

**DATE:** October 19, 2020**FILE:** 6430-01**TO:** Chair and Directors  
Regional District Board**FROM:** Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson  
Chief Administrative Officer*R. Dyson***RE: 2020 Strategic Planning Session Update****Purpose**

Update the Board on the results of its September 2020 strategic planning session, which includes presenting

- Rethink Comox Valley, a thoughtful review of services to support community recovery, and
- the report from Allison Habkirk, including the core service key outcomes and initiatives, to be used through the 2021-2025 financial planning process.

**Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:**

THAT Rethink Comox Valley and the Comox Valley Regional District 2020 Strategic Planning report, dated September 22, 2020 be approved and shared through social media and with partners;

AND FURTHER THAT the strategic planning report's key service outcomes and key initiatives/directions be applied to the 2021-2025 financial planning process.

**Executive Summary**

- The Board conducted a strategic planning session on September 17 and 18, 2020 to consider its core services, key service outcomes and key initiatives
- The session used the COVID-19 response and renewal framework as a basis for understanding the opportunities and impacts associated with the ongoing pandemic and Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) service delivery
- The CVRD Board's strategic drivers continue to guide and influence service delivery; the drivers being:
  - Fiscal Responsibility
  - Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection
  - Community and Social Wellbeing
  - Indigenous Relations
- Allison Habkirk facilitated the September 2020 session, resulting in the report attached as Appendix A; importantly, the report describes for each core service the key outcomes and initiatives, which now form a basis for the 2021-25 financial planning process.
- Communicating the Board's response to COVID-19 and Rethink Comox Valley (Appendix B) requires a modest effort on social media as well as direct correspondence with key partners; a short video accompanies Rethink Comox Valley.

- For the Board’s awareness, specific action relates to the core service of Transportation
  - Transportation – a report will be presented to the Board later in 2020 that reflects on transportation as a core service and will consider
    - 2021 transit service levels including impacts from Fifth Street Bridge construction
    - Existing work plan for transportation aspects (active transportation plan, EV charger installation / strategy, regional transportation memorandum of understanding to be implemented through the Regional Growth Strategy technical advisory committee)
    - Scoping a transportation alternatives assessment project that considers broad aspects of the community including partnerships, roles for community halls/schools, alternative modes of transportation and opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, continued growth in municipal town centres, and community engagement
    - Concluding the efforts of the Integrated Regional Transportation Select Committee, as its dual mandate to “consider a single point of contact for transportation-related initiatives” and to, in short, “collaborate on regional transportation projects and specific promotion of a bike commuter path” has been concluded (the regional transportation Memorandum of Understanding resolves the first portion of the mandate and ongoing work on a variety of specific projects resolves the second portion).
- The CVRD’s website includes a page on strategic planning, which provides links to the various reports and materials and describes the process including specific attention to how the drivers are influencing service delivery:

[www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/strategic](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/strategic)

Prepared by:

***J. Warren***

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James Warren  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments: Appendix A – CVRD Strategic Planning Report dated September 22, 2020  
Appendix B – Rethink Comox Valley

# Comox Valley Regional District 2020 Strategic Planning

September 22, 2020

Prepared by A. M. Habkirk BA MA MPA MCIP



## BACKGROUND

This report documents the outcomes of a two-day workshop held with the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board and senior staff held September 17 and 18, 2020 (copy of flip chart notes attached as appendix A).

The workshop was an early step in the annual strategic and financial planning cycle, illustrated below, to identify priorities for the 2021 Corporate Plan. The 2020 workshop builds on the work of the 2019 strategic and financial planning process and integrates the COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework, also illustrated below, into the strategic and financial planning process.



The key objectives of the September 17 and 18, 2020 workshop were to:

- revisit the Corporate Plan 2020, including reaffirming its strategic drivers and key service outcomes and updating key projects;
- apply the COVID-19 renewal reports that were considered from June to August, refining work plans and priorities;
- develop a renewal plan, titled Rethink Comox Valley, that describes how the CVRD plans to:
  - keep services affordable;
  - streamline processes;
  - protect quality of life and;
  - care for the community.

At the workshop, the Board considered the key components of both the strategic and financial planning processes and the COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework to confirm the components current validity.

Specifically, the following components were considered and affirmed:

- The Corporate Plan strategic drivers
  - Fiscal Responsibility
  - Climate Crisis and Environmental Stewardship and Protection
  - Community and Social Wellbeing
  - Indigenous Relations
- The COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework principles
 

The following five key principles will guide the CVRD's actions moving forward:

  1. Maintain core services at an affordable cost
  2. Sustain stable services in support of the local economy
  3. Adapt to changing community priorities
  4. Realign resources to support community renewal initiatives
  5. Communicate clearly about our actions

The key decisions and Board comments from the workshop-are noted in this report in boxes and italics as below.

*The Corporate Plan strategic drivers and the COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework principles were affirmed by the Board.*

## SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT POLICY DECISIONS

The Corporate Plan 2020 was largely affirmed by the Board with minor adjustments made in timing, priorities and initiatives. Core services with minor adjustments include: Finance and Administration, Water Supply, Sewage Treatment and Electoral Area Services. For the most part the Key Service Outcomes and Key Service Initiatives had only minor adjustments which are detailed in the individual core service sections of this report on pages 5-21.

In the case of Transit and the Regional Growth Strategy Services more significant shifts in direction were made and are detailed below.

### **Transit/Transportation Service**

The Transit Service has been significantly impacted by the pandemic, specifically ridership and revenues. These impacts prompted the Board to consider the service as currently formulated. In the discussions it was acknowledged that a transit planning discussions will take place this fall so the transit service was not considered in detail other than there was consensus that the Board needs to reassess the transit service and funding. Specifically, the upcoming transit planning discussions should include 2021 service levels and accommodation for the 5th Street bridge project. The outcome of these planning discussions may help inform a revised and updated *Transit Future Action Plan*. Importantly the Board discussed and agreed the service should be expanded to “transportation” with transit being one component of the broader transportation topic in the Comox Valley.

When asked what Key Service Outcomes the Board expects from a transportation service, several themes emerged including:

- Improved mobility of citizens
- Reduced GHG emissions
- Convenient and safe alternatives to gas fueled automobiles
- Efficient use of public money
- Mode shift away from private gas fuels vehicles
- A broad community conversation about transportation

Clearly this transition to a broader consideration of transportation in the Comox Valley will require further discussion including those that will take place this fall but importantly there is good opportunity for policy development and planning to be incorporated into the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) work.

### **RGS Service**

The second area of significant direction shift was related to the RGS and how it could be better used to realize some of the Board’s priorities. There was Board agreement that transportation, food security, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and GHG reduction be included under the RGS service. Using the RGS to address these priorities would provide opportunities for data collection, policy alternative development, tracking progress and program evaluation.

There was moderate Board support for coordinating resources and providing additional staff to support these RGS efforts.

# Core Services

The Board reviewed each of the core services and considered the following components:

- The COVID 19 Response and Renewal process short- term and long-term actions;
- The 2019 Key Service Outcomes; and
- The Key 2019 -2022 initiatives/directives.

The Board decisions for each core service are documented in this report under each of the core service headings.



## Finance and Administration

*The Short and Long term COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework Renewal Actions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.*

### Short Term Renewal Actions:

1. Reduce the 2020 budget for Finance and Administration by 4 per cent (approx. \$300,000).  
Reduction examples include:
  - Reduced employee benefit contributions
  - Reduced professional training opportunities
  - Reduced meeting schedule and expenses
  - Reduced travel for meetings and conferences, such as the UBCM and FCM events
  - Reduced professional fees for projects deemed non-critical (software upgrades, consulting on systems improvements)
2. Revising grant-in-aid and other funding programs to support community groups with a single access point for funding applications, helping the public understand what funds are available, how to apply for those funds and aligning community projects with CVRD Board priorities.

### Systemic and Long-term Renewal Actions:

3. Adjust policies and bylaws to reduce red-tape, increase transparency, promote accountability, and streamline processes
4. Analyze cost savings opportunities (support services policy, remote working, software/hardware options)
5. Develop common, annual assent period
6. Develop and introduce aspects of the financial stability/sustainable service delivery framework
7. Support for economic recovery and development through task force and administered by the Comox Valley Economic Development Society
8. Eliminate process barriers for collaboration and empower CVRD staff to work with our partners on projects and initiatives from conception to delivery. Enable a centralized, focused advisory body that is held two or three times annually to broadly consider Valley-wide, important issues and ensure all service level needs and impacts in a more holistic manner.
9. Develop a comprehensive, corporate-wide personnel plan that spans five+ years with business cases describing the pressures, options, and solutions.

*The Key Service Outcomes were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop with the addition of Maintain Indigenous Peoples Relationships added to the Key Service Outcomes.*

**Key service outcomes:**

- ✓ Fiscal responsibility and management
- ✓ Quality information and communication for residents and businesses
- ✓ Social procurement
- ✓ Partnerships e.g. school district, elected officials' forums
- ✓ Community leadership e.g. electric vehicle best practices
- ✓ Maintain relationships with Indigenous peoples

*The Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop*

Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions:	Ramp up? Stay the Course? Slow down? Drop off the list?
1. Strategic planning process redesigned to a comprehensive step-by-step process for 2019/2020	✓
2. Regular upgrades to existing systems (e.g. financial reporting and asset management) to achieve a higher degree of integration and more efficient practices (ongoing)	↔
3. Comox Valley Economic Development Society Contract review (2020)	✓
4. Regional office project (move in late 2019)	✓
5. Coordinating asset management across all CVRD services (ongoing)	↑
6. Supporting K'ómoks First Nation community to community forums, regular project updates with KFN Chief and Council, broad cultural awareness associated with indigenous relations for staff, elected officials and public (ongoing)	↔
7. Revising grant-in-aid and other funding programs to support community groups with a single access point for funding applications, helping the public understand what funds are available, how to apply for those funds and aligning community projects with CVRD Board priorities.	↑
8. Develop common, annual assent period	↑
9. Develop and introduce aspects of the financial stability/sustainable service delivery framework	↑
10. Support for economic recovery and development through task force and CVRD and CVEDS liaison	↑
11. Eliminate process barriers for collaboration and empower CVRD staff to work with our partners on projects and initiatives from conception to delivery. Enable a centralized, focused advisory body that is held two or three times annually to broadly consider Valley-wide, important issues and ensure all service level needs and impacts in a more holistic manner.	↑





## Water Supply

*The Short and Long term COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework Renewal Actions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.*

### **Short Term Renewal Actions:**

1. Deferred water rate increases to provide \$282,000 in annual savings for 2021/22:
  - Reduce travel and training, operational costs, and some watershed protection plan activities
  - Extend the life of fleet vehicles



















### **Systemic and Long-term Renewal Actions:**

2. Collaborate with neighbouring regional districts and municipalities to provide mutual aid for water systems if staffing or operations are insufficient.

*The Key Service Outcomes were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.*

### **Key service outcomes:**

- ✓ High quality water
- ✓ An adequate water supply to accommodate current and future demands
- ✓ Water conservation (reduction of per capita usage)
- ✓ Adequate, maintained, reliable and resilient infrastructure
- ✓ Source and infrastructure resiliency to climate change impacts
- ✓ Affordable water
- ✓ Positive KFN relations regarding water supply
- ✓ Watershed protection
- ✓ Reduced conflicts with watershed recreational users
- ✓ Supply source redundancy

<i>The Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop</i>	
<b>Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions:</b>	<b>Ramp up?</b>   <b>Stay the Course?</b> <b>Slow down?</b>   <b>Drop off the list?</b>  
1. Completion of the Water Treatment Project	 
2. Partnership with KFN through Mutual Benefit Agreement related to Water Treatment Project includes commitment to extend water services south to their development lands north east of Union Bay	
3. Ongoing implementation of the Comox Lake Watershed Protection Plan	
4. Municipal natural assets inventory (MNAI)	 
5. Future use consideration of Coal Beach property	 
6. Perseverance Creek risk reduction	 
7. Asset management to confirm current conditions and define future asset renewal requirements	
8. Consideration of southern communities for expanded service (aligned with RGS goals and objectives)	



## Sewage Treatment

*The Short and Long term COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework Renewal Actions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.*

### **Short Term Renewal Actions:**

1. Reduced revenue requirements over the next two years due to operational changes, limited travel/training and prioritizing work plans.
2. Skyrocket compost fee is waived for municipalities to ease financial pressures and increase use of the product.

### **Systemic and Long-term Renewal Actions:**














1. Collaborate with neighbouring regional districts and municipalities to provide mutual aid for sewer systems if staffing or operations are insufficient.
2. Advance collaborative sewer services, in particular through decisions to treat wastewater from Royston and Union Bay at the main treatment plant.

*The Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop*

### **Excerpt from 2019 Strategic Plan**

#### **Key service outcomes:**

- ✓ Asset management
- ✓ Affordability of service
- ✓ Infrastructure resiliency to climate change impacts
- ✓ Partnerships with KFN
- ✓ Reduce storm water infiltration
- ✓ Willemar Bluff risk reduction

<i>The Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop</i>	
<b>Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions:</b>	<b>Ramp up?</b>   <b>Stay the Course?</b> <b>Slow down?</b> <b>Drop off the list?</b>    
1. Comox Valley Liquid Waste Management Planning (LWMP) to select optimal conveyance solution, level of treatment for the Comox Valley Water Pollution Control Center and explore opportunities for further resource recovery	
2. Upgrades and equipment at the CVWPCC to address odour, good neighbour, operations	 
3. Area "A" analysis - In April 2018, the sewage commission provided support in principle for receipt of Area A wastewater, subject to resolution of concerns relating to governance, financial and regulatory impacts on existing service	 
4. Advance collaborative sewer services, in particular through decisions to treat wastewater from Royston and Union Bay at the main treatment plant.	
5. Completion of major capital upgrades at the biosolids compost facility to increase the capacity by 50 percent	



## Electoral Areas

*The Short and Long term COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework Renewal Actions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.*

### **Short Term Renewal Actions:**

1. Increased efforts
  - Park maintenance contracts with mental health groups and non-profit organizations
  - Park patrols and enforcement to support public health and COVID-19 measures
  - Virtual events (public meetings, advisory and committee, building inspection, regulations)
2. Deferred / postponed:
  - Land-use planning: short-term rental policy work
  - Capital projects in ABC and Islands parks services results in \$290,000 towards reserves in 2020 (13 percent reduced spending)
  - Increased reserves in Comox Valley water distribution system due to reduced bulk rate













### **Systemic and Long-term Renewal Actions:**

3. Improvements and changes:
  - CVRD bylaw compliance officers to enforce water restrictions
  - Building inspection department to
    - pursue software that promotes virtual operations and remote procedures
    - rewrite building inspection bylaw for clarity
  - Examine delegating all development permit approvals to staff
  - Detailed water rate analysis to promote sustainable service delivery
  - Focus on grants and community works funds to support capital works projects

*The Key service outcomes were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop*

### **Key service outcomes:**

- ✓ Local government for rural areas
- ✓ Advocating for equitable and appropriate service delivery
- ✓ Infrastructure and community resiliency
- ✓ Responding to and partnering with community groups and residents

<i>The Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop</i>	
<b>Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions:</b>	<b>Complete? Ramp up?</b> <b>Stay the Course?</b> <b>Slow down?</b> <b>Drop off the list?</b> 
1. Rural roadside garbage, recycling, and organics collection – public engagement	
2. Septic regulation / education (enhanced efforts)	
3. Air quality (in rural areas)	
4. Agricultural planning	
5. Regional parks	
6. OCP updates: Cannabis policies (operational)	
7. OCP updates: Saratoga settlement node (operational)	
8. OCP updates: Development permit revisions (operational)	
9. Building inspection department to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. pursue software that promotes virtual operations and remote procedures</li> <li>b. rewrite building inspection bylaw for clarity</li> </ul>	
10. Examine delegating all development permit approvals to staff	
11. Grant Programs and Community Hall Services	

### **BIG QUESTIONS**

*A rich conversation was generated by the question, “ What are the priorities in your Electoral Area?”*

*The list of responses included:*

- *Concerns regarding the impacts of climate change in rural areas e.g. dry wells*
- *Concerns regarding the health impacts of fire smoke*
- *The lack of social cohesion (Area B’s lack of neighbourhood cohesions/identity – makes communication challenging when not knowing neighbours, seniors, residents, newcomers)*
- *Multi generational farms – young generation/children returning?*
- *Challenge of daycare in rural areas – potential for multi use facilities at firehalls, community halls*
- *Need to support rural small home based businesses*
- *Lack of transit on Hornby/Denman*
- *The need for sewer service to the south*
- *Exhibition grounds as a potential regional service – to share costs*

- *Emergency preparedness*
- *Region wide park service – to share the cost of parks*
- *Potential new services – Septic regulations, community halls*
- *For next term consider watershed protection, Fire Smart risk, regional service water supply*

*There is the potential to weave some of these concerns/opportunities into existing services. For example:*

- Watershed protection efforts could include concerns regarding dry wells
- Emergency preparedness could be addressed in various ways: fire smoke, Fire Smart and use of Fire Halls to build neighbourhood connections and strengthen social cohesion



## Transit /Transportation

*The conversation regarding transit quickly evolved into a conversation about transportation more broadly, as reflected in the notes at the end of this section.*

*The Short and Long term COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework Renewal Actions , the Key Service Outcomes and the Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were not discussed in detail by the Board acknowledging that a bigger discussion about transportation broadly is needed and the forthcoming Transit Planning Initiative. They are for the time being assumed to remain relevant.*

### **Short Term Renewal Actions:**

1. Enhanced support for transit through COVID-19
  - advocate for financial assistance to offset fare revenue loss
  - support for transit improvements (optimized scheduling, infrastructure, planning)
  - maintain service levels during 5th Street bridge project
  - align service levels with September 2020 return to school

### **Systemic and Long-term Renewal Actions:**

2. Consider services, infrastructure, supports, public requirements and integrating with other modes and opportunities across jurisdictions for long-term transit plans.











**Key service outcomes:**

Affordable fares

- ✓ Access equity
- ✓ Greenhouse gas reduction
- ✓ Alternative services in rural areas
- ✓ Link high need users to services e.g. food bank, farmers market
- ✓ Integration with School District 71 student transportation needs

Mode shift – Transit Future Action Plan

Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions:	Ramp up?  Stay the Course?  Slow down?  Drop off the list?   
1. Annual Transit Improvement Plans based on BC Transit and local input	
2. Development of a Transit Future Action Plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. review mode share targets and service levels</li> <li>b. local government land use and transportation plans and</li> <li>c. identify future service and infrastructure needs and cost implications</li> </ul>	

*While the Board did not specifically discuss the ‘big questions’ for the Transit service, discussion centred around what the service outcomes might include for a transportation service. The responses included:*

*When asked what Key Service Outcomes the Board expects from a transportation service several themes emerged including:*

- *Improved mobility of citizens*
- *Reduced GHG emissions*
- *Convenient and safe alternatives to gas fueled automobiles*
- *Efficient use of public money*
- *Making other modes of transportation convenient and safe to encourage a shift away from private vehicles*
- *A broad community conversation about transportation*

*There was a strong general consensus that the Board needs to reassess what the CVRD does with transit funding.*



## Regional Growth Strategy

*The Short and Long term COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework Renewal Actions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.*

### **Short Term Renewal Actions:**












1. Enhanced support and attention on
  - climate change response (electric vehicle strategy and grant funding opportunities, and multi-modal transportation planning)
  - sustainable funding levels for RGS

*The Key service outcomes were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop with the suggestion that the following be included under the RGS service:*

- *Transportation*
- *Food security*
- *Climate change mitigation and adaptation*
- *Reducing GHGs*

### **Key service outcomes:**

- ✓ Settlement that is socially, economically, environmentally healthy
- ✓ Adequate housing supply for current and future needs
- ✓ Affordable housing
- ✓ Affordable servicing
- ✓ Partnerships with KFN and other organizations
- ✓ Improved air quality
- ✓ RGS monitoring and evaluation

<i>The Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.</i>	
<b>Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions:</b>	<b>Ramp up? Stay the Course? Slow down? Drop off the list?</b>
	
1. Regional housing needs assessment	
2. Air quality framework identified to improve Comox Valley air quality	
3. Multi-modal integrated regional transportation implementation agreement	
4. Integrating regional growth principles with sustainability strategy principles – develop CVSS Scorecard	
5. Review of the RGS	
6. Regional approach and cooperation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. BC Energy Stepcode</li> <li>b. Transportation</li> <li>c. Plastic bags</li> <li>d. Food security/system</li> <li>e. Farming</li> </ul>	
7. Partnerships with KFN & food security organizations	
8. Evaluation and reporting framework (dashboard) and data collection	
9. Climate change mitigation and adaptation planning	
10. Poverty Reduction Strategy	

## BIG QUESTIONS

*In response to the question, “Is there interest in going further than establishing policies; for example establishing a service(s) and dedicating resources?” there was moderate interest in the potential to coordinate resources, provide additional staff and include the broad topic of transportation. Accessibility was also a point of discussion, and the Board committed to making some funding available in the 2021 budget process to support the Social Planning Council.*

*In response to the question, “Given the CVRD Board’s declaration of the Climate Crisis in early 2019, what does this mean and how can this be accomplished?” a number of topics were raised including:*

*the need for transportation baseline green house gas data  
addressing food security/system  
developing an agricultural plan for the region  
water demand and supply  
climate change adaptation and mitigation planning – relates to flood mapping  
reducing GHGs from buildings  
eco asset carbon capture*



## Recreation

*The Short and Long term COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework Renewal Actions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.*

### **Short Term Renewal Actions:**

1. Completed
  - maintenance upgrades during COVID-19 shut down (supported by asset management)
  - community / user group support through a revised Active Comox Valley program
  - support user groups and clubs return to play plans (swim clubs, minor hockey, figure skating, Boys and Girls club)
  - conservative approach to recreation restart plan following public health guidelines

### **Systemic and Long-term Renewal Actions:**








2. Continue to work in collaboration with our partnering municipalities, stakeholders, and the community to
  - look at ways to address the loss of sales and services revenue and
  - evaluate and move towards a new programming and services model.

*The Key service outcomes were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.*

### **Key service outcomes:**

- ✓ Supporting the health of citizens
- ✓ Asset management
- ✓ Partnerships between jurisdictions and external stakeholders
- ✓ Connectivity to recreational services
- ✓ Accessibility to recreational services
- ✓ Volunteer engagement
- ✓ Cooperation with School District 71 facilities
- ✓ Greenhouse gas and environmental impact reduction
- ✓ Partnerships with K'ómoks First Nation

*The Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop with the suggestion that the Exhibition Grounds be considered for outdoor recreation purposes.*

Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions:	Ramp up? Stay the Course? Slow down? Drop off the list? 
1. Implementation of the CVRD Sports Centre Strategic Plan 2019-2021	
2. Opportunities for organizational improvement including information technology supports, management structural changes	
3. Implementation of a low-income regional pass	
4. Energy reduction improvements such as: switching to LED lighting; evaluating heat reclamation potential; and acquisition of an electric ice resurfacing equipment	
5. Enhanced programming with First Nations involvement	
6. Exhibition Grounds be considered for outdoor recreation purposes	

### BIG QUESTIONS

In response to the question, *“What is the importance of outdoor programming and recreation space, considering the current and potential ongoing limitations with traditional recreation infrastructure including pools and ice sheets?”* a number of suggestions were made including:

- Connect partners in recreation e.g. municipalities and the CVRD
- Connecting trails
- Coordinating recreation activities offered across the region
- Reduce expenditures
- Explore the potential for outdoor fitness, tennis, disc golf, cold water swimming
- Monitor the impact of COVID on outdoor facilities/parks/trails such as increased use

In response to the question, *“How can your municipal councils and the CVRD board collaborate more effectively?”* Number of suggestions were offered including:

- Coordinating scheduling and use of facilities and activities across the region
- Think about recreation “close to home recreation”
- Offer a transit discount for travel to recreation
- Create a “universal recreation pass”



## Emergency Programs

*The Short and Long term COVID 19 Response and Renewal Framework Renewal Actions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop with the following comments:*

- *Focus on neighbourhood preparedness plans (Program Review – a few neighbourhoods left) Provide a voice for vulnerable people in an emergency, including the role for senior governments;*
- *Clarify the role of the EOC in emergencies; and*
- *Provide additional support and funding to this service.*

### **Short Term Renewal Actions:**

1. Prepare for COVID-19 second wave:
  - Advance planning for EOC
  - Collaborate with IT for remote operations
  - Address EOC “After Action Report” findings
  - Support to volunteer programs to meet public health and WorkSafeBC requirements
2. Increased efforts to relocate program office, equipment, and volunteer programs (ESS and Emergency Radio Communications) with consideration for search and rescue
3. Deferred / postponed (\$29,500 in 2020 savings):
  - “Fracture on Fifth” earthquake exercise
  - Minor capital and operational expenses
4. Cancelled:
  - HAM radio course and town hall presentations for Denman and Hornby evacuation guidelines

### **Systemic and Long-term Renewal Actions:**








1. Develop a Regional Emergency Program Service delivery model (incorporating EOC After Action Report findings)

*The Key service outcomes were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop with the following comments:*

- *Regarding the Fire Smart Program – do not postpone but pivot (staff report forthcoming on this topic)*
- *Regarding Search and Rescue – space was offered at the Comox Water Pollution Control facility but the organization is currently exploring purchasing Moray Avenue property.*

### **Key service outcomes:**

- ✓ Emergency prevention and mitigation
- ✓ Emergency Operations Centre preparedness
- ✓ Business and resident emergency preparedness
- ✓ Support for emergency staff and volunteers
- ✓ KFN partnerships and bridging
- ✓ Emergency food supply preparedness

<i>The Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions were affirmed by the Board at the September Workshop.</i>	
<b>Key 2019-2022 initiatives/directions:</b>	<b>Complete? Ramp up?</b> <b>Stay the Course?</b> <b>Slow down?</b> <b>Drop off the list?</b> 
1. Completion of the new Regional Emergency Operations Centre a. Developing, training, and implementing the EOC personnel plan capable of filling three shifts for a stage 3 activation	
2. Preparation for 2020 earthquake emergency functional exercise (“Fracture on Fifth”)	<b>POSTPONED</b>
3. National Disaster Mitigation Program – Flood Risk Mapping for entire CVRD Coastline, in collaboration with CVRD Planning	
4. Consideration of Merville and Mount Washington fire service buildings	
5. Community Fire Smart Program and wildfire protection planning	
6. Exploration of available space for volunteers (Search and Rescue)	
7. Develop a Regional Emergency Program Service delivery model (incorporating EOC After Action Report findings)	



## Welcome to **Rethink Comox Valley**

Within this document you will find important information about what services the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) provides, how these services have been impacted by COVID-19 and what we are doing to help our community recover from this pandemic.

For more information about the CVRD visit our website at [www.comoxvalleyrd.ca](http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca).



## About the Comox Valley Regional District

The CVRD provides **98 services** for Comox Valley residents including:

- ▶ Essential shared regional infrastructure like sewer and water
- ▶ Recreational facilities, programs and parks that support our mental and physical health
- ▶ Fire protection for electoral areas
- ▶ Planning services that guide the sustainable development of our region
- ▶ Solid waste services (in partnership with the Strathcona Regional District)
- ▶ Funding for local hospitals (in partnership with the Strathcona Regional District)

### CVRD Core Services

Water Supply



Transportation



Sewage Treatment



Recreation



Emergency Programs



Regional Growth Strategy



Finance & Administration



Electoral Area Services

### Partnerships



Solid Waste



Funding Hospital Infrastructure

## Impact of COVID-19 on Services

### Immediate Response



Established a **regional emergency operations centre**



**Temporarily shut down** public facilities and outdoor gathering spaces



**Share public works staff with municipal partners** to keep essential services like sewer and water operating seamlessly



Implemented **new safety protocols**



Encouraged **staff to work from home**



Provided **\$148,000 in grant funding** to support our most vulnerable populations



Supported **food distribution** for those in need

### Resulting Impact

**Loss in revenue** that supports services like recreation and transit



**Higher operating costs** to comply with new safety protocols



**Administrative savings** due to fewer meetings, cancelled travel and training, reduced employee benefit contributions and cancelled non-critical projects



## A Thoughtful Review

As our community began to restart in the summer of 2020, it was time to transition away from responding to the pandemic and **Rethink** our services. As a new normal set in, the board asked staff to consider how the CVRD should adapt to better respond to priorities of residents and aid in community recovery. All actions were driven by the CVRD's **key drivers** of fiscal responsibility community and social wellbeing, indigenous relations and climate crisis, environmental stewardship and protection.

## Taking Action

### SUMMER

#### Action

CVRD staff review relevance and priority of projects

#### Outcome

Identify **key actions** within context of CVRD strategic drivers



**Fiscal Responsibility**

**Community & Social Wellbeing**

**Climate Crisis & Environmental Stewardship & Protection**

**Indigenous Relations**

### FALL

#### Action

CVRD Board reviews recommendations and finalizes the plan

**Keep services affordable**

**Streamline processes**

**Protect quality of life**

**Care for the community**

#### Outcome

**Rethink Comox Valley** is adopted and shared with the public

## Highlights of Rethink Comox Valley include:



### Caring for the Community

- Advocate for our vulnerable populations
- Create a one stop shop for community groups to apply for grant funding
- Funding opportunities that target homelessness and food security
- Implement new and innovative recreation programs
- Improved collaboration with municipalities on Emergency Response
- Thoughtful service delivery to address poverty, housing needs and sea level rise



### Quality of Life

- Appoint a task force to work with local business sectors on economic recovery
- Play hockey and swim while staying safe!
- Replace critical infrastructure to protect Baynes Sound



### Streamlining Services and Keeping Them Affordable

- More than \$750,000 in reduced spending thanks to administration cuts, deferred parks projects, frozen water rates and finding operating efficiencies
- Move some services and public engagement online for improved access and to keep public and staff safe

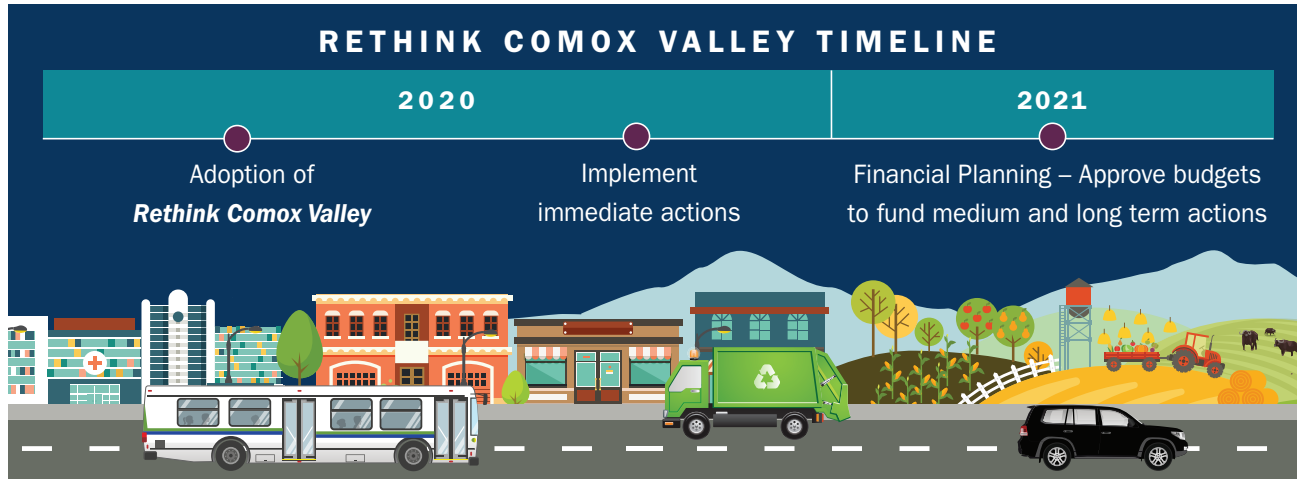
### In Partnership with the Strathcona Regional District

Plan to save more than \$800,000 in solid waste operating costs over two years



## Next Steps

The **Rethink Comox Valley** plan is a step along the path to continued effective and efficient service delivery. The priorities set now will help define budgets for next year and beyond.



## How the Plan will be Funded

Local government services depend on tax dollars, and the CVRD primarily uses property taxes to fund its activities.



**\$95**  
**PER MONTH\***  
**to the CVRD for Services**  
 \*Based on a house valued at approximately \$500,000

**COMPARED WITH**

**\$450** per month for expenses such as cable, hydro, insurance & other utility bills  
 +  
**\$110** in provincial taxes  
 +  
**\$1600** or more for a mortgage

Illustration of several stacks of money, with some stacks being taller than others, representing the cost of utility bills, taxes, and mortgage.

While participation in CVRD services vary depending on your community, your tax dollars can help to support community groups, clean water, treated wastewater and regional parks and greenspaces.