 mitigation and adaptation 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

In 2020, CRD operations produced 2,512 tonnes of CO₂e. 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.

In 2020, the CRD completed a community energy and emissions inventory to provide a more complete picture of the region's energy and GHG emissions consumption. This followed the GPC BASIC+ Framework, and included GHG emissions from:

- Stationary energy (e.g., buildings, construction, energy industry)
- Transportation (including airport and marine emissions)
- Waste
- Industrial process and product use
- Agriculture, forestry and other land use

The study, conducted for the 2018 year, shows that the capital region emitted approximately 1.7 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually. Although this does not represent a significant reduction from the 2007 baseline, the total per capita GHG emissions (tCO₂e / Capita) has decreased by 14.4%. Transportation and buildings account for the vast majority of regional emissions - almost 80%.

Regardless of GHG emission reductions today, the capital region will continue to experience the impacts of climate change now and into the future, including:

- An increase in rainfall in fall, winter and spring; and a decrease in rainfall in summer
- More intense, longer in duration, and more frequent rainfall events
- Frequent heavy snowfalls and rain-on-snow events in the short-term, less snow in the future
- Hotter summers and less days with freezing in winter
- More extreme climate events (such as long hot and dry summers)

- Increased likelihood of variability of climate within and between years
- Sea level rise

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. The CRD climate action activities completed in 2020 align with the principles of the RGS.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

Climate actions completed in 2020 align with the CRD Corporate Climate Action Strategy, the CRD Regional Climate Action Strategy, Regional Growth Strategy, Board Priorities and the CRD Corporate Plan.

CONCLUSION

Throughout 2020, multiple CRD services contributed to corporate and regional climate goals. The 2020 Climate Action Annual Report outlines actions the CRD has undertaken to advance the corporate and regional climate strategies, Board priorities, and commitments as a signatory to the BC Climate Action Charter over the past year. After it is received by the Board, the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program report will be submitted to the Province as required under the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Reporting Program. The CRD is developing a renewed climate action strategy which will be brought to the Board for approval in fall 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environmental Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That the 2020 Climate Action Annual Report be received for information; and
2. That staff complete all Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program reporting requirements and submit to the Province by the reporting deadline (currently June 1, 2021) and post on the CRD website.

Submitted by:	Glenn Harris, Ph.D., R.P.Bio., Senior Manager, Environmental Protection
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Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Capital Regional District 2020 Climate Action Annual Report