



CVRD

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, JULY 31, 2012 AT 12:30 PM

CVRD BOARD ROOM – 175 INGRAM STREET

AGENDA

	PAGES
1. <u>APPROVAL OF AGENDA:</u>	1
2. <u>ADOPTION OF MINUTES:</u>	
M1 Adoption of Minutes of the Regular meeting of the Communications Committee held June 19, 2012	2-5
3. <u>BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:</u>	
4. <u>REPORTS:</u>	
R1 Report from Mickelson Consulting Inc Re: Communications Strategy Research Summary Report dated July 25, 2012	6-54
5. <u>NEW BUSINESS:</u>	
6. <u>QUESTION PERIOD:</u>	
7. <u>ADJOURNMENT:</u>	

The next Regular meeting of the Communications Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, September 18, 2012 at 1:00 pm, in the Board Room, CVRD, 175 Ingram Street, Duncan BC.

NOTE: A copy of the full agenda package is available at the CVRD website www.cvrld.bc.ca

DISTRIBUTION:

Communications Committee

Director B. Fraser, Chair
 Director M. Marcotte, Vice-Chair
 Director P. Kent
 Director G. Giles

Director B. Lines
 Director I. Morrison
 Director M. Walker
 Director R. Hutchins

Cowichan Valley Regional District

Warren Jones, Chief Administrative Officer

Joe Barry, Corporate Secretary

Minutes of the Regular meeting of the Communications Committee held in the Board Room, 175 Ingram Street, Duncan BC, on Tuesday, June 19, 2012 at 12:35 pm.

PRESENT: Chair P. Kent
Directors B. Fraser, G. Giles, R. Hutchins, P. Weaver,
I. Morrison <to 1:20 pm>, M. Marcotte,
L. Duncan <1:26 pm>, M. Dorey <2:00 pm>

ALSO

PRESENT: Warren Jones, Chief Administrative Officer
Joe Barry, Corporate Secretary
Sybille Sanderson, A/General Manager, Public Safety
Tara Daly, Recording Secretary

ABSENT: Directors B. Lines, M. Walker

**APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be amended with the addition of one New Business item:

NB1 Cowichan Bay Communications; and

that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

**ADOPTION OF
MINUTES**

M1

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Regular meeting of the Communications Committee held February 21, 2012 be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

**BUSINESS ARISING
FROM MINUTES**

BA1

It was noted that the February 21, 2012 minutes indicated that the Terms of Reference for the Communications Committee would be referred to this meeting. Since the Terms of Reference are not on this agenda, the issue will be referred to the July meeting.

REPORTS

R1

Staff Report from the Corporate Secretary, Legislative Services re: Communications Audit/Strategic Communications Plan was received for information.

The Corporate Secretary provided an update of the Strategic Communications Plan, including survey and workshops, for information. The final report from Mickelson Consulting Inc. will be presented to the Communications Committee at the September 18, 2012 meeting.

R2

Report from the Board Chair re: Electoral Area Newsletters – Development of Policy and Procedure for Standardized Layout and Funding Formulas was considered.

It was moved and seconded that it be recommended to the Board that the following items be referred to Electoral Area Services Committee:

- 1. A standard template be developed for all CVRD newsletters funded through General Government.**
- 2. In addition to local area news/updates and messages from the local area director, that space be provided for regional news/messages.**
- 3. Regional District staff/contractor be assigned to assist area directors with the production/review of such newsletters /articles.**
- 4. A percentage of the cost of publication and distribution of such newsletters be charged to General Government.**
- 5. The EASC consider establishing a communications budget to permit each area director to publish a newsletter bi-annually.**

MOTION CARRIED

R3

Report from the Board Chair re: Review of External Correspondence Process was considered.

It was moved and seconded that staff be requested to develop a “best practice” policy and procedure regarding response to external communications, including both mail and email, for the Communications Committee’s consideration.

MOTION CARRIED

1:20 pm

Director Morrison left the meeting at 1:20 pm.

R4

Report from the Board Chair re: Establishment of an External Communications Core Review Group was considered.

It was moved and seconded that an external Communications Core Review sub-committee of the Communications Committee be established to provide political oversight to such communication plan/response.

MOTION CARRIED

1:26 pm

Director Duncan arrived at the meeting at 1:26 pm.

R5

Report from the Board Chair re: CVRD Matters, Board Highlights, was considered.

It was moved and seconded to recommend to the CVRD Board that CVRD Matters be re-established as a regular monthly publication.

MOTION CARRIED

R6 Report from the Board Chair re: Website Area Profiles – Development of Base Profiles for Each Area Including Events/Meetings Calendar was considered.

It was moved and seconded to refer Website Area Profiles – Development of Base Profiles for Each Area Including Events/Meetings Calendar to a Communications Committee meeting after receipt of the Strategic Communications Plan report.

MOTION CARRIED

1:56 pm Director Duncan left the meeting at 1:56 pm.

2:00 pm Director Dorey arrived at the meeting at 2:00 pm.

R7 Report from the Board Chair re: CVRD Profile – Development of CVRD Policy and Procedure for Showcasing Political Jurisdictions, Economic Initiatives, etc. was considered.

It was moved and seconded that a CVRD Profile sub-committee of the Communications Committee be established to develop, for the committee's consideration:

- 1. A list of key topics for PowerPoint presentations; and**
- 2. A draft outline (scope & sequence) for each PowerPoint presentation.**

MOTION CARRIED

R8 Staff Report from the Corporate Secretary, Legislative Services re: Proposed Shift in July Meeting Date to July 31, 2012 to Coincide with EASC's July Schedule was considered.

It was moved and seconded to move the Communications Committee meeting from July 17, 2012 to July 31, 2012.

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

NB1 Director Giles brought forward, on behalf of Director Iannidinardo, the lack of support, strategy or communications, from the Regional District in Cowichan Bay regarding float homes in Cowichan Bay not being connected to the sewer system. The committee felt this was an issue that would be best dealt with by the Electoral Area Services Committee.

2:05 pm Director Duncan returned to the meeting at 2:05 pm.

ADJOURNMENT
2:14 pm

It was moved and seconded that the Communications Committee meeting adjourn.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 2:14 pm.

Chairperson

Recording Secretary

Dated: _____



Cowichan Valley Regional District Communications Strategy Research Summary Report

July 25, 2012

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Research Overview	2
Key Themes	3
• Highlights	3
• Board Interviews, Workshop and Feedback Forms	5
• Staff Interviews, Workshop and Feedback Forms	7
• Community Workshops & Feedback Forms, Online Survey	11
Highlights from Statistical Findings	14
• Information Priorities	14
• Satisfaction Ratings	14
• Gap Analysis	17
• Preferred Tactics	19
• Social Media Use & Interest	21
Communication Audit	23
• Overview	23
• Communication Content Audit – Details	24
• Branding and Design Audit – Details	32
• Website and Social Media Audit – Details	35
• Eco Depot Report – Communications Considerations	38
Policy Review	40
Needs Assessment	42
Recommendations & Next Steps	43

Executive Summary

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is developing a communications strategy along with new policies and procedures to improve communications in the region and within the organization. The research phase involved an extensive consultation process with internal and external stakeholders to identify needs and opportunities, as well as the key elements required for developing a strategy. This consultation included Board Directors, staff and community members, and involved the use of interviews, feedback forms, surveys and workshops. The review also included analysis of existing communication materials, policies and current procedures.

Some of the key strengths noted in the research were positive examples of successful communications initiatives, staff pride and commitment to providing high quality services and a number of technical platforms that can be used to improve communications and outreach.

There were also consistent themes related to areas for improving communications. From an organizational perspective, there is a need for more timely, responsive and coordinated communications that reflect consistent standards, messaging and branding. There is a need for more proactive communication on key topic categories ranging from Board decisions to recreation and tourism, along with interest in early and more extensive community consultation, particularly in the area of capital projects, community planning and development. Internal communication is also a challenge. Staff indicated they are often disconnected from other departments while at the same time indicating they were confident that they knew the correct person to contact for information. It is also noted that the CVRD does not have a formal issues management process and there are no communication policies or guidelines. As a result, the quality of materials is inconsistent, messaging is regularly missing key elements related to need and benefit, and the CVRD is often in a position of more reactive responses to issues and concerns, rather than proactive communication. This also results in missed opportunities to deliver news and information to residents in a timely and strategic manner.

The size and diversity of the region add another layer of complexity to communications. Information priorities are varied across the region due to different services and competing interests between electoral areas and municipalities. This same dichotomy can also affect Board communications and messaging in media relations. As well, the rural nature of several areas limits the tactics available to communicate to residents.

The recommendations stemming from this initial research will be reflected in the new Communications Strategy. Overall, these recommendations focus on five areas:

1. Implement more effective communications related to ongoing Board decisions, CVRD programs and services, and general awareness of CVRD activities in individual electoral areas and municipalities as well as initiatives that affect the region to provide timely updates on topics focused on audience interests.
2. Implement more effective consultation to provide opportunities for meaningful input and engage residents earlier to discuss projects and service changes.
3. Improve the quality of communication to provide professional, clear and engaging materials using a variety of tactics tailored to audiences.
4. Implement a communications program focused on raising awareness about the CVRD, its role and responsibilities in the region, strategic plan and its values in serving its communities.
5. Establish guidelines, policies and procedures to improve internal communication, issues management and effective communication practices.

Research Overview

The development of a new Communications Strategy begins with an extensive review of existing communications, including internal operations and standards, assessment of existing policies and the materials being used, as well as interest in exploring alternatives such as social media. The communications audit includes an assessment of what is working well and what is missing or needs improvement from both an internal and external audience perspective.

The tactics for this research process involved the following:

- Interviews with Corporate Leadership Team and Managers (13 participants)
- Interviews and Workshop/Feedback Form with Board Directors (15 participants)
- Workshop/Feedback Form with employees (21 participants)
- Four Workshops/Feedback Forms with community members (33 participants)
- Online community surveys – Municipalities and Electoral Areas (440 respondents)
- Communication audit to review and assess tactics
- Graphic design audit and assessment
- Policy/procedure review – in context of communications
- Communication resource review

This research phase provides the foundation for recommendations on next steps, including the development of communication guidelines, and a strategy and plan for implementing communications more strategically for both internal and external audiences.

Mickelson Consulting Inc. will use the findings from the research to develop a Communications Strategy for the CVRD, including recommended updates to policies and procedures as they relate to corporate communications.

The Communications Strategy will address the range of proactive and reactive communications required by regional and local government, including marketing and promotion, Board relations, education and awareness, community engagement, and reactive communications such as issues management. As well, it will include recommendations for internal communications standards and tactics.

Key Themes - Highlights

During the research and consultation phase, there were a number of consistent ideas and concerns identified which are captured in this Research Summary Report as key themes. These themes are based on the input provided through the various research mechanisms; however, they are not verbatim comments. The key themes are bundled in categories to provide context.

Strengths

- Excellent front line staff who provide quick, informed service
- Some good communications e.g. Kinsol Trestle Rehabilitation Project, Regional Parkland Acquisition initiative and water/sewer project in partnership with Mill Bay Community League
- CVRD delivers a wide range of services well
- Boil water orders follow emergency checklist and are handled effectively and consistently
- Staff pride and commitment in terms of work standards, delivering excellent customer service and delivering high quality services
- GIS systems, information technology support and capacity for communications applications
- High quality maps for parks and trails
- Employees are generally satisfied with the level of information they receive and are confident in terms of the correct person to contact in other departments

Weaknesses

- Not reaching people in region with information – topics not tailored to area, tactics like newspapers limited, difficult to reach silent majority, and using a variety of tactics to get the word out but people still feel like they are not informed
- Lack of understanding of who the CVRD is, what they do in terms of their role/responsibilities in the region and who it affects
- No follow up with residents – may tell them about a problem and ask for input, but no closure on outcomes
- No procedures or CVRD communications person to take lead resulting in lack of cohesive messaging
- Lack of consistent standards for communications and consultation
- No proactive information going out consistently
- Need a better means to collect feedback from the public and report back
- Do not consistently challenge and/or address misinformation or bad news with accurate information
- No consistent mechanism to report out to the community regarding how tax dollars spent and why
- No consistent support for Board communications, including events and presentations
- Lack of marketing communications to promote assets and services offered through the CVRD, such as Cowichan Theatre, Kinsol Trestle, recreation facilities, parks, trails and economic development, with clear branding to connect these to the CVRD
- Despite having staff expressing high confidence in the correct person to contact for information in other departments, there are no consistent processes that provide for discussion and information sharing between departments

Opportunities

- Potential for rotating Board and Committee meetings throughout the Regional District
- Hold more Town Hall meetings to meet the Director and discuss concerns
- Website – good platform, just needs work on navigation and content updates
- Notify Me – good platform for subscriber email, just needs to be tailored to areas/audiences
- More use of radio – including local, volunteer stations
- Apply good governance practices (Board focus on policy and strategy direction, staff focus on administration/implementation) and together support clear, timely communication internally and externally
- Newsletters already in place: Directors, community organizations
- Social media to inform communities and engage new audiences, but with a more strategic approach
- Many local service clubs and stakeholder organizations throughout the region offer a means to connect with interest groups and leverage their communication networks through social marketing
- Corporate Strategic Plan and reorganization provide opportunity to break down silos between departments
- New technology modules that support community engagement and customer service being considered for this year: Community Voice and Citizen Request Tracker
- CVRD Matters is widely used when available and could be re-introduced with resource support

Threats

- No expertise within the CVRD to provide professional communications advice and assistance (structural gap in organization – not consistent with communications support in other regional and municipal governments in area)
- Lack of trust in the CVRD – reputation for arrogance and lack of interest in communities
- Lack of sense of community due to diversity of area and competing interests
- When Directors are negative or divisive in public or through media, it affects the reputation of the CVRD and can result in misinformation that also damages credibility of organization
- Mixed responses from Board in terms of need for communication – some list as a priority, others not indicating as much support or recognition of need
- No one currently committed to communication plans or policies, e.g. existing corporate logo guidelines not enforced, resulting in multiple brands and reduced recognition
- Positive services, such as recreation, not consistently branded as CVRD – only core services such as water and sewer, planning and other program and service areas that are not viewed in as positive light – which affects the reputation of CVRD as providing value for tax dollars
- Limited budget allocated to communications – in many cases, none in place
- Lack of time and resources to support consistent communications and stay informed as employees

Key Themes – Board Directors Interviews, Workshop and Feedback Forms

The following key themes are based on the comments shared by Board Directors through interviews, workshop discussions and feedback forms.

Opportunities to Improve Communications in Community

- Learn and apply new ways to reach public with information, speaking with one voice
- Better understand people's motivators – what they want to know, when they want to provide input/feedback
- Develop strategy, policies and protocols for consistency in messaging and quality of communications to help the CVRD communicate more effectively and get accurate information out to communities
- Create an office to deal with communications, have a Communications Officer/Liaison with expertise to provide support to staff, Board and for internal communications
- Increase understanding of who the CVRD is, what it does and how it serves communities
- Provide input for role of Communications Committee for ongoing communications
- Develop process and procedures to ensure all Board members are kept informed in consistent manner, and that staff share information between departments more effectively to improve overall communication in community
- Be more transparent and proactive as an open government
- Gain an understanding of residents needs and interests: where dissatisfied, how needs differ throughout region and best way to reach people
- Share more information, earlier to give residents advance notice using simple, clear communication
- Learn to focus on sharing good news proactively – not just react to issues
- Develop better processes for community consultation and mechanisms for feedback
- Improve reputation of CVRD – build trust and respect

Challenges for Communications

- No one committed to communication plans or policies, and no clear policies on how to implement communications
- No expertise within the organization to assist with communications at professional standards
- Diverse region and diverse audiences make it difficult to keep groups informed – need to understand differences between municipalities and electoral areas, as well as the differences between each electoral area
- Negative image and reputation as well as lack of understanding of what CVRD does, but no plan in place to address
- No consistency in communications, including logo use, branding/graphics, messaging and media relations
- Board meetings no longer broadcasted on Shaw and fewer reporters attending and reporting on meeting outcomes, resulting in less coverage

- Lack of training for spokespeople, including senior managers and Board members to respond to media, be more proactive with messages and address issues and concerns effectively
- Silos in the organization and in compartmentalized budgets
- No communication support to the Board
- Lack of tactics to reach audiences, particularly those in rural areas, and lack of online tactics to provide platform for Directors to communicate with area residents
- Need honest community engagement, not process that is viewed as manipulation or is after decision
- Lack of understanding about what the CVRD does, including misunderstandings about role in region, e.g. CVRD not involved in road infrastructure – including snow clearing, traffic lights and crosswalks and also not recognized for the good services provided, such as recreation facilities and parks
- Don't have a dedicated spokesperson to assist with media calls and support Board
- Mixed range of funding for Directors – some have budget for local communications but others don't, resulting in inconsistency
- Increasing demand on Board members – time commitment increasing and not able to keep represented areas informed

Communication Support – For Directors

- Need to do a better job of communicating on Board decisions and activities, as well as capital projects and public meetings
- Need staff to have better understanding of the types of information the Board requires, and the amount of detail in reports, more relevant information when needed and better coordination of concerns being raised in communities
- Need to be kept informed when news releases or other information being publicized so all Directors informed and aware
- All Board members need to have the same information at the same time

Top Communication Priorities in Communities:

- Early engagement, that is pertinent, precise information
- Explain role of CVRD, how taxes allocated and why (types of expenses)
- When an issue comes up – keep the public informed
- Provide Directors with support to keep their residents informed and to hear from them on issues/concerns as their advocate

Media Relations

- Need Directors to speak to media with the same voice – they can undermine key messages if not managed. Consistency in speaking – right now, they have their own agenda and are not necessarily thinking of CVRD
- In municipality - Mayor spokesperson, in Regional District, it's the Chair – but reality is once decision is made, Directors (EAs) need to respond
- Organization needs to build better relations with media
- Need a clear media policy including who speaks to an issue

- Board should be copied on all news releases and receive advance notice on proactive communication

Issues Management – Concerns in Communities

- Regional recreation and related two-tiered pricing in some facilities
- Transportation and transit
- Growth management – lack of Growth Management Plan for region
- Lack of communication and need for honest, open, transparent information sharing
- New fire halls and other infrastructure needs
- Waste management
- Urban regulations in rural areas
- Acquisition of park land
- Core city issues/homelessness
- Protection of rural agrarian and ecological values
- Explaining CVRD functions
- Municipal incorporation and boundary expansions into electoral areas

Key Themes - Staff Interviews, Workshop and Feedback Forms

The following key themes are based on the comments shared by CVRD staff through interviews, workshop discussions and feedback forms.

Opportunities to Improve Communications in Community

- Build brand and improve reputation of CVRD to be more positive and clarify use of the brand to be consistent, then have someone manage/enforce brand
- Proactive messaging – tell success stories, celebrate success
- Demonstrate what is being done well – not currently well branded to showcase these services
- Improve the way the CVRD consults with community and provides information on how input being used
- Improve media relations and media/social media monitoring to stay informed about misinformation being reported (often do not address issues in reporting)
- Corporate Strategic Plan and reorganization provide opportunity to break down silos between departments
- Multiple local organizations throughout the community provide good way to communicate
- Better communication in key areas like transit, recycling and solid waste management, legal notifications for meetings, and large development applications
- Standards and templates for communications
- Increased awareness about the value of communications, the benefits of this expertise, why branding consistency is important and when to communicate
- Create best practices for community engagement

Challenges for Communications

- Large area with many diverse/different external audiences – hard to reach them all on projects
- Difficult to reach youth audiences
- Complexity of some topics difficult to communicate, such as climate change information – action/adaptation, why environmental protection is best and private property rights
- Not a lot of communication on policy – sometimes forgotten or not enforced
- Technology and trying to stay current
- Lack of resources to stay current or add new tasks – e.g. have some social media but no one to support regular updates, website out of date, communications that should go out are missed and no proactive information
- Lack of time to pay attention to all communication needs
- Lack of trust in community hard to overcome
- Public Hearings – only hear from people with concerns (usually residents in immediate area of change), not hearing from silent majority who may support the project
- People don't care until something affects them – hard to get general information out there
- No dedicated communications person – no expertise or tactical support available
- 42,000 people in municipalities who don't consider themselves part of the CVRD
- Diversity and split between municipalities and electoral areas means doing one thing for electoral areas may result in push back from municipalities and vice versa – makes it hard to balance
- Different understanding on communication -- for some, it's inform and educate, for others it's "listen to us" and expectations about how their opinion will be reflected – need to do a better job of receiving feedback and disseminating information back to community
- No Regional Growth Strategy so not integrated
- Lack of personnel and skill sets to support communications -- it's all off the side of desks and organization needs professional graphics, writing and strategy
- Communications not top of mind for staff – focus is on doing own work and they don't think of related communication needs associated with these daily tasks or projects
- Lack of budget for communications and community engagement in departments
- Limited CVRD communication support for Cowichan Theatre, so unable to address concerns such as building or street signage, and no marketing communications plan or sponsorship guidelines to assist with Cowichan Theatre operations

Internal Communication Needs Areas

- Hotlinks to documents that explain information for easy filter of what is going on in other departments – currently no department page on Staffnet
- News feed on what projects/initiatives underway as dynamic content on Staffnet – perhaps to open on login
- Not clear how communicating and at what level – e.g. Intranet – high level across board, but not consistent, also front line and between divisions
- New employee orientation needed to support learning curve
- Need training in how to communicate – with customers and media
- Corporate Leadership Team has regular meetings but limited information going out to the rest of organization
- Staff meetings are ad hoc – not regular or consistent
- More inter-division meetings to support communications between departments – not taking place regularly and need to involve other departments in initiatives that connect to them and provide opportunity for input/suggestions
- More information on Board decisions, ideas and direction
- Frontline staff need to be kept informed about issues and other news

Tactics to Keep Internal Audiences Informed

- Email used by majority of staff as primary tactic
- Second most frequent tactic is department and/or division meetings
- Moderate use of Staffnet
- Some memos and phone/verbal updates

Top Challenges for Staying Informed

- Too much email to review
- Not enough time
- Not enough resources

Top Communications Needs Areas

- Financial/budget information – context, what it is, impact on homeowner – get the facts out about what it means
- Keeping information current on website and in other tactics – lack of resources
- Raise awareness about flooding prevention – information, increase understanding
- Gain insight into interest in additional recreation facilities and whether prepared to pay
- Research to determine best/most popular recreation programs to deliver programs that match interests and reduce need to cancel programs
- Community awareness of strategic plan – the big picture/vision for the CVRD

Media Relations

- No proactive information sharing, no message assistance and completely reactive
- No policies on media relations
- Need to do a better job of getting news out there

- Need media training – none done
- No review process for development and distribution of news releases – not centralized, resulting in errors/typos, lack of knowledge on frontlines when information going to media/public, incorrect media being contacted, some media being missed in distribution and not consistently posted on website
- Subject matter experts and Board members caught by surprise when media follow up on news release

Issues Management – Process

- Bylaw enforcement – needs systematic process
- Dealing with complaints – no formal process and not clear when to advise other departments
- Utility issues – have a good boil water process, which follows a successful, systematic approach

Issues Management – Concerns in Communities

- Eco Depot / recycling
- Aging infrastructure
- Regional vision in planning/regional approach to growth management
- Poor reputation
- Environment – especially water
- Communications and consultation
- Coordinating land use
- Regional recreation and maintaining recreational facilities
- Lack of understanding about the CVRD and its functions/responsibilities
- Transit – region-wide and inter-regional
- Food security and sustainability

Key Themes – Community Workshop/Feedback Forms & Online Survey

The following key themes are based on the comments shared by CVRD residents and business owners through workshop discussions, feedback forms and online surveys.

Communication Challenges and Priorities

- Receive nothing from the CVRD
- Would like more information on taxes and how spent
- Don't understand who is responsible for which trails, facilities, roads, etc.
- Come to residents with decisions already made – they don't ask for input early
- Need more information on Board and Committee meetings and would like rotation of meetings around region to be more accessible
- CVRD promotion and tourism materials are not delivered to Visitor Centre (have to pick them up) yet most other agencies deliver them
- Don't know what Economic Development is doing
- Not clear what issues are being dealt with by Board versus Commissions or Committees and information not flowing back to community
- Want to know when something is changing that affects residents, such as new bylaws, capital projects, planning or service changes, particularly if additional costs involved
- Need better information on recycling and solid waste management services and schedules
- Information needs to be more targeted to residents in various areas
- Need earlier notification of events and projects and the opportunity to provide input
- Need more information on grants available and how to apply – process details and deadlines
- Need ability to comment on minutes and agendas
- Would like updates on initiatives taken forward to other levels of government or organizations such as UBCM – told proposal going forward but no information on what happened
- Need better information on transit system – schedule stops, transportation planning
- Information on how youth/children can be more involved in CVRD e.g. through school programs
- Director communications inconsistent – some very available (open door policy, regularly in communities to host informal meetings, have newsletter) and others not at all accessible
- Not enough information on subdivision development, capital projects and other initiatives that affect region/community, or told a little bit and then no updates

Issues / Community Concerns

- Air quality and water concerns (drinking water quality, water supply and drainage) as well as other environmental sustainability concerns
- Rule changes in recreation facilities, parks and fields are imposing city policies on small communities and soon won't be able to use facilities for small town events
- Lack of representation on Board equals no control over community

- Don't know what the CVRD does or how it relates to community -- only know its name -- so no relationship with citizens
- Bylaw enforcement -- not enough response, no consistency in enforcement e.g. illegal dumping
- Parks and trails signage inadequate and don't make it clear who operates them (maps are very good though)
- CVRD not sharing information readily -- keeping reports from residents, forcing Freedom of Information process to get information e.g. Parks Rodent Study
- Not providing opportunity for input and then trying to force decision e.g. "Vote Yes -- Eco Depot"
- Managing growth, development and sustainability in region, including environmental protection, and not communicating properly
- Regional recreation: need for facilities, better recycling at facilities and funding
- Sewer and water improvements
- Maintaining rural integrity of area
- Better transit services
- Garbage and recycling costs and management
- Lack of communication and consultation
- Lack of trust in CVRD and its Directors
- Road conditions and ferry service (mentioned frequently even though not CVRD services)
- Economic development needs to be improved to support jobs/business/industry

Ways to Improve Communications

- Need an electronic newsletter or bulletin that includes ability to provide feedback or comments
- Follow up on feedback -- show how it's being used and acknowledge it's been received
- Information separated by areas would help
- More meetings with Directors for face-to-face, informal discussions
- Electoral Area Directors need a resource person to help with communication
- CVRD should send more content to print and radio media
- Provide a televised broadcast of Board meeting
- Website -- navigation is not easy, can't find information
- Notice of meeting by agenda area
- Use more plebiscites during election -- more transparency
- Town Halls -- make them more round table discussions rather than up at a microphone/podium
- Better connections and communication with other regional districts and neighbouring government organizations/agencies -- including Diamond Improvement District
- Directors need platform to communicate to citizens in their areas and provide more regular updates and opportunities for input
- Calendar of events based on monthly activity in each area

- Communicate whenever there is change occurring – if not change, people don't care, but if there is change, need to understand why needed, and if reasonable, more accepting
- Need management to pass information down the line to all staff

Consultation – Topics

- Projects in community e.g. Utility Plan to use cleaned up sewage effluent to irrigate golf course – no consultation or community discussion
- Transportation planning
- Community planning
- Economic development
- Transit
- Recreational facilities
- Changes to arts funding and cuts
- Input into Corporate Strategic Plan
- Changes that affect residents – taxes, properties, services

Consultation – Best ways to connect

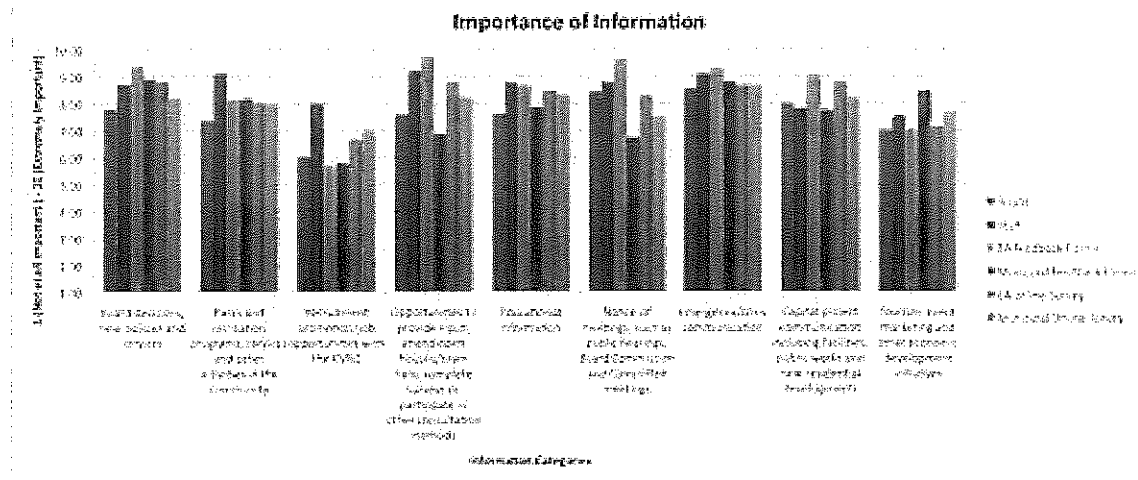
- Connect to everybody in the community
- Minor issue – email input
- Major issue like fire hall – public meeting plus other methods
- Door-to-door tactics
- Community newspapers – limited but read
- Newsletters
- Direct mail – occasionally – and just one sheet free standing insert, not too much detail
- Serve on Commissions and Advisory Committees
- Presentations at meetings hosted by local organizations
- Have staff or Board members as representatives on local organizations

Highlights from Statistical Findings

Information Priorities

The following graph notes the importance ratings for different categories of information shared by the CVRD, where 1 is not at all important and 10 is very important. The responses are generally consistent for Directors, staff, workshop participants and online survey participants in the sense that most information categories are rated as significantly important (8 – 10). The Directors most consistently rated information importance as lower than the average and Staff rated information as higher than the average. The most notable disparity is in the area of information related to recruitment, where staff respondents have given this a significantly higher rating than the other respondents. This is not surprising given internal awareness of the demographic shift and increasingly competitive recruitment market.

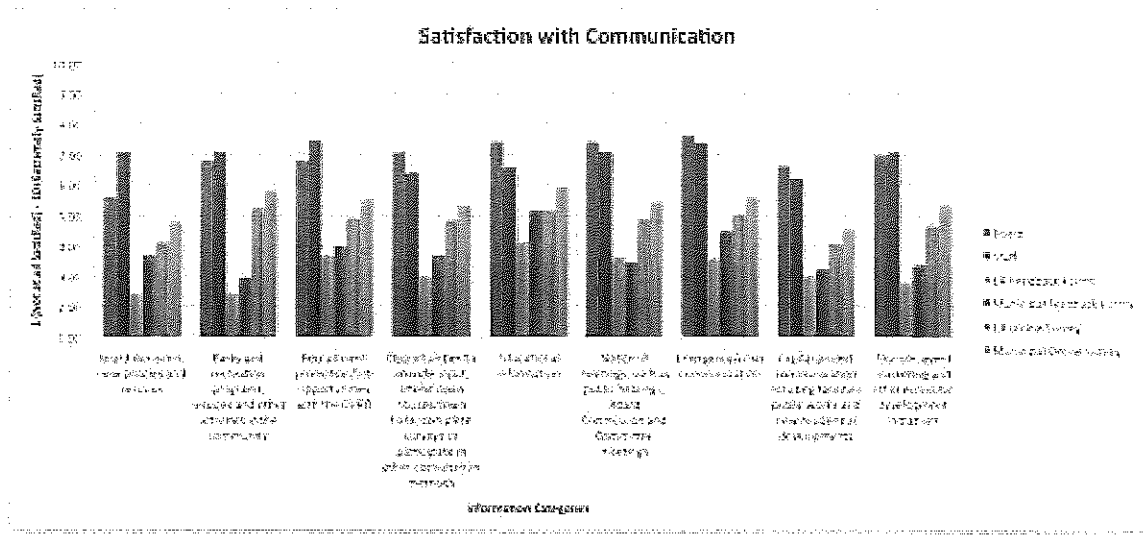
Overall, these results indicate a strong interest in increased information sharing on core topics related to CVRD activities.



Satisfaction Rating

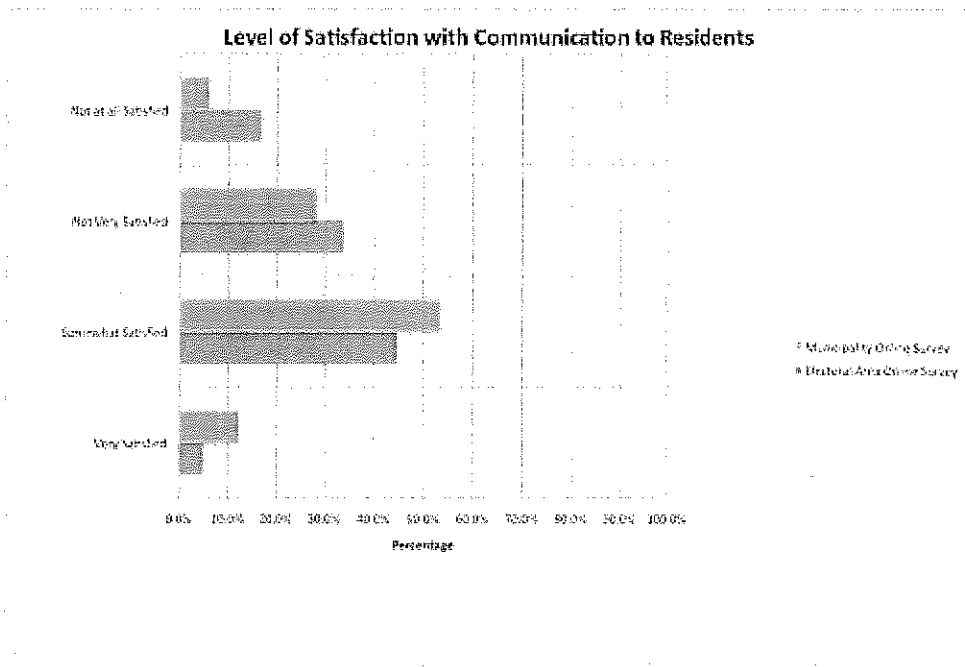
The following graph notes the satisfaction ratings for different types of information shared by the CVRD, where 1 is not at all satisfied with the information provided and 10 is very satisfied. There is a notable disparity between internal audiences (CVRD Directors and Staff) who indicated fairly high satisfaction levels with communication on each of the core topic categories; whereas, the public respondents rated their satisfaction levels as significantly lower. This disparity is particularly notable from participants in workshops who largely represented local organizations and stakeholder groups.

This disparity is of some concern as it demonstrates a disconnect between the CVRD and its citizens in terms of expectations for communications. As well, given that local organizations and stakeholder groups are a key asset to help the CVRD share information with their members and in their communities and to provide input on their specialty areas, it suggests these groups are being underutilized and are not being reached effectively by the CVRD.



Satisfaction Ratings Overall

The majority of respondents in the online survey indicated they were “Somewhat Satisfied” or “Not Very Satisfied” with communications to residents. It was noted that in the 2011 Ipsos Reid survey of residents, the question focused more on opportunities to provide input, and 65% of residents surveyed indicated they were satisfied.



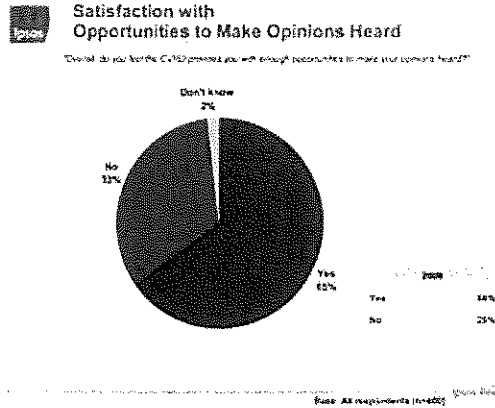


Communications

Satisfaction with Opportunities to Make Opinions Heard

Two-thirds of Cowichan Valley residents feel they have been provided with a sufficient amount of opportunities to make their opinions heard.

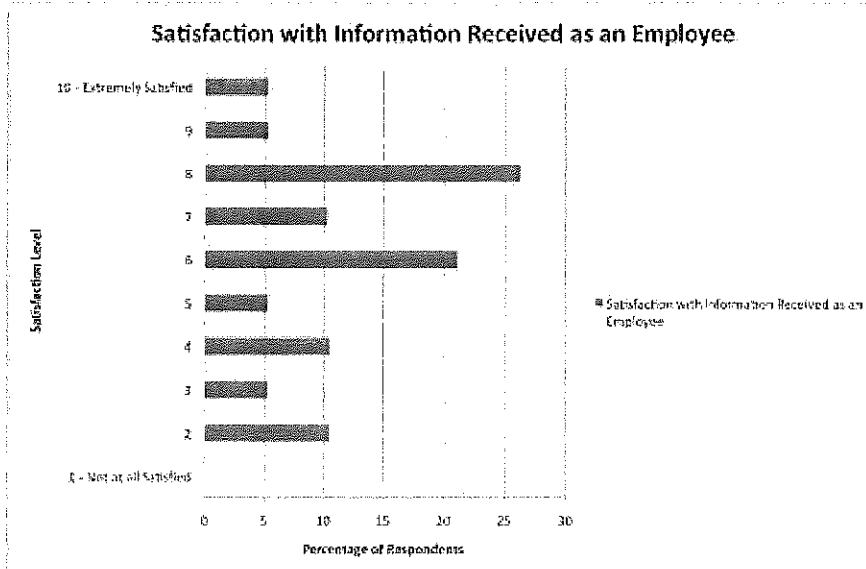
Consistent with findings from 2009, two-thirds (65%) of residents feel that they are provided with sufficient opportunity to make their opinions heard. On the other hand, 33% feel they have not had sufficient opportunity to make their opinions heard.



These findings are consistent across all sub-groups.

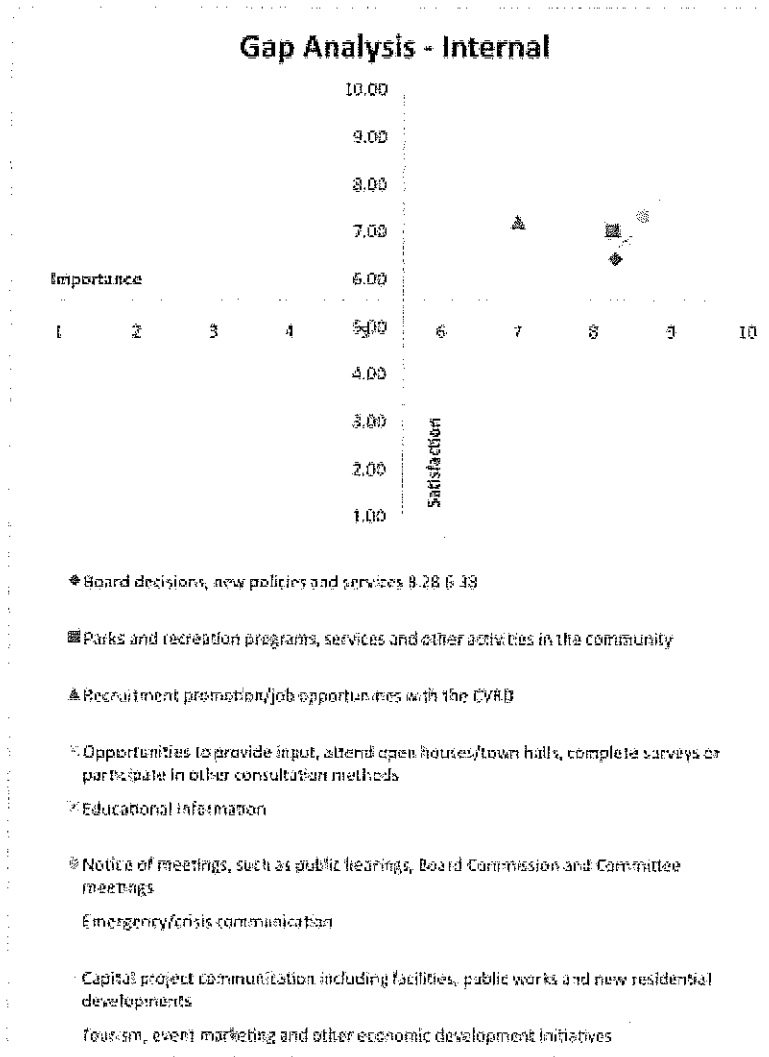
Information Provided to Employees: Staff

In general, staff members who participated in the workshops are satisfied with the amount of information they receive as employees.

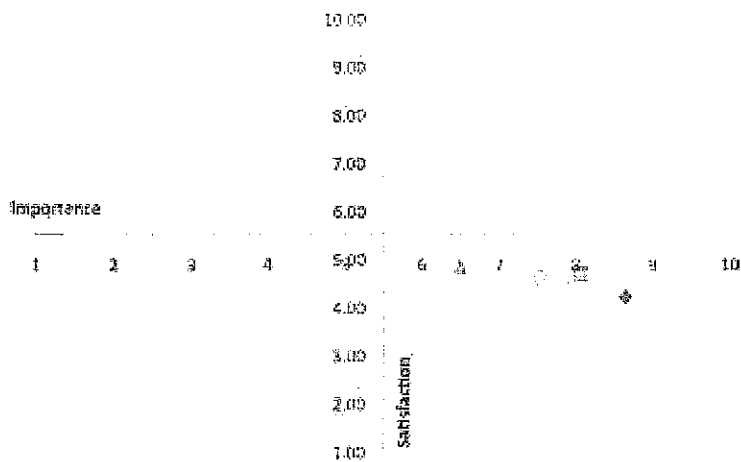


Gap Analysis

The following charts show a gap analysis that compares how important information is rated to how satisfied respondents are with the amount of information being communicated. The two charts below represent the combined average input from internal groups (CVRD Staff and Board Directors) and external groups (Workshop Participants and Online Survey Respondents). The scale is from 1 to 10, so a general standard for delivering “good” to “very good” communication would be in the range of 7 to 10, and a low satisfaction level would generally be from 1 to 4. It is noted that almost all information was rated as important (8 to 10), which can make it difficult to prioritize communication resources. To help address this, the gap analysis shows the lowest satisfaction areas, which means that situations where importance is high and satisfaction is low are priority areas for initial communication support.



Gap Analysis - External



- ◆ Board decisions, new policies and services
- Parks and recreation programs, services and other activities in the community
- ▲ Recruitment promotion/job opportunities with the CVRD
- Opportunities to provide input, attend open houses/town halls, complete surveys or participate in other consultation methods
- Educational information
- ◇ Notice of meetings, such as public hearings, Board Commission and Committee meetings
- ▽ Emergency/crisis communication
- ▽ Capital project communication including facilities, public works and new residential developments
- ▽ Tourism, event marketing and other economic development initiatives

The comparison of the two groups shows a fairly consistent response in terms of measurement of the importance of each topic area; however, there is a significant difference in responses related to satisfaction with the communication related to each topic area. For internal audiences, the satisfaction levels are still lower than ideal (less than 8 for all topic categories), but still within the “somewhat” to “satisfied” range. For external audiences, satisfaction ratings are primarily scored at 5 or less, indicating low levels of satisfaction overall.

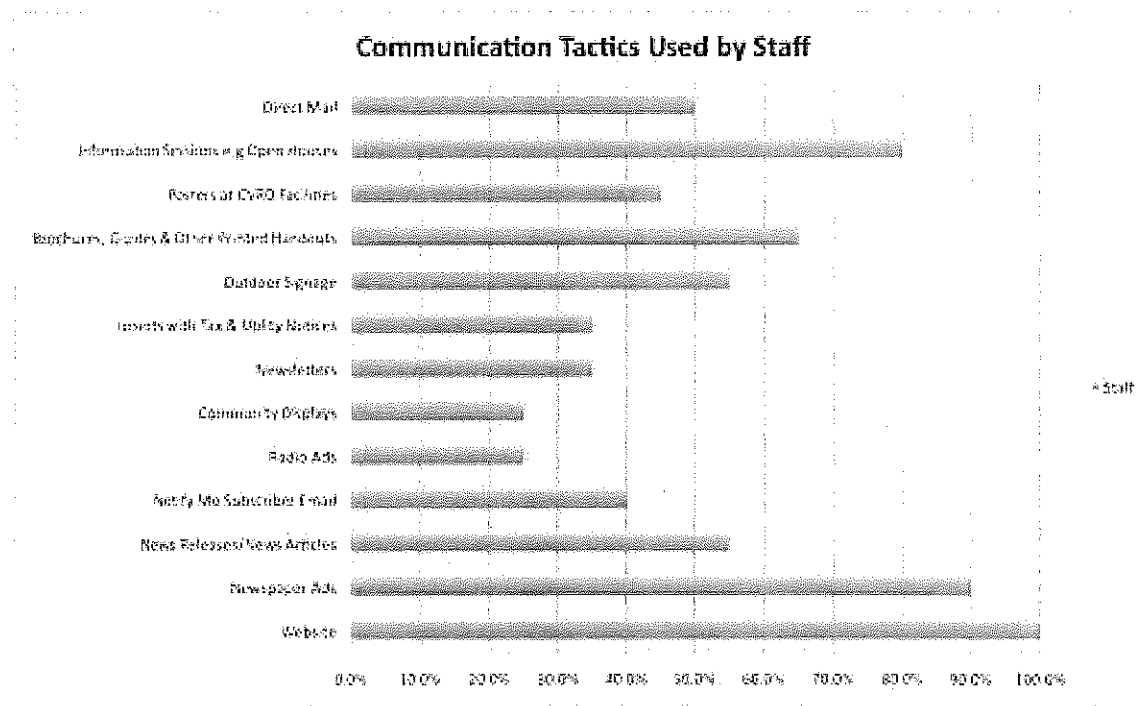
This significant gap, both between importance and satisfaction, as well as between levels reported internally versus externally, indicates that there are extensive opportunities to improve communications within the region.

Preferred Tactics

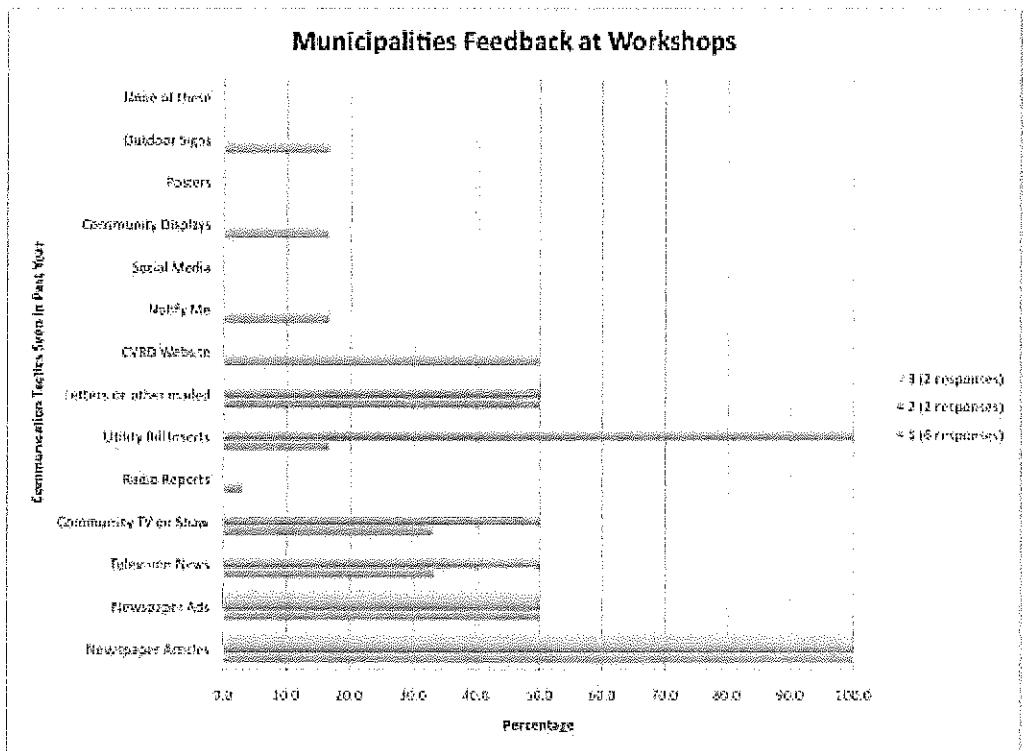
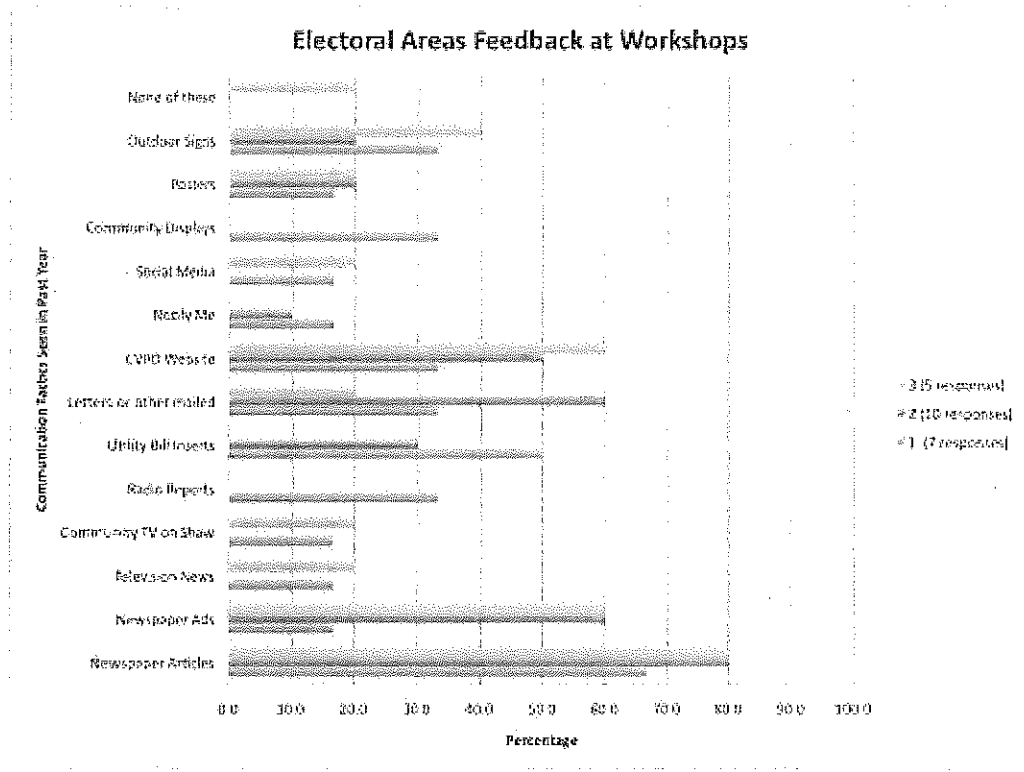
The website, local newspaper articles and advertisements, and direct mail were the tactics most used by the CVRD and most often listed by the community. It is noted, however, that newspaper articles are the source of information for the majority of respondents and these articles do not necessarily reflect CVRD messages or accurate information. As well, while the website is listed as a primary tactic for both groups, it has also been consistently noted in the research that the website navigation is challenging and content is not up to date. As a result, two of the primary information sources for the community do not necessarily convey reliable, timely information. It is also noted that some tactics used by staff are underutilized by the community, such as open houses (which are not well attended), Notify Me and utility inserts.

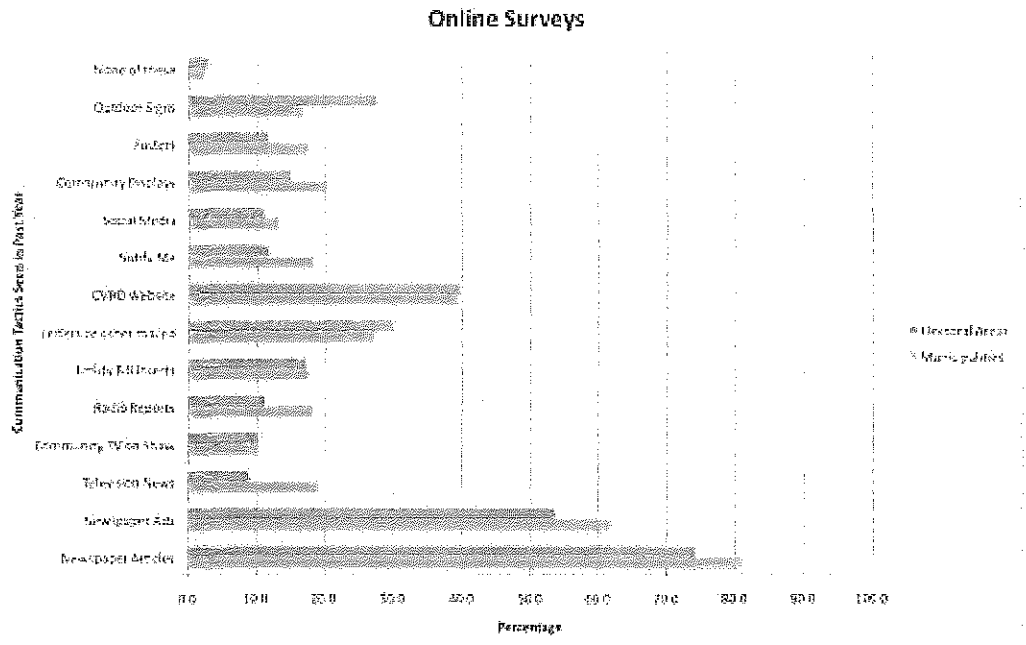
In the workshop research, it was noted that there is generally a lack of communication overall and participants found it challenging to think of when they last received information from the CVRD other than tax notices or media coverage. This is consistent with staff's concerns that there is a lack of consistent communication and proactive messaging.

Tactics Used by Staff



Tactics Mentioned by Community as Seen/Used in Past Year





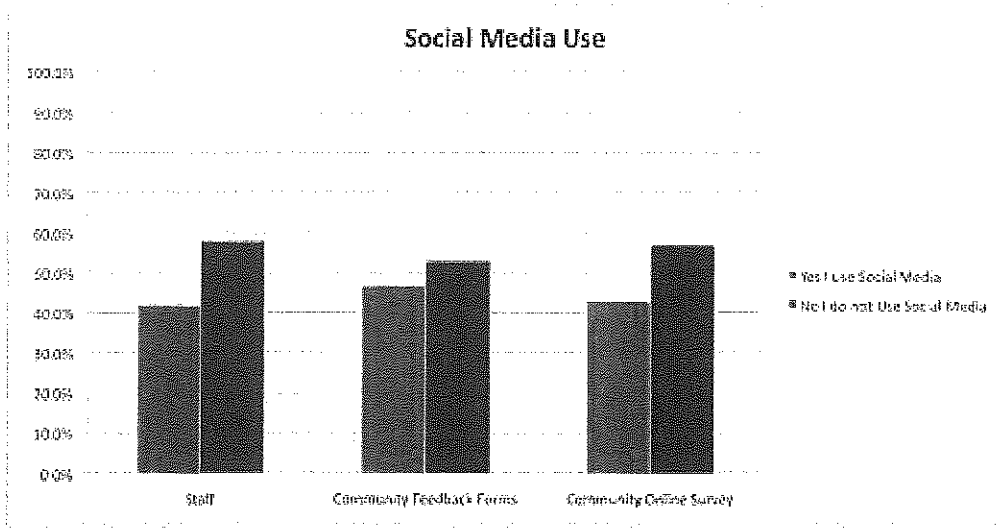
In addition to the statistical data, the most frequent response to the “other” category in the survey noted “word of mouth” and “personal emails” to gain information on CVRD activities. This again involves messaging that may or may not be accurate or based on consistent messages from the CVRD.

In response to the question about preferred methods based on best practices/methods in other areas, the most consistent preferred tactics were the use of email and the local newspaper. Newsletters, direct mail and town halls were also popular.

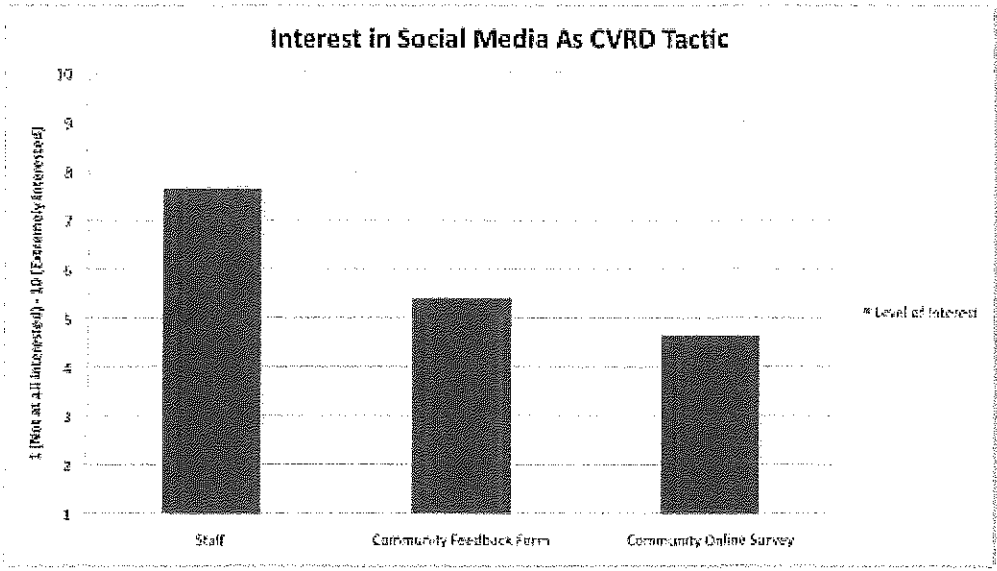
Social Media Use and Interest

A small majority of the respondents in the feedback forms and survey indicated that they do not use social media for personal use; however, it is noted that there is significant interest at a Staff level in seeing social media tactics used by the CVRD. It was also noted that social media was listed as a source for information from community respondents even though there is very limited used of social media within the CVRD at this time.

Social media interest is influenced by demographics, particularly age. While there is a growing percentage of adults and older adults using social media tools (Mashable Social Media site cites that “More than 66% of adults are connected to one or more social media platforms.”), the dominant user groups are still in the 14 – 35 years demographic. The number of respondents who indicated they are not currently using social media would also likely influence interest levels in seeing these tools used by the CVRD.



There is moderate interest in the CVRD using social media, with staff showing significantly more support. These results are fairly consistent with the percentage of respondents who are not currently using social media.



Communication Audit

Overview

Multiple samples of CVRD materials were reviewed as part of the communications audit, including the website, brochures, newsletters and flyers. The materials regularly contained comprehensive information; however, the content was not consistently written for the audience in terms of the need and benefit information. Most included extensive operational information, with minimal context for why the project or service is in place, the value it brings to the community and other benefits. There is a mix of styles in the materials, and in general, the tone is fairly formal. The tone and audience focus is better in the marketing and promotional materials, many of which also seem to have been developed by professional graphic designers. There is minimal use of summary information or abstracts, headlines and subheads and other tactics to allow readers to scan information. By adjusting writing style, adding creativity and more dynamic sentence structures, the content in the materials can be adapted to be more audience focused and engaging. As well, applying consistent, professional graphic standards would significantly improve the quality and readability of materials.

In the graphic design audit of the materials provided by the CVRD, it is evident that there are two distinct logos being used: that of the CVRD and the logo that has been named the Economic Development (Cowichan) identity. Neither logo is being applied consistently, and in some cases, the corporate logo has been changed so significantly it no longer connects clearly to the CVRD. The other critical issue is that there is not a clear distinction as to how and when each should be used and, in the case of the Cowichan identity, whom it actually belongs to and/or represents. This creates confusion and perhaps even frustration for CVRD residents and communities. It is not that two logos cannot be used, but that their purpose is not understood. It may be valuable to revisit both — at least internally — to ensure that the purpose and message behind each one is well understood and supported by management. If they are not, some realignment should be undertaken to make sure that both logos are serving their communication purposes well.

There are many other issues around branding elements: colour, typography, grid and layout, and imagery that need better management, but the key issue is the confusion related to logo use. The result is no clear identity for the organization.

Guidelines should be established professionally and enforced with the support of senior management and the Board. In discussions with staff, it became evident that there was initially more structure and clear requirements for logo usage and applications, but that these requirements were not recorded in writing and that when the primary “enforcer” of these requirements left the organization, so did the consistency in logo use for the corporate identity. It soon devolved into multiple designs with no consistency in how and when applied. The Cowichan brand has more guidelines and approval processes in place, but it is used very broadly outside of the CVRD by businesses and organizations in the region. There are no guidelines in place that link the two logos and appropriate usage for each, and there are no policies in place preventing the many varieties of the corporate logo or the use of alternate logos found in recreation materials.

These guidelines should be given to and managed by as few people as possible so that communications can be run through one office in order to ensure that they are consistent and professional.

CVRD Communication Audit - Details

A selection of publications and other printed materials were reviewed as part of the Communication Audit. The following chart is a summary of the audit findings:

Tactic	Content/Purpose	Messages/Tone/Style	Design	Comments/Recommendations
Brochures: Development Services, such as Development Variance Permit, Agricultural Land Reserve, Building Permits, Zoning Bylaws, OCP	Provide detailed information on bylaws and process requirements related to development Frequency: long-term, last update June 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tone is formal and directive. Some use of second person “You” but not for engagement – more for notification Content is descriptive and detailed, but does not convey the “what’s in it for me” or “why should I care about this” message effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too much copy – lots of information but intimidating to read Insufficient white space Lack of visual hierarchy for content scanning and readability Some consistency in the template layout, but not effective use of space/design CVRD logo prominent Consistent use of contact information in template Good that it has last revised date and reference to other land use materials/references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edit copy to add audience interest messaging Change tone to less formal, more engaging Enhance the “why” and “needs/benefit messaging” Redesign materials to provide for improved readability Apply new design to all related materials Use photos/other graphics to add visual interest
Brochures: Tax notice inserts for Electoral Areas and Municipalities	Provide residents with information on how CVRD tax dollars allocated towards programs and services in their community Frequency: annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful, accurate information for taxpayers but formal tone, report style so not engaging Messages are dry in terms of data, not representing “what’s in it for me” message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too much copy for allocated space Lacks white space and visual hierarchy of text for scanning and readability A couple of graphs, to help with illustrating spending Could use photos or other design to draw in audience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edit copy to include more benefit/outcome messages Adjust tone to more conversational and use rhythm/pacing of sentence structures for flow Speak to “why” and “what’s in it to me” Tell story rather than report Use headlines and subheads that are punchier – more engaging Update design template to improve readability and visual interest – still black & white

Tactic	Content/Purpose	Messages/Tone/Style	Design	Comments/Recommendations
Brochure: Efficient outdoor water use	<p>Reducing water waste outdoors and promoting water conservation</p> <p>Frequency: primarily seasonal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tone is friendly and fairly engaging except that it speaks to “Canadians” in general rather than more specific to local audience • Has “why” messages and clear steps. • Use of ambiguous subhead “Xeriscaping” adds confusion rather than interest/clarity • Has contact info and uses CVRD logo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some use of colour and better use of white space and subheads for readability • Clip art not ideal for professional design • Logo use inconsistent but good that it’s applied • Poor quality graphics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edit copy to reflect local audiences • Update design to professional standards • Emphasize “need/benefit” and other “why” messaging throughout • Celebrate success if relevant • Continue to speak to audience in conversational tone
Brochures: Resident responsibilities for green / sustainability related programs, Woodstove Change Out and Toilet Replacement	<p>Replacement programs to exchange old for new, safer, more efficient options</p> <p>Frequency: one expired, one ongoing (or appears so)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilet brochure friendly, engaging tone with some “why” messaging • Woodstove content not as directed to audience interest or “why” message - more directive • Both have application forms, but neither seem to offer email option • Expiry info not easy to find • Contact info on both 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some attempt to make more engaging with clip art images but not professional • No consistency in design • Use of CVRD logo but not consistent or clear • Also multiple logos including “Green Cowichan” on back • Too much copy – not enough white space or visual hierarchy • Unclear who “owns” programs • No clear branding through font or colour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to purpose of materials and emphasize the “why” and “need/benefit” messaging that’s relevant to audience • Apply new, professional design standards • Consistent use of logo • Clarify ownership of program through content and design • Use photos rather than clip art • Reduce visual clutter through design improvements • Design improvements will also address problems with printing/folds not being properly aligned with content

Tactic	Content/Purpose	Messages/Tone/Style	Design	Comments/Recommendations
Brochure: Clearing the Air – alternatives to burning	<p>Not clear – looks like intent is to stop burning of green waste from land clearing</p> <p>Frequency: unclear</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear cover for content or ownership • Tone is dictatorial and formal • Writing is at fairly high reading level for a safety-related message with specific restrictions and/or requirements • Difficult to determine key messages • Some attempt at positive benefit message but mixed in with instructional and other information. • Difficult to read or understand intent • Has contact information split in two places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cover! • Some use of subheads but not effective • Too much copy, difficult font for readability • Photo use but photos are not clear – can't figure out what they are showing • Not using CVRD logo – just has Green Cowichan • Intimidating to read, and message/design is threatening • No white space or visual hierarchy for readability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review to determine purpose of brochure then update content to write to audience interest • Include a cover with clear headline, ownership (CVRD) and then subheads for readability/scanning • Update design and use photos that support message • Adjust tone to be more engaging/less threatening • Use logos appropriately
Newsletter: Zero Waste	<p>Recycling services overview – not sure how distributed</p> <p>Frequency: unclear, nothing to show timing of release, edition #, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the “what” message but not the “why” • Friendly, engaging tone • Speaks to audience in terms of services and opportunities • Lots of good content – but also content overload – not sure where to read or what's most important • Second side copy doesn't fit with masthead – 60% of copy is more about parks than recycling • Has contact information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a recommended use of CVRD logo - embedded in words “Zero Waste” • Difficult to determine who ‘owns’ material • Lots of content but no visual hierarchy and limited white space • Mix of photos and clip art • Too busy – eye doesn't know where to look • Use of “Green Cowichan” logo as a design feature rather than a brand mark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on information priorities • Don't mix messages/content • Update to professional design for readability and to be more engaging • Determine audience motivators and speak to these in content • Apply consistent graphic standards

Tactic	Content/Purpose	Messages/Tone/Style	Design	Comments/Recommendations
Newsletter: Public Safety Newsletter	<p>Purpose appears to be to provide an overview of all public safety services but not clear who audience is or what key messages are intended</p> <p>Frequency: not clear – no publishing date and no edition #</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive information but no clear priorities or purpose – why are you sharing information, what is intent of publication, who needs the information and why • Appears to be more of a report than a news piece • Content is fairly informal for most part, but then has report style in ESS pages • Very little audience focus to the materials – “what’s in it for me” “why should I care or read this?” • Some volunteer drive information – but in different spots of the newsletter • No clear contact information for source of newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No consistent design and doesn’t adhere to standard layout practices such as line length for readability • Mixed use of fonts, photos, styles • Not clear if this is CVRD from front cover – just says “Cowichan Valley” • Difficult to follow due to lack of continuity in design • CVRD logo on the back page • Some use of clip art – not consistent or iconic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs strategy / editorial plan for purpose and audience clarity • Consistent writing style throughout speaking to audience and their interests – answer why they should care / be interested • Apply professional design standards for readability and branding consistency • Use photos rather than clip art (other than icons or pictograms) • Group information for audience relevance rather than organizational structure
Information Flyers	<p>Primarily service information such as recycling, or program bulletins, also Cowichan OCP</p> <p>Frequency: not clear</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largely factual and report-style tone • Some writing to audience e.g. “if you receive...” but primarily formal tone, third person and directive • OCP materials more informative and provide good summary information as well as friendly tone with simple language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate logo used • Some consistent design for Information Bulletin and OCP materials • Insufficient white space for readability on most of the flyers • Better design on the OCP materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editing of content to explain “why” message up front in meaningful way • Less formal tone • Apply professional design standards for readability and branding consistency • Consider story-telling and use of call to action

Factic	Content/Purpose	Messages/Tone/Style	Design	Comments/Recommendations
Newsletter: Discover Cowichan News	<p>Purpose: information on economic development but not sure of audience or distribution</p> <p>Frequency: Not sure; however edition # and date is clear (September 2011)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy writing is informal and speaks to general audience interests • Headlines/subheads could be used better to tell story – be more engaging rather than reporting • Not clear that this is a CVRD program/service • Contact information and Facebook icon but no Facebook page info and not clear what to search for • Some interesting stats but relevance depends on audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses EDC Cowichan logo but not CVRD logo • Masthead incorporates branding • Amount of content is okay but could be better designed for readability • No photos • One small banner ad – not sure if CVRD or paid ad space but odd on such a small publication. Promoting an event - so may be its purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review design layout to incorporate tactics for improved readability • Update headlines/subheads with more engaging “why” or “benefit” messaging • Use more story-telling rather than reporting for content • Consider featuring people more than programs – outcomes rather than services • Clarify and target audiences where possible to help with the “why should I care” factor • Follow graphic standards including using CVRD logo and providing clarity of ownership
Booklet: Visit Cowichan Travel Planner	<p>Purpose: tourism promotion</p> <p>Frequency: annual</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very professional • Marketing writing • Lots of information • Relevant to audience • Good calendar of events • No CVRD logo –just Visit Cowichan logo • No clear indication that this is supported through CVRD • No CVRD contact information – says Tourism Cowichan with an @shaw email address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very professional design • Good use of photos and colour • Consistent design features for navigating content • Not sure what the graphic standards are for the Cowichan logo and colours/fonts as varied use in other materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good publication • Add in connection to CVRD – take credit for the work being done in tourism and emphasize CVRD’s role • Look at branding links

Tactic	Content/Purpose	Messages/Tone/Style	Design	Comments/Recommendations
Tourism Marketing cardstock handout	Purpose: At a glance reference for visitor services Frequency: not sure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing writing • Clear information • No link to CVRD – has two provincial logos and main Visit Cowichan marketing logo • No contact information linking to CVRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional • Good photos • Good map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to CVRD with branding and contact information
Sustainable Economy handout – mini brochure	Purpose: use at trade shows/booths as quick overview in fun design Frequency: long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active, engaging messages • Action-oriented copy • Lots of content for small handout – neat idea • May be more ideas than people can handle – eight action items • No link to CVRD • EDC Cowichan logo only • No contact info beyond sustainablecowichan.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional • Clean • Colourful • Good photos • Clever design idea • Fits business card holder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to CVRD with branding and contact information
Islands Agricultural Show Bookmark	Purpose: event marketing Frequency: likely one-time use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple information but misses need/benefit message (why attend?) • Would include something more specific than “promote, educate, communicate” to capture interest • Contact info makes it look like an event being supported by CVRD Economic Development – but no logos, not even marketing, other than funding partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional and simple design but not particularly engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea of a simple handout is good but not particularly well executed • Needs link to CVRD • Needs call to action and benefit • Photos of people / animals may have helped

Tactic	Content/Purpose	Messages/Tone/Style	Design	Comments/Recommendations
Brochure: Taste Cowichan Wine Festival	Promote wine festival Frequency: annual?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Cowichan, Taste Cowichan and EDC Cowichan logo all used – not sure that this many logo options is helpful • No CVRD logo or contact information • A couple of provincial and “Vancouver Island Region” word marks – ownership and sponsorship unclear • Copy writing has a lot of good information but not well presented – can’t see the call to action or benefit statements clearly • The balance of the brochure is good information – just map and promo copy for each winery or tour location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional design but not particularly effective • Not a lot of white space and no clear visual hierarchy • Logos are all over the place – not clear on priority or ownership/sponsorship • Ads all blend in together – not effective • No connection to CVRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update copy to highlight call to action and benefits to key audience • Review design for more effective presentation of key messages • Redesign to allow for better, more effective ad placement • Link to CVRD through branding and contact information
Booklet: Cowichan Theatre Performance Season	Highlight performances scheduled for the season Frequency: two times per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly standard theatre program information • Performance promos provided by theatre groups • No CVRD links or content • Even CVRD logo has been changed – not consistent with standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional • Content is busy – but likely due to nature of information and multiple contributors • May be options to adapt design to make easier to read/follow • Good use of colour links between schedule and seasonal performances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review logo standards and align with CVRD requirements • Add links to CVRD • Review design for opportunities to make easier to read/follow

Tactic	Content/Purpose	Messages/Tone/Style	Design	Comments/Recommendations
Poster & Ad: Cowichan Theatre Presents	Promotional tools for specific performances Frequency: as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content driven by individual performance promotions • Addition of Cowichan Theatre logo + Presents in to masthead/banner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional and likely based on artwork provided by theatre groups • Good to have consistent use of the banner/masthead • No link to CVRD • Same problems with adapted logo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review logo standards and align with CVRD requirements • Add links to CVRD
Booklet: Parks & Trails Guide	Information and promotion for parks and trails Frequency: long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good information about the various parks and trails • Promotion copy is weak – missing the audience interest/engagement emphasis • Subheads not engaging • Lots of contact information • CVRD and Parks Cowichan logos used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens oddly – first fold has information upside down • Some folds cut off titles • Good use of icons/pictograms • Good use of photos • Odd size • Good map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update copy to tell stories or add context/info that is more engaging • Continue use of pictograms/icons and photos • Good to see CVRD logo and contact information • Address layout problems for readability and navigation • Perhaps use a different stock – this one is durable but also quite heavy
Recreation Program Guides: Playbook for Cowichan Lake Recreation and Fall Activity Guide for South Cowichan Recreation	Recreation program information Frequency: seasonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly standard program information provided • Copywriting is engaging – conversational and talks about benefits of programs • CVRD logo used but no clear contact information to link to CVRD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cowichan marketing logo used but not consistent with standards – upside-down “I” image? Other clip art and words incorporated into logo • South Cowichan use of colour helps with navigating content and visual hierarchy • Nice to see photos rather than clip art • Using Active Communities logo too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some descriptions fairly long – may want to look at standards for word count consistency • Link better to CVRD • Be consistent with brand and logo standards

Branding and Design Audit - Details

A brand identity and all the touch points it affects must come from a known, adopted and supported message that drives it. That message must be the rallying cry for the creation of every customer interaction. It must be supported in every level of the organization and watched carefully by a person or department charged with maintaining continuity.

Continuity is important for a number of reasons:

- The brand identity is a critical asset. Well managed, it will give the CVRD a sustainable advantage. As brand guru Alina Wheeler says, “Anything less than superior quality reduces the value of the asset on both a conscious and unconscious level.”
- It has the effect of speaking with a unified voice, both verbally and visually.
- It allows for efficiencies in making design decisions in the future.
- It creates and supports clarity in messaging. It says, “We are one organization.”

It is achieved by:

- Considering all touch points from annual reports to flyers; ads to presentations — and this includes consistency of verbal messaging as well as visual form. Consistent naming, voice etc., are extremely important.
- Planning in advance for the touch points that currently exist to create a 30,000-foot view of what needs to be done and how things relate to one another and the organization as a whole.
- Considering and prescribing: colour palette, typography (including size, leading and alignment as well as line lengths), photographic style, formats and grids (on which layouts are based).

A consistent identity does not mean one that is rigid or limiting. It should be a strong architecture on which the brand is built through repetition, persistence and frequency. And the less frequency an organization can afford to buy through paid media for awareness, the more repetition and persistence is needed.

The branding and design audit included a review of various pieces of print communication produced by multiple departments within the CVRD as outlined below.

Logo

The CVRD logo presents as corporate and professional. It has a slightly dated look because of the bullets between the letters and the typography in general, and could use a facelift in terms of modernity. There is inconsistency in the way the full name is treated below the logo. It is done in different typefaces, with and without the line in between “Cowichan Valley” and “Regional District.” Sometimes, this type does not appear at all — and in places where it is necessary for identification.

This type treatment is an integral part of the visual identity. The professionalism of the identity is compromised by the inconsistency. Overall, this subliminally communicates a lack of attention to detail and/or confusion within an organization. It was also noted that the corporate design has been adapted by various users. In some situations, the “CVRD” typography has been eliminated, using only the graphic elements, and sometimes the

graphic elements are changed as well, which is essentially creating multiple logos and degrading the brand and linkage to the CVRD.

The additional issue is the confusion between the CVRD logo and the various iterations of the CVRD Economic Development (Cowichan) logo. From an outsider's point of view, the Cowichan logo appears more frequently and more dominantly in the publications reviewed. In the Parks & Trails Guide, the logos are treated equally, although positioned on the first and last pages.

It is unclear what the Cowichan logo actually represents because it appears with numerous words over the "i." Also, because there are so many "sub-brand" treatments with this logo, it seems like it must represent the CVRD itself, yet in fact it is used by multiple organizations/businesses in the region.

Observations of Cowichan logo adaptations:

- Parks Cowichan
- Visit Cowichan
- Explore Cowichan
- Tourism Cowichan West
- Cowichan B+B
- EDC Cowichan (no one outside of government is likely to know what "EDC" means)
- Taste Cowichan
- Cowichan Lake Recreation

As well, on the Fall Activity Guide, the logo has been modified, turning the "i" into a somersaulting figure.

Colours for this logo also vary widely:

- Blue type with green "i"
- Green type with blue upside-down "i"
- Blue with white "i"
- Gold logo
- Blue with red "i"
- Blue with gold "i"
- All one colour
- All white
- Grey and white

In some cases, the logo is surrounded by a white box sitting inside and image or colour. This looks unprofessional.

The logo should have three variations: black, colour and white. Black can be used over light coloured backgrounds, colour can be used where it works with design and production budget, and white can be used "knocked out" of colour images or dark backgrounds. It is unnecessary and confusing to use other variations.

These are all indications that can drive a perception of confusion within the organization. And most importantly it is unclear what that organization actually is – who is being represented with the brand.

Typography

One of the biggest weaknesses observed in the materials reviewed is the inconsistency in typography. A logo is only a signature for an organization. The brand supports it, but it cannot be on every page. What supports the brand is a set of brand tools, among these – and really the skeleton that carries everything else – is the typography.

Most people may not be able to differentiate Times New Roman from Goudy or Helvetica from Akzidenz Grotesk, but they do notice the tone and professionalism a typographic choice and treatment carry. They will also have a very different feeling about an organization that uses any sans serif typeface on a given day rather than the same one, and the same weights of it, in the same way, in every communication piece.

Within the samples provided, there are numerous typefaces and line spacing being used. Another important element in typography is how an address and contact information are treated. Again these are consistent among a few pieces, then changed drastically in others. Postal codes sit on their own, short lines where best practices in design would have them next to the city and province to save room and to create a more harmonious look. As an example, there should be a maximum of two typefaces used in any corporate identity, with a maximum of two to three weights for each. Rules should be established as to when each should be used (i.e. use one for headings, the other for text) because the carefully managed repetition of typography use supports the brand identity as a whole and will help residents recognize communications for the District and feel confidence in their authenticity and professionalism.

This is not to say that the typography needs to be dull. The right typeface choice is important. It should have enough weights available to allow freedom to be creative. Any typography operates in context with colour and the images supporting it so that the entire communication is harmonious and rational.

Colour

Just as with typography, a consistent colour palette (which need not be restrictive, as long as it is well planned to work together) supports the brand's meaning and fosters confidence in the brand. There is no defined colour palette for the CVRD in terms of graphic standards or policy; however, based on the audit of materials, it appears that the CVRD has established blue and green as both its corporate and Economic Development Cowichan colours. The two are different, which is acceptable, as long as it is clear what the CVRD is as opposed to what Economic Development encompasses. The two can use different support colour palettes, which may give them greater autonomy. As an example, the CVRD may apply a more conservative colour palette for the corporate identity and a more playful palette for the Economic Development Cowichan identity but they need to work together.

Layout, Photography and Illustration

It is common for local and regional governments (and, in fact, many other organizations) to have departments that start to create their own brand with the rationale that they need to be independent or express their individuality. This is something that should be curtailed and tightly controlled. Every variation on typography, grid, illustration style,

photography style and colour undermines the power of the brand and erodes the connection audiences make to the CVRD.

Website & Social Media Audit – Details

Overview

The CVRD website platform offers multiple opportunities to share information and dynamic content, along with the Notify Me subscriber email service for push communications. The only notable technical challenge with using the website was found when using a mobile device. The mobile site was somewhat challenging to navigate and no department links or contact information could be found. As well, a few tested links were not connecting to the relevant information page. A large majority of respondents have visited the website but there was mixed response in terms of whether they were able to find the information they needed. Also, in terms of satisfaction with navigation, the majority of respondents were split between “somewhat satisfied” and “not very satisfied.”

Website

The primary challenges with the website relate to the communication elements of a web environment as a tactic to share information. Feedback from the community indicates that in addition to the problems related to the navigation, content is often outdated or not posted in a timely way and there is no clear contact information. As well, community members noted incomplete or missing information.

Social Media

Social media use as an online communication tactic has been ad hoc and set up without approvals or policies in place to manage standards and implementation. The social media sites used by the CVRD include:

- Economic Development – Facebook – 62 Likes, sporadic updates and no branding or content to show part of CVRD
- Cowichan Theatre – 266 Likes on Facebook and 224 Followers on Twitter, nothing connecting it to CVRD in “About” or through branding
- Cowichan Lake Recreation Facility – Facebook, originally created as a “personal” page and has since been removed
- CVRD General – 9 Likes on Facebook, generic Cowichan Valley Regional District organizational page but not branded and no information on who owns the site

Notify Me

As part of the audit, it was noted that while the Notify Me tool is a valuable resource, it is not being used effectively. There are so many diverse options it makes it unwieldy to manage, and the topic areas are not tailored to audience interest. As an example, there could easily be one Notify Me option for job postings, rather than by category as noted in the screen shot below:



Job Postings

METHOD	LIST NAME	DESCRIPTION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Administrative Support	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Administrative Support, Secretarial and Cashier/Receptionist type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Daycare / Preschool / Childcare	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Daycare, Preschool or Daycare type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Economic Development	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Economic Development type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Engineering	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Engineering Technologists, Environmental Technologists, Sewer and Water, Utilities, and Solid Waste Management type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Finance type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Food and Beverage	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Food and Beverage type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Human Resource / Payroll / Occupational Health and Safety	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Human Resource, Payroll and Occupational Health and Safety type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information Technology and GIS	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Information Technology and GIS type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Operational Support	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Operational Support including maintenance type employment opportunities are posted.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parks, Recreation and Culture	By signing up for this category, you will receive an e-mail notice when Parks positions, Program Assistants, Programment, Youth

In the same way, there could be one general “News Flash” for all news releases and/or news items related to the CVRD, and then Electoral Area / Municipality specific topic areas for tailored information. There may be one or two other key topic areas based on interest groups or purpose (such as tenders/RFPs), but not a list as numerous as those listed in screen shots below:

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News Flash

LIST NAME	DESCRIPTION
1 Corporate Secretariat	
Area D - Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan	By signing up for this list, you will receive updates about the Area D - Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan.
Burning Regulations	
Cowichan Lake Recreation	
Cowichan Theatre	
Current World Events	
Economic Development	
Environment	Environment Commission News
Film	
Human Resources	
Island Savings Centre	By signing up for this list you will receive information about announcements related to Island Savings Centre.
Kerry Park Recreation	By signing up for this list you will be notified when an announcement has been added to the Kerry Park Recreation website.
Parks	
Parks Volunteering	
Planning & Development	Keep residents current with News updates.
Public Safety	
Public Safety Education	
Public Safety News Releases	By signing up for this list you will receive information about issues that concern Public Safety such as weather warnings or potential hazards that may affect the region.
Recycling & Waste Management	By signing up for this list you will receive notification of announcements regarding Solid Waste and Recycling.
Shawigan Lake Community Centre	
South Cowichan OCP	The intent of this News Flash is to enable staff to enhance communication about the OCP project.
Tourism	



Notify Me

METHOD	LIST NAME	DESCRIPTION
	Area D - Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan	Sign up to receive information about the Area D - Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan process, which is currently underway.
	Cowichan Theatre	
	Emergency Alerts	By signing up for this list you will receive email notification regarding any major local emergencies.
	Engineering Tenders/RFPs	
	Public Safety Education	By signing up for this list you will receive the Public Safety Newsletter as well as any workshop updates such as training dates, cancellations or when a class is full.
	South Cowichan OCP	Sign up to receive agendas, minutes, and newsletters from the South Cowichan OCP.
	South Cowichan Zoning	Sign up to receive information about South Cowichan Zoning

Eco Depot Project – Communication Considerations

Following a review of the Eco Depot Report (the Report), it is apparent that there was an extensive amount of work and research done to coordinate the project, and that the intent was to provide enhanced, convenient services to area residents. The project aligned with goals and plans for the organization, and was based on an increasing need for recycling services and waste diversion. It was equally apparent that the need for this service, and the benefits to area residents, were not established with key audiences. As well, the lack of communication and consultation with these audiences, combined with a general lack of trust in the CVRD as an organization (as per the research for the Communications Strategy), further undermined the project.

The stated observation in the report is an effective summary of this need for better communication and consultation on projects in communities:

What seems clear is that citizens are demanding a greater degree of engagement in government and corporate initiatives where community interests may be impacted. As a government, the CVRD needs to look at new ways to provide these engagement opportunities early in project development planning.

In general, this project would have benefited from early engagement with the residents directly affected by the project in terms of construction and location, as well as the residents in the broader area who would benefit from the services. It's interesting that the Report notes that the Eco Depot project involved "extensive consultation" and lists a number of tactics applied after the land was purchased. In the more detailed description of the tactics applied in this consultation process, it appears that the tactics primarily focused on information sharing and technical planning – both of which generally take place after a project is approved and a plan is in place. Based on the timing of the

consultation and the nature of the content, this series of tactics appears to be more about communication than consultation.

An earlier consultation process involving questions and input that directly related to the planning and site selection options for the project would have provided a platform to share information about why the project was being proposed, the types of services being delivered, and the criteria used for selecting a site. This would not necessarily require details on which specific sites were being considered. Instead, the affected residents and general areas could have been identified, and discussions could have focused on criteria for site selection for use in evaluation. As well, many of the concerns raised by residents who mobilized to protest the project appear to be topics that could have been addressed in early planning stages:

Members of these groups began to attend all CVRD Board meetings to voice their opposition to the project. Concerns raised by the groups during public meetings included:

- Concern over a general lack of consultation by the CVRD regarding the project, and a lack of trust amongst the community of the CVRD;
- Concerns about traffic volumes and potentially hazardous conditions on Cameron Taggart Road;
- Concerns over litter, and fears that site operations would run seven days per week;
- Competition with private waste management facilities;
- Other issues included concerns over noise, dust, wildlife, rodents, after-hours dumping and the aquifer;
- Costs and cost-overruns, and concerns that the project would cost up to \$5 million.

It is worth noting that while early consultation would have provided an opportunity for area residents to flag their concerns, it may not have changed the strong opposition to the proposed site. On one hand, there may have been time for the CVRD to adjust designs or address location concerns. Alternatively, the CVRD would have had a very strong indication that the proposed site would not be considered a good fit, either by the neighbourhood or the broader community, and could have adjusted its plans accordingly.

Often, with projects involving change in a neighbourhood, the individuals directly affected may oppose the project; however, the broader community benefits are recognized by the rest of the citizens, who then support the project. The referendum results indicate that by the time a vote was put to all residents, the concerns, negative perceptions and prevailing messages about the proposed facility went beyond the residents in the immediate area.

The Report again summarizes the challenges of starting late with consultation and communication:

Although the consultation efforts carried out for the Eco Depot project were extensive, they were unable to fully address growing opposition within the local community. This opposition may have been fuelled in part by the CVRD's lack of comprehensive communications strategy, the fact that technical studies were not available until late in the process, and the unexpected nature of the public opposition, which was not

anticipated by the CVRD Board or staff who genuinely believed that the community would welcome the proposed Eco Depot and the benefits that it would provide.

As public opposition to the project grew, the CVRD undertook increasingly extensive consultation and outreach measures. However, because the opposition had not been anticipated by the CVRD, these efforts were largely reactive and not the result of a well-defined communications strategy. As a result, opposition groups were able to control the nature and agenda of the public discussion, which effectively put the CVRD in the position of having to defend the project rather than proactively inform residents about it.

It is difficult to determine in hindsight whether earlier consultation and more open processes would have changed the outcome of the referendum and negative perceptions of the facility; however, best practices in community consultation for projects of this scope would have better prepared the CVRD for the concerns and opened up more opportunities to address them. As well, given the influence of social media in this situation and lack of staff resources to monitor or respond on these platforms, the CVRD was not sufficiently prepared with its communications to respond to concerns, provide facts related to the need and benefits of this type of service or correct misinformation. The communications plan and survey work done later in the project included good information and a better sense of community interests, but it came too late in the process. By the time the communication materials from the CVRD were created and disseminated, the community position was already established and the information materials were perceived as “manipulative” and trying to force a “yes” vote in the referendum, rather than neutral messaging based on facts.

In general, the recommendations in the Report are consistent with the recommendations being developed for the Communications Strategy. The primary additional recommendations would be that, while a social media policy can assist with guiding how to engage on these platforms, resources are still needed to monitor, post and respond to comments and questions. As well, it is recommended that early consultation involve a mix of information sharing and opportunities to provide input before final decisions are made. This does not necessarily involve a referendum, which can be expensive and time-consuming; however, it should include multiple opportunities and platforms to provide meaningful input. As well, there should be a report at the completion of the consultation process highlighting key themes from input and next steps. If this type of consultation is not feasible due to other constraints, it is recommended that it not be referred to as “consultation” and instead focus on messaging and information sharing to all affected audiences.

Policy Review

There were no policies provided that relate directly to communications that are currently in place within the CVRD. The existing policies provided are focused on technology use, such as Internet and social networking usage, cellular phone usage and records management related to electronic files and communication. There are some general guidelines related to the corporate logo based on its original development and more detailed guidelines for the use of the Cowichan logo. There is an ad hoc approach to media relations and no communication approval processes or procedures identified. In broader policy terms, the CVRD has established its intent to improve communications through its Corporate Strategic Plan, which includes a goal for Service Excellence, with an objective to be “An organization whose public and staff are proactively informed.”

The following challenges are noted as a result of these policy and procedure gaps:

Media Relations

- There is no clearly defined spokesperson, which results in multiple people responding to media, sometimes with mixed information or a lack of the full picture of a situation. This affects the credibility of the organization, as well as its reputation. There are concerns about Directors responding as individual elected officials, with personal opinion, rather than as spokespeople representing the organization with the Board decision as the message.
- News releases go out without being reviewed, resulting in problems with accuracy, typos, and grammar.
- Directors are not consistently notified of news going to media and have been caught off guard by media calls.
- News releases are posted on website, but some are going out to media without notifying the primary contact for this posting, so they are missed.
- News releases are sent out by all areas of the organization without a structured release process, which has resulted in the wrong reporter being contacted and some media organizations being left out/not contacted.
- There is very little proactive messaging about success stories or achievements.
- No consistent media or social media monitoring is in place to track issues and address misinformation.

Branding/Graphic Standards

- Branding is inconsistent and logos have been corrupted into multiple forms resulting in no cohesive brand and no link to CVRD in many materials.
- The mix of colours, fonts and designs result in no consistent image in the community, so the CVRD is not recognizable as a single organization.
- There are no clear guidelines; therefore, it is difficult to enforce a consistent brand.
- Some areas of the organization are deliberately disassociating themselves from the organization by avoiding use of the CVRD logo, which further exacerbates the problems with reputation management in the community – citizens only see the negative news, tax notices or basic services; they don't recognize that the CVRD is associated with the many positive programs, facilities and services they enjoy in their community.

Communication Procedures/Guidelines

- There are no clear guidelines for how and when to communicate and consult with the community.
- Communication is not a priority in many service areas, largely due to lack of resources and understanding or expertise rather than preference or intention.
- Content that involves multiple departments is not consistently checked by subject matter experts for context.
- Communication is inconsistent.
- Quality of materials is not up to professional standards.
- Content is not written to audience interest and, as a result, it often does not capture attention.
- Best practices in community engagement are not being followed.

Needs Assessment

General Observations

- Within the CVRD, there is an interest in improving communications, even though perceptions of satisfaction with current levels of communication are higher than those expressed by community members.
 - While staff indicate that they recognize they need to communicate more regularly and to better effect, they are not acting on this need largely due to lack of time, lack of resources and lack of expertise within the organization – there is willingness but it is not sufficient to overcome these obstacles.
 - Board Directors who participated in the research phase indicated commitment to improving communications and consultation in the community, with goals for increased transparency overall; however, this does not necessarily mean all Directors are equally committed to supporting communications.
- CVRD employees are very committed to serving their communities and delivering quality services throughout the region. They take pride in their work and are positive about their region as a whole.
- The CVRD has a number of excellent tools in place to assist with communications; however, they are not currently being used effectively.
- There is a general lack of understanding of the CVRD – what it does, areas of responsibility and its role in the region – along with indications of mistrust and perceived lack of value for tax dollars. This is further exacerbated by departments who distance themselves from the CVRD by avoiding use of the logo or through use of alternate or corrupted versions of the logo.
- There is a lack of consistent communication going out to residents and as a result they feel uninformed about what is going on in their community as it relates to CVRD programs, projects and services.
- Communication materials that are developed are inconsistent in terms of content, branding and design standards.
- Consultation has been successful for some projects, but for the most part, there is a general consensus that the consultation does not occur early or often enough, is not meaningful in terms of true input (decisions already made) and there is no follow up.
- Internal communications are not consistent and there are perceived barriers to inter-departmental information sharing due to silos in the organization. As well, the most popular tactic (email) is also one that is overwhelming employees, and other platforms like Staffnet are underused or not used effectively.
- There are multiple opportunities to improve communication, citizen engagement and outreach to community organizations along with an interest at the community level in assisting with building these relationships.
- There is very limited budget allocated to communications yet everyone wants to increase information sharing and consultation. While some communications can be managed through tactics like the website, email and social media, these do not work well on their own and some paid tactics are required, along with paid resources to develop and support them.

- Issues are not managed effectively due to staff not recognizing early when a concern could escalate, no consistent protocols for notifying managers or Directors, a tendency to ignore problems until they become a media story and lack of monitoring of media and social media. When potential issues were flagged during the research phase, the response was apathetic in the sense that there was no interest in investigating further to determine the severity of these concerns.

Primary Areas for Improvement

1. Implement more effective communications related to ongoing Board decisions, CVRD programs and services, and general awareness of CVRD activities in individual electoral areas and municipalities as well as initiatives that affect the region to provide timely updates on topics focused on audience interests.
2. Implement more effective consultation to provide opportunities for meaningful input and engage residents earlier to discuss projects and service changes.
3. Improve the quality of communication to provide professional, clear and engaging materials using a variety of tactics tailored to audiences.
4. Implement a communications program focused on raising awareness about the CVRD, its role and responsibilities in the region, strategic plan and its values in serving its communities.
5. Establish guidelines, policies and procedures to improve internal communication, issues management, media relations and effective communication practices.

Recommendations & Next Steps

Recommendations towards more effective communications	Next Steps
<p>Apply a communications plan and tactics. Identify audiences, challenges, opportunities, key messages and communication tactics to improve communication in the community. Should also include budget for tactics, which may involve a budget review as currently very little in place in individual departments. Also develop checklists and templates to assist with streamlining communication process and ensuring consistent standards.</p>	Address in Communications Strategy
<p>Communications Support Identify resource gaps and provide assessment of needs areas for communication skill sets, including qualifications and position descriptions to reflect current and future needs, with clearly defined responsibilities, accountability, and skill requirements.</p>	Address in Communications Strategy
<p>Training Provide staff with training in areas such as social media, logo use and graphic standards, and new communication policies and procedures as required.</p>	For future consideration.

<p>Leverage Technical Platforms More Effectively Consider a heuristic review to test navigation and assess the usability of the site as well as opportunities to add more dynamic content, and information tailored to each area. This update would also allow for new graphic standards to be applied, and how social media tools may be applied in future or added to existing platform. Make changes to categories for Notify Me tool to tailor them to areas and audience interests and reduce the overall number of categories to simplify management. Promote these tools regularly through other tactics.</p>	Future consideration
<p>Social Media Develop and implement a social media strategy, including a review of existing social media sites and develop strategic approach and policy to support future use of social media tactics.</p>	Future consideration
<p>Develop EOC/Crisis Communications Plan: A crisis communications plan is needed to complement EOC plan, incorporating updated media policy and social media management. Media relations and social media are core to crisis communications, as well as effective, responsive messaging and appropriate spokespeople at sites and through EOC.</p>	Future consideration
<p>Identify Internal Tactics to Improve Communication Develop a list of tactics for departments and managers to apply as part of improving communication within and between departments. This also includes improved approach for notifying frontline and providing key messages for customer relations.</p>	Address in Communications Strategy
<p>Support Managers to be Accountable Provide recommended tactics to share information more regularly between departments and from Corporate Leadership throughout organization. Incorporate communication updates into Corporate Leadership Team meetings, communication linkages in Board reports, provide clear approval process where other departments required to approve related content and establish an issues assessment process for managers to evaluate when to escalate issue.</p>	Address in Communications Strategy

<p>Board Communication: Provide tactics to promote proactive messaging, respond to misinformation and manage issues. This will also include key message development, how and when information is being flagged with Directors, and related support such as backgrounders or prepared tactics such as use of Notify Me subscriber email for area updates. Also provide recommendations for role of Communications Committee in ongoing communication.</p>	<p>Address in Communications Strategy</p>
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<p>Recommendations towards more effective consultation</p>	<p>Next Steps</p>
<p>Establish Community Consultation Program Standards Review the options for community consultation and apply standards for how and when the community will be engaged. In particular, focus on existing community groups to bring them together for additional discussions on how and when they would like to receive information from CVRD staff and Board, and how and when they would like to be consulted. Ideally assign a “Stakeholder Liaison” from staff who owns the relationship with a particular group or groups, and takes responsibility for flagging items of interest with them. For the broader community, apply best practices in consultation to ensure broad notification, multiple tactics for sharing information and reporting back on outcomes. Focus on building trust, demonstrating transparency.</p>	<p>Address in part through Communications Strategy. Would also benefit from more comprehensive processes to align departments, develop decision-making matrix and develop templates and checklists for each type of consultation.</p>
<p>Leverage Community Connections Work with community groups and other stakeholder organizations to develop mechanisms for regularly disseminating information out to their members, leveraging their email lists, publications and meetings, and collect feedback. Ideally, set up regular opportunities for CVRD staff and Board members to attend their meetings either as a speaker or an observer.</p>	<p>Addressed in part through Communications Strategy but would benefit from further work with stakeholder groups to formalize options for leveraging their communications tools.</p>

Recommendations towards improving the quality of communication	Next Steps
<p>Develop and Enforce Logo Guidelines and Graphic Standards It is strongly recommended that departments not be permitted to design their own materials or create/apply their own individual brands or logos. Staff members are not equipped with the right training or software to do it properly, nor will they have the knowledge to manage brand standards. It is recommended that guidelines and/or templates be created with which they can create simple documents and that use of approved logos and other graphic standards be enforced. This includes removal of the many “corrupted” logos currently in use across the organization and consistent application of the two approved logos. The standards will also need to be consistently supported and enforced by CVRD management and the Board.</p>	<p>Recommendations for general standards of design in Communications Strategy. Future consideration to include update to logo, development of graphic standards guide and templates for key tactics.</p>
<p>Writing Training Communication content could be improved through writing skills development and use of a Style Guide to provide consistent standards for usage.</p>	<p>Future consideration</p>

Recommendations towards raising awareness of CVRD	Next Steps
<p>Develop communications campaign and integrate with all communications Develop and implement a “who we are, what we do” communications campaign that is linked to consistent branding practices and all other communication and consultation in the region. Personalize the CVRD through story telling, features on Directors and staff and multi-media tactics in addition to other standard communication tools.</p>	<p>Future consideration</p>
<p>Apply Branding Best Practices Address the issues identified related to multiple and inconsistent logos with a strategic approach that leverages the strengths of both the corporate logo and the Cowichan logo. Stop use of all non-conforming branding and enforce standards.</p>	<p>Addressed in part through Communications Strategy but also require work on logo and graphic standards.</p>
<p>Be more proactive Share success stories, link CVRD activities to the programs, services and events in communities and engage the community more readily. Go out to where residents are gathering to build relationships and establish trust.</p>	<p>Addressed in part through Communications Strategy but also linked to future awareness campaign.</p>

Recommendations towards establishing guidelines, policies and procedures	Next Steps
<p>Develop media policy: Provide clear guidelines on spokespeople, including primary spokespeople and subject matter experts, including consideration of a formalized role for a designated media liaison. Include processes for news release development, approvals and dissemination as well as procedures for responding to media calls.</p>	Address in Communications Strategy
<p>Develop Graphic Standards and Logo Use Guide Provide clear usage guidelines and approval processes to ensure consistent application of CVRD and Cowichan logos and graphics.</p>	Future consideration
<p>Develop Issues Management Guide Provide guidance to managers and staff on how to assess issues to assist with proactive messaging and more prompt responses to issues as they arise.</p>	Address in Communications Strategy
<p>Develop Communication Guidelines: Clearly outline standards, requirements and approval process for all communication from the CVRD, including how and when to connect with other departments and provide staff/frontline with updates. Procedures and policies must be endorsed and enforced to by senior management to be effective.</p>	Address in Communications Strategy
<p>Develop Style Guide Develop a Style Guide that identifies consistent usage in the organization, tone and writing style recommendations to assist with consistent content development</p>	Future consideration
<p>Provide Training. Provide media training to all Board Directors, members of the Corporate Leadership Team and other approved spokespeople such as subject matter experts. Should include strategic messaging and practicing tactics. Develop training on all new guides, policies and procedures that relate to communication and assign staff to monitor and enforce.</p>	Future consideration