

DATE: January 17, 2020

FILE: 6430-01

TO: Chair and Directors
Committee of the Whole

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Core Service: Finance and Administration

Purpose

To describe the key projects related to Finance and Administration, as a core service, and to recommend support for the Indigenous Relations Framework.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the Indigenous relations framework, as attached to the staff report dated January 17, 2020 be approved, as a guide to support the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) in considering the needs, interests and concerns of Indigenous peoples and outline how the CVRD can incorporate an Indigenous lens into decision-making and service delivery.

Executive Summary

The CVRD's strategic planning process includes identifying strategic drivers and key projects. For Finance and Administration, as a core service, the key projects are highlighted in Appendix A to this report.

- Of the six key projects named, this report describes the strategic planning process, existing system upgrades, regional office project, asset management and Indigenous relations. The Comox Valley Economic Development Society contract, as a key project, will be described during review of the economic development service budget in February 2020.
 - o Strategic Planning Process: The annual process is undergoing a transition to focus on drivers to respond to Board interests, aligning service delivery with the important components for the public. Further details are online at <https://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/about/about-cvrd/strategic-priorities>
 - o Existing System Upgrades: Information technology, data management and financial reporting are three areas, among many others, which are reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Most recently, financial reporting software and personnel management software have been revamped to provide more effective platforms for staff to deliver services.
 - o Regional Office Project: CVRD staff relocated from its Comox Road office location to 770 Harmston Avenue during the latter part of December 2019. The relocation followed the significant Board direction to construct the new office, enabling a headquarters for the majority of staff that is purpose-built, in a location that can serve as a regional emergency operations centre when required and is owned by the CVRD – all factors that did not apply to the Comox Road location. Strong partnership with K'ómoks First Nation is evidenced at Harmston location with artwork and future totem pole installation. An official grand opening celebration will be held in the spring 2020 and community partners will be invited to help celebrate this success.

- Asset Management: Providing sustainable service delivery means understanding the condition and value of CVRD infrastructure. Regular reporting on assets will assist with decision making over the coming months and years as a more comprehensive understanding of CVRD systems is gained by aligning asset management with financial planning that is driven through the Board’s strategic drivers.
- Indigenous Relations: The Board named Indigenous relations as one of its four strategic drivers, and further focused its attention on the relationship between the CVRD and the K’ómoks First Nation (KFN). While there are many activities that occur on a regular basis between the CVRD and KFN, a comprehensive approach is not described. Attached as Appendix B is a framework that will support the CVRD to consider the needs, interests and concerns of Indigenous peoples and outline how the CVRD can incorporate an Indigenous lens into decision-making and service delivery. The principles and tasks described in the framework will provide the direction needed to enhance programs and practices, with an Indigenous lens. The intent of the framework is to describe the range of actions that would help to achieve the framework’s goals. The list of actions is extensive, and only those tasks that include sufficient resources can be accomplished. As projects arise, consideration must be given to the required resources. Annually, as noted in the framework, the Board will be updated on such activities.

From a financial perspective, expenses associated with the key projects are accounted for in the General Government Function (No. 110). The majority of costs are associated with ongoing activities and do not represent increases. As subsequent financial plans are introduced for individual services, additional attention may be given to topics such as asset management or systems improvement.

Prepared by:

J. Warren

James Warren
General Manager of Corporate Services

Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

None	✓
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Attachments: Appendix A – “Core Service: Finance and Administration – Key Projects”
Appendix B – “Indigenous Relations Framework”



Core Service: Finance and Administration

Finance and Administration provides support services for: legislative, financial, personnel, communications, executive, information technology and administrative functions. In addition, it oversees borrowing for large scale projects and elections and public approval processes.

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

Initiatives (Proposed for 2020-2024 budget)

Key Projects	Strategic Drivers	Costs	Public Engagement	Timing
1. Strategic planning process redesigned to a comprehensive step-by-step process for 2019/2020	F, C	\$		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)	F	\$		2020
3. Comox Valley Economic Development Society contract review (2020)	F, P	\$\$		2020
4. Regional office project (move in late 2019)	F, C, I	\$		2020
5. Coordinating asset management across all CVRD services (ongoing)	F, C, P	\$\$		2020
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)	P, I	\$		2020
* - depends on partner collaboration and advocacy with partners is encouraged Strategic Drivers: F = fiscal responsibility; C = climate crisis; P = community partnerships; I = Indigenous relations				

Indigenous Relations Framework (January 2020)

VISION

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) is committed to building its relationship with Indigenous peoples and advancing reconciliation. To support Indigenous relations as a strategic driver, the CVRD proposes adopting a framework to deliver core services with an Indigenous relations lens and promote greater cultural awareness.

OBJECTIVES

- To enhance the knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture and history, including the modern day legacy of colonial history.
- To build capacity of all staff, elected officials and committee/advisory members to be engaged in collaborative work with Indigenous communities and peoples.
- To maintain ongoing staff to staff engagement and information sharing, seeking opportunities to collaborate and learn from each other.
- To explore and respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for engaging with First Nations peoples and advancing national and provincial objectives/commitments.
- To seek ways to maximize Indigenous engagement while minimizing demands on Indigenous peoples time and resources.
- To evaluate opportunities for Indigenous participation on Board, committee, commission and advisory bodies.
- To build strong and enduring relationships with First Nations governments and peoples.

KEY ACTIONS

1. Develop policy:

- Update and amend CVRD plans, policies, procedures and bylaws to reflect the Indigenous relations lens.
- Explore and respond to TRC's Calls to Action and UNDRIP framework
- Align projects with the CVRD Board's strategic priorities
- Integrate an Indigenous lens into CVRD program development and service delivery (including broad public engagement)

2. Strengthen relationships

- Release a statement of reconciliation to signal the organization's commitment to staff but also the larger community
- Explore new partnerships with KFN to support KFN in their pursuit of economic development opportunities and conservation efforts (i.e. servicing agreement for future treaty settlement lands, implementation agreements)
- Explore new opportunities to partner with First Nations outside of band and council (i.e. UBCM grant program in progress with Wachiay Friendship Centre or CVRD Water Treatment Project)

- Create physical spaces that celebrate Indigenous people's history and culture (e.g. installation of Indigenous artwork at new CVRD administrative building)
- Develop signage or educational materials for the inclusion of Indigenous history (e.g. Seal Bay Nature Park)
- Reach out to KFN early and often (e.g. CVRD/KFN engagement handbook)
- Build and enhance relationships and establish new partnerships with Indigenous peoples
- Engage with K'ómoks First Nations on how to incorporate an Indigenous lens and ongoing consultation at the CVRD
- Engage with First Nations of the Comox Strathcona Waste Management service area on projects of interest and in collaboration with other agencies
- Continue with monthly project updates with K'ómoks First Nation Chief and Council; CVRD projects/initiatives are all guided through this process
- Engage with other regional districts to share opportunities, learnings and best practices

3. Support learning

- Provide staff time for self-directed learning as well as professional development training opportunities such as articles (UNDRIP, TRC Executive Summary) webinars, and online learning
- Incorporate into CVRD practices, where appropriate, Provincial and Federal legislative updates relating to Indigenous peoples/reconciliation.
- Commit to co-hosting with KFN annual community-to-community forums to ensure ongoing dialogue and relationship building
- Identify champions to get the message out to the larger organization
- Provide Indigenous cultural training for staff and elected officials
- Dedicate at least one of the elected officials forums annually to Indigenous topics with participation of other relevant government agencies (i.e. Islands Trust, School Districts)
- Update the CVRD Board annually on progress and findings, including specific tasks undertaken and response to TRC Calls to Action and UNDRIP

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Indigenous relations framework is an ongoing effort that will evolve and respond to current events and future goals. Adequate resources must be considered for effective implementation, and will be addressed as programs are considered.

- Develop cultural competency¹ training program for staff and elected officials (e.g. material for new employees, resources for fieldwork, CVRD library, etc.)
- Establish interdepartmental working group and/or advisory committee to review projects and services that intersect First Nations interests and provide input on regional decision-making
- Establish the resources (in-house capacity and budget) to manage and support this initiative (e.g. meeting expenses, training, administrative fees and staff time).

¹ Cultural competency training is designed to enhance self-awareness and to strengthen the skills of those who work directly and indirectly with Indigenous peoples. The goal is to develop an understanding and promote positive relationships between service providers and Indigenous peoples.