

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021**

SUBJECT Updated Capital Regional District Climate Action Strategy

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the renewed draft Capital Regional District (CRD) Climate Action Strategy for approval.

BACKGROUND

The CRD has committed to taking action to address climate change within operations at the regional level, as highlighted in the Board's declaration of a climate emergency and accompanying commitment to take a leadership role to pursue regional carbon neutrality. In response, staff led the development of a renewed draft Climate Action Strategy (the strategy), replacing both the CRD 2016 Corporate Climate Action Strategy and the 2017 Regional Climate Action Strategy. The strategy (Appendix A) reflects current Board priorities and provides a clear path for how the CRD will show leadership on climate action.

The strategy outlines how the CRD can influence, lead and support efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate. It includes a renewed vision, principles, goals and corporate greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets. To leverage and maximize region-wide benefits, it aligns with federal, provincial and local initiatives and policy directives. It is recognized that the success of this strategy relies on our collective commitment to bold climate action at all levels of government.

Over the next five years, the CRD's Climate Action Service, and over twenty CRD divisions, will be responsible for implementation of the strategy's 128 actions. Staff will monitor and assess whether actions need to be adapted, shifted or updated to reflect changing context or opportunities, and report progress annually. After five years, the strategy will be updated to continue advancing the CRD's climate goals.

To develop the strategy, staff and a consultant team engaged staff representatives for numerous CRD divisions, the CRD Climate Action Inter-Municipal Working Group, and elected officials on the CRD Climate Action Inter-Municipal Task Force. Input was embedded into the strategy, and feedback, in general, aligns with the draft Strategy.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

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

1. That the Capital Regional District Regional Climate Action Strategy be approved; and
2. That staff be directed to forward this report to municipal councils for information.

Alternative 2

That the report be referred back to staff for further review.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Implications

The strategy recognizes that GHG emissions must be reduced and sequestered and, to respond to climate impacts, efforts must focus on understanding vulnerabilities, ensuring natural assets are resilient, and preparing the region's infrastructure and lands.

The strategy sets a new corporate GHG reduction target of 45% below 2007 levels by 2030 (per the Province's reporting framework). The strategy aligns with the regional target to reduce GHG emissions 61% by 2038 based on 2007 levels (per 2018 Regional Growth Strategy). Further, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that to limit global temperature rise below 1.5°C, there must be net-zero emissions by 2050. The strategy includes CRD actions to support this pathway over the next five years.

Intergovernmental Implications

To develop this strategy, staff reviewed municipal climate plans and consulted the region's municipalities and electoral areas to understand priorities for the CRD to play a role in achieving coordinated regional climate action goals. The strategy complements municipal priorities, fills in gaps and aligns with federal and provincial governments. It is intended to inform the service and work plans of CRD community-based services, guide funding applications and highlight partnership and advocacy opportunities.

Supporting Indigenous-led climate solutions is a foundational principle of the strategy. The CRD will continue to look to the region's First Nations to understand priorities and support, as needed.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The strategy aligns with the policy direction of the CRD's Regional Growth Strategy.

Social Implications

Development of the strategy identified six principles that guided the selection of actions and will continue to guide their implementation, including a core principle to ensure "actions are inclusive and accessible to residents across the region, and support the most vulnerable."

Financial Implications

While many of the strategy's actions can be accomplished within existing service levels, increased service adjustments have been proposed, starting in the 2022 budget year (refer to *2022 Service Planning – Climate Action & Adaptation* staff report, also on the September 29 agenda). The CRD will continue to leverage partnerships, programs and grant funding opportunities.

Future financial implications associated with service level adjustments, identified by feasibility or other studies, would be considered by the Board in future service planning processes.

Service Delivery Implications

The strategy proposes a service adjustment of two new full-time equivalents (FTE), the conversion of one FTE to a continuous versus contract position, and reallocation of funding due to loss of the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program. This would allow the CRD to support additional programming related to regional energy retrofits (refer to *Capital Region Energy Retrofit Business Case* staff report, also on the September 29 agenda), public electric vehicle charging (related to the June 16, 2021 CRD Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Roadmap staff report), municipal climate action policy and capacity building, and to advance corporate energy management. Refer to the *2022 Service Planning – Climate Action & Adaptation* staff report, also on the September 29 agenda.

An increase in service delivery to the Climate Action Service requires a bylaw amendment to increase requisition room limits. Should the proposed 2022 service planning adjustments or the amendment of Bylaw No. 3510, Climate Action & Adaptation, not be supported, actions and associated timelines would need to be adjusted within the strategy's five-year action plan.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The key driver of the strategy is to advance the Board's Climate Action & Environmental Stewardship Strategic Priority and accelerate the CRD's Climate Action activities in light of its declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

Embedded through numerous services, climate action at the CRD has strong linkages with several strategic plans across the organization including: 2019-2022 Board Priorities and Corporate Plan, the 2018 Regional Growth Strategy, the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plans, the 2017 Regional Water Supply Strategic Plan, the forthcoming Regional Parks Strategic Plan, the recently approved Solid Waste Management Plan and regional transportation priorities (Appendix A). Successful implementation of these dependent plans alongside the strategy is integral to fulfilling the CRD's role in climate action.

CONCLUSION

The CRD Climate Action Strategy provides a renewed vision, goals and plan to guide the organization's climate action activities for the next five years. Developed in consultation with municipal partners, the Strategy includes an implementation plan for where and how the CRD will influence, lead or support our region in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate impacts through its various services.

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. That the Capital Regional District Regional Climate Action Strategy be approved; and
2. That staff be directed to forward this report to municipal councils for information.

Submitted by:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: CRD Climate Action Strategy - Taking Action on the Climate Emergency - September 2021 Report
- Appendix B: Climate Action Strategy 2021 - Taking Action on the Climate Emergency - Presentation