

**REPORT TO FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2022**

SUBJECT **First Nations Relations Operational Update**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide, for information, an update on some of the initiatives underway in support of the Board priority of advancing strong relationships with First Nations.

BACKGROUND

The CRD's Statement of Reconciliation acknowledges the fundamental right of self-determination to Indigenous peoples, and commits to working with First Nations through the governance systems they choose. Initiatives underway to support this goal include:

- Staff are developing a First Nations Relations Communications Framework to provide a guide for CRD employees on the essentials of respectful, concise, constructive and professional intergovernmental communication with First Nations. Through this framework staff can be more effective and strategic on how and when to engage the Nations, so as to support respectful, positive relationships.
- Staff are developing a Working with Indigenous Elders Guidance Document, to support staff to build respectful relationships with Indigenous Elders.
- CRD staff are exploring requests from First Nations to develop Memorandum of Understandings and to provide capacity funding to enable First Nations to more effectively engage with CRD operations. It is anticipated that governance and funding requests arising from these discussions will be brought forward to the Board.

The CRD's Statement of Reconciliation recognizes the gap in wealth between First Nations and settler governments, and commits to working towards a prosperous economic future for all. To this end, initiatives include:

- Assisting operations staff in collaborating with First Nations in response to requests regarding land use planning, wastewater and water servicing, and solid waste management.
- One of the recommendations in the CRD First Nation Economic Development Partnership Model Feasibility Study Report (May 2020) was to increase opportunities for First Nations employment across CRD, through mentorship and job shadowing opportunities, Indigenous internships, and an Indigenous employment strategy. A consultant will be engaged to produce a report with recommendations for best practices around Indigenous employment in a settler government context, based on lessons learned elsewhere from Indigenous internship programs and Indigenous employment more broadly, to lay the groundwork for what would need to be put in place internally prior to any new program. Staff, with the support of the consultant, will also connect with the local Nations regarding

their employment goals and how to support a culturally safe working environment within the CRD. It is anticipated that the launch of an Indigenous internship program will require additional funding. Staff will bring forward recommendations and a budget request to the Board on receipt of the consultant's recommendations on program design and the delivery model.

One of the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was to provide education "on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism." The following education initiatives are underway:

- The CRD Board will be offered a 3-hour Introduction to Cultural Perspectives Training on February 23rd, delivered by Indigenous Perspectives Society. The training will focus on understanding history, dispelling myths and stereotypes, and building local relationships.
- All CRD leadership, managers and staff, including auxiliary staff, will be offered an essential 2-hour Cultural Competency Seminar. To reach all staff, twenty seminars will be delivered between March to June 2022, incorporating 90 minutes offered by Indigenous Perspectives Society and 30 minutes with First Nations Relations staff.
- CRD Executive Leadership Team, plus those managers and staff who work directly with members from the local First Nations, will also be offered a 3-hour Building Local Relationships Workshop. For these staff, eight workshops will be offered between March to June 2022, delivered by Indigenous Perspectives Society.
- First Nations Relations and Corporate Communications continue to proactively identify opportunities for education, such as was done with informative posts for all staff related to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the First Nations Relations Operation Update report be received for information.

Alternative 2

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the report be sent back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Intergovernmental Implications

By uplifting self-determination, promoting opportunities for economic prosperity and raising awareness amongst CRD staff and Board, these initiatives contribute towards efforts to build trusting, reciprocal government-to-government relationships with First Nations.

Social Implications

The CRD's Statement of Reconciliation recognizes the gap in wealth between First Nations and settler governments. By exploring ways to support First Nations economic opportunities, such as through wastewater and water servicing, the CRD is taking steps to support the economic goals of First Nations.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

This aligns with the Board priority of taking measurable steps toward developing respectful government-to-government relationships and partnerships with First Nations to foster shared prosperity for all.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

This work aligns with the CRD's Task Force on First Nations Relations and the CRD's Statement of Reconciliation, and complements the CRD's ability to engage with First Nations on all relevant plans and strategies.

CONCLUSION

Some of the initiatives underway in support of the Board priority of advancing strong relationships with First Nations include: offering cultural competency training to all CRD employees and Board Directors; exploring best practices for supporting Indigenous employment; producing a respectful communications framework for staff; participating in intergovernmental discussions regarding CRD service delivery and collaboration to support the development of government-to-government relationships.

RECOMMENDATION

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the First Nations Relations Operational Update report be received for information.

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