



Strategic Plan Quarterly Report to Board

Oct. to Dec.
2024

Q4



**COWICHAN VALLEY
REGIONAL DISTRICT**

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STRATEGIC PLAN QUARTERLY REPORT

October to December 2024

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

The CVRD Board of Directors acclaimed Kate Segall as the new Chair of the Board and Tim McGonigle as Vice Chair, at their regular meeting of November 13, 2024.

Emergency Management Cowichan announced a new space to operate an Emergency Warming Centre for the 2024/2025 winter season. This emergency service has provided a total of 41 nights as of January 8, 2025.

Following a successful Alternate Approval Process (AAP), the CVRD acquired the Shawnigan Village Waterworks utility system in Shawnigan Lake, as of November 30, 2024.

The Parks & Trails Division launched an extensive public engagement exercise to solicit input on the Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan Update, including in-person events and an online survey for residents.

The CVRD Environmental Services Division, in partnership with member municipalities, First Nations, Island Health, the Province of BC and others, hosted the first ever Cowichan Region Climate Gathering in December 2024. The two-day event provided an opportunity for many government bodies and community organizations to come together and provide information on their respective climate adaptation initiatives.







ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- CVRD Regional Arts & Culture Master Plan adopted by CVRD Board
- Housing Needs Assessment Report completed
- Online Accommodation Platform – revenue reallocated to housing initiatives
- Bylaw Dispute Adjudication System approved and implemented
- Bald Mountain Regional Parkland acquisition complete

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

RECONCILIATION

Initiative	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
1.0 Support efforts to strengthen cooperation, collaboration, and relationships between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous in our communities						
→ 1.1 Support community-led reconciliation and relationship building through engagement with First Nations				The CVRD has hired a First Nations Relations Advisor (one-year term position) as of December 2024. This position has a priority to support the organization relating to engagement and reconciliation activities. A staff report will be provided to the Board in Q1 2025 outlining next steps, including recommended priorities and activities.	On Track	Chief Administrative Officer
→ 1.2 Support watershed governance and stewardship with local First Nations				Continued participation at both the staff and Board level on the Collaborative Community Advisory Table for the Xwulqw'selu (Koksilah) Water Sustainability Planning Process (co-led by Cowichan Tribes and Province). Staff are also participating on the planning team. Staff submitted an application for an Agricultural Water Infrastructure Program grant to support for Phase 2 water supply study for the Koksilah watershed; application is currently under review. Continued staff participation in Chemainus Watershed Initiative led by Halalt First Nation. Ongoing collaboration with Cowichan Tribes on mid and lower Cowichan River flood mitigation projects (DMAF funded, complementary to weir replacement project).	On Track	Manager - Environmental Services
→ 1.3 Work with local First Nations to develop initiatives that support our shared environmental, social, economic, and governance goals				A staff report will be provided to the Board in Q1 2025 outlining next steps, including recommended priorities and activities.	On Track	Chief Administrative Officer
→ 1.4 Develop an Indigenous relations framework to integrate UNDRIP, DRIPA, and implement Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Actions into our work at the CVRD				An RFP for the Framework is in development and a staff report with the recommended scope for this initiative will be presented to the Board In February 2025. Development of the Framework is expected to commence in early Q2 and is anticipated to be presented to the Board toward the end of Q3 2025.	On Track	Deputy CAO, General Manager - Strategic Services

OUR COMMITMENTS

Initiative	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
2.0 Serve, strengthen, and connect Cowichan communities through collaborative governance						
→ 2.1 Work collaboratively with member municipalities and First Nations towards the development of a Regional Growth Strategy				Letters sent to member municipalities inviting comments on draft Regional Growth Strategy and steering committee terms of reference, and steering committee appointments. Staff anticipate providing a report to the Board in Q1 2025.	On Track	Chief Administrative Officer
→ 2.2 Explore options for re-establishment of a Regional Planning function				CVRD Board resolution (October 9, 2024) to conduct a Regional Planning Service Feasibility Study in 2025.	On Track	General Manager - Land Use Services
→ 2.3 Undertake a preliminary governance study for the southern Electoral Areas				Following adoption of the 2025 Budget, a final report will be presented to the Board in Q1 2025, summarizing the findings of the survey.	Behind	Chief Administrative Officer
→ 2.4 Enhance community engagement and responsiveness with a variety of strategies					On Track	Manager - Communications & Engagement
→ Completing a communications and engagement strategy with a focus on climate readiness and adaptation				Development of the strategic communications plan was moved to Q3 2025, based on the Board's direction, recognizing staff have two significant priority projects underway in early 2025 (Community Satisfaction Survey and Website Redevelopment).	Not started	Manager - Communications & Engagement
→ Website improvements and public information campaigns to raise awareness of the CVRD and its services				Following an extensive RFP process, a vendor was selected and awarded the website redevelopment project work. A Creative Brief document was completed by senior managers, and a staff-wide survey was launched in December 2024 to solicit input from all CVRD staff. In-person and virtual discovery sessions will be held with the Senior Management Team and various division staff throughout January 2025.	On Track	Manager - Communications & Engagement
→ Public information meetings prior to public hearings				Public information meetings may be held at the direction of the Board on an as and when needed basis.	Complete	Manager - Communications & Engagement
→ Community Satisfaction Survey				A vendor has been selected and staff are working with the Senior Management Team to finalize questions for early January 2025. The survey is to be launched in early February, with results shared at a COTW meeting in late March 2025.	On Track	Manager - Communications & Engagement










Initiative	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
3.0 Promote climate action initiatives, reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions, and protect our communities from the adverse impacts of climate change						
→ 3.1 Identify, build support for, and act on additional initiatives across all of our services to reduce our wastes, cut our emissions, and minimize our overall footprint				The integrated corporate and community GHG and energy reduction strategy is underway with anticipated completion in Q1 2025. It is expected that a staff report will be presented to the Board for consideration in Q1/Q2 2025.	On Track	Manager - Environmental Services
→ 3.2 Complete the high priority items (1-4 years) of Cowichan Adapts as outlined in the Implementation Plan				Service activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebranded Cowichan Adapts website was launched at the end of Q3 2024, initial response has been very positive. A very successful Climate Action Forum occurred in December 2024, with nearly 100 confirmed attendees. LGCAP funding has been approved to contract with Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium to update the regional climate projections to the new global climate models. Additional funding will be used to support climate education in local schools. 	On Track	Manager - Environmental Services
→ 3.3 Fully implement Emergency Management Cowichan as a regional service to enhance emergency planning and preparedness as required and in alignment with the modernized Emergency Management legislation and regulations				Drafting renewal and update of the Cowichan Local Authority Emergency Management Agreement for adoption in Q1 2025. Awaiting release of regulations throughout 2025. Finalizing award of contract for Regional Emergency Management Indigenous Engagement Project commencing in Q1 2025.	On Track	Senior Manager - Emergency Management
→ 3.4 Work with our partners to complete the replacement of water storage infrastructure on Cowichan Lake and the Stocking Lake Dam					On Track	Chief Administrative Officer
→ Lake Cowichan Weir Replacement				CVRD staff continue to participate in the Cowichan Weir Technical Working Group. This group continues to meet twice a month, and over the last quarter of 2024 the group work included: Communications Strategy, ongoing provincial licensing discussions and other project costing review. Cowichan Tribes, with support from the Cowichan Watershed Board, continue to move forward with the project and the CVRD continues to support this important initiative.	On Track	Deputy CAO, General Manager - Strategic Services
→ Stocking Lake Dam Replacement				Collaborative work continues to progress on the dam with the joint ownership between the CVRD and the Town of Ladysmith (TOL). The TOL has advanced detailed design services through a consultant. Design work completion anticipated for Q2 2025. Project completion anticipated for Q4 2026.	On Track	General Manager - Operations








Initiative	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
4.0 Promote organizational excellence						
→ 4.1 Implement a new reporting regime that includes periodic strategic planning updates, project updates and tracking of strategic initiatives					Complete	Deputy CAO, General Manager - Strategic Services
→ 4.2 Be an employer of choice - celebrate and communicate recognition and appreciation of staff				In Q4 2024, staff advanced initiatives to celebrate and communicate recognition and appreciation of CVRD employees. The review and revision of all HR-related administrative policies are underway, with major completion anticipated in Q2 2025. A 2025 employee recognition event calendar is being developed to provide informal appreciation opportunities for all staff. The wellness program continues to expand, with 2024 offerings including Yoga, Core Training, on-site RMT and acupuncture, weekly hiking events, a 10k marathon run club, Bike to Work Week, the Movers & Doers Club, and access to the Canadian Mental Health Association's "Not Myself Today" mental health tool. Additionally, staff are testing employee performance development and management tools, with full implementation expected by Q2 2025.	On Track	Manager - Human Resources
→ 4.3 Develop and report on measures to improve recruitment and retention of employees				Staff are exploring options for HR systems, without sufficient resources secured for an HRIS system, to proceed with updating and implementing the employee orientation, onboarding, and offboarding program. This program is anticipated to be completed by Q4 2025. Additionally, staff have initiated an exempt compensation strategy review, which includes market research, compensation benchmarking, salary structure analysis, internal pay equity analysis, a three-year market forecast, and an implementation plan, with completion targeted for Q2 2025. Lastly, the CVRD has been honoured with an Organizational Safety Excellence award at the 2024 BC Municipal Safety Association (BCMSA) Conference.	On Track	Manager - Human Resources
→ 4.4 Promote a learning culture to support effective decision-making and program delivery				In 2024, CVRD successfully delivered five training workshops, distributed a staff and management survey to guide the 2025 Learning & Development Program, and began developing a 2025 course calendar based on survey results, with training opportunities launching early in Q1 2025. Additionally, a new CVRD Learning & Development Program brand and supporting communication materials are on track for completion by the end of Q1 2025, reinforcing CVRD's commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning and effective program delivery.	On Track	Manager - Human Resources









OUR LIVELIHOODS

Initiative	2023	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
5.0 Increase the levels of economic resiliency, security, and prosperity for residents of the Cowichan Region							
→ 5.1 Update the 2018-2022 Economic Development Cowichan Strategic Plan to build on our strengths					Phase 2 of project engagement took place in Q3 2024, including a stakeholder workshop designed to shape the overall direction of the Strategic Plan. The project team has been working closely to support alignment between the EDC Strategic Plan and the proposed North Cowichan Economic Development Action Plan, which are being developed on similar timelines. A draft EDC Strategic Plan is being prepared by project consultants, which will be shared with the Board in Q1 2025. Once approved by the Board, it is expected to be sent for external comment before being finalized. External referrals will mean the project will not be finalized until late Q1/Q2 2025.	Behind	Manager - Economic Development
→ 5.2 Identify potential initiatives for investment and partnerships to enhance community public spaces in our rural centers through the Local Area Planning process					Step 2 of the Local Area Plan (LAP) process was completed, resulting in the "CVRD Alternate Futures Report", which contemplates various scenarios for housing, transportation, daily needs and infrastructure for the proposed LAPs. A final report was submitted to UBCM in support of Complete Communities work with the Malahat and Ts'uubaa-asatx First Nations.	On Track	Manager - Strategic Initiatives

OUR COMMUNITIES

Initiative	2023	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
6.0 Create healthy, livable, and efficiently serviced communities							
→ 6.1 Encourage collaboration and coordination on the development of Official Community Plans, land use policies, and bylaws across Electoral Areas, Municipalities, and First Nations					The Island Corridor Towards a Shared Vision public engagement phase has concluded. The final report is being drafted and is scheduled for presentation to the Board in Q2 2025.	On Track	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
→ 6.2 Modernize the Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas					Draft Modernized OCP Bylaw No. 4373 received first reading by the Board on December 11, 2024, and was referred to external governmental agencies and First Nations.	On Track	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
→ Update development permit area guidelines and exemptions					Revisions to DPA 1 (Riparian Areas), DPA 2 (Environmentally Sensitive Areas) and DPAs 9-12 (Form & Character) are in progress. Staff to report to EASC in Q1 2025.	On Track	Manager - Community Planning
→ Strengthen climate action policy					Corresponding climate action policies have been included in the draft Modernized OCP Bylaw No. 4373.	On Track	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
→ Strengthen ecological and water protection measures					Corresponding policies have been included in the draft Modernized OCP Bylaw No. 4373.	On Track	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
→ Encourage new development in accordance with Smart Growth principles					Corresponding policies have been included in the draft Modernized OCP Bylaw No. 4373.	On Track	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
→ 6.3 Modernize and enhance the CVRD's Development Services					Land Use Services is continuously working on improvements to policies, procedures and bylaws to enhance development processes, based on the Development Services Review.	On Track	Manager - Development Services
→ Implement a Land Management System					Implementation of Land Management Software is progressing concurrently with other corporate IT initiatives, including records management and GIS.	On Track	Manager - Development Services
→ Enhance development approval processes through improved policies, procedures and bylaws					Modernized Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 4373 received first reading in Q4 2024. Initial public engagement for Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw, including focused engagement on agricultural zones and regulations, occurred in Q4 2024. Internal development application and building permit referral processes are under review.	On Track	Manager - Development Services

Initiative	2023	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
→ Enhance public awareness and participation in development processes						On Track	Manager - Development Services
→ Support Advisory Planning Commissions					APC members were reappointed to the 9 respective Electoral Area APCs for a further two-year term (ending 2026). APC members will receive refresher orientation with CVRD legal counsel in Q1 2025.	On Track	Manager - Development Services
→ 6.4 Pursue provincial and federal funding to implement the Cowichan Internet and Cellular Connectivity Strategy and the Telecommunications and Antennae Structures Policy and support the delivery of improved services to all communities in the CVRD					It is expected the in-progress Economic Development Cowichan Strategic Plan will redefine and prioritize acting on the Connectivity initiative.	Not started	Manager - Economic Development
→ 6.5 Advocate to senior levels of government on items that the Board feels are impacting achievement of local government objectives in the Cowichan Valley					The Board was presented recommended AVICC resolution in December 2024. The priority areas supported by the Board included: 1. Facilitating First Nations' Participation in Local Government Planning and Land Use Processes. 2. Support and Resourcing for Active Transportation Projects by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit. 3. Addressing local communities concerns with private managed forest lands.	On Track	Chief Administrative Officer
→ 6.6 Establish a new South Sector Liquid Waste Management Plan					Review of Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP) amendment work continuing with relevant stakeholders to determine the best course of action to reinstate the South Sector LWMP process. Workplan development anticipated by the end of Q3 2025.	Not started	General Manager - Operations
→ 6.7 Implement 3 stream collection for solid waste, recycling, and organics					The new curbside totes are anticipated in Q1 2025. Curbside utility fees have been set for 2025 to offset program costs. A draft communication plan and curbside bylaw are in progress. The award for the truck software is anticipated by the middle of Q1 2025.	On Track	Senior Manager - Recycling & Waste Management
→ 6.8 Explore design and planning improvements to Bings Creek facility					The Phase 1 Project Development Plan has been awarded to the consultant, with finalization of the document anticipated for Q2 2025.	On Track	General Manager - Operations

Initiative	2023	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
→ 6.9 Explore opportunities for service coordination and consolidation incorporating the recommendations of the Utility Service Review					<p>The Mill Bay Sewer Integration Project is underway. This collection system construction project will connect the Mill Springs, Kerry Village, Brulette, and part of Sentinel Ridge sewer systems, as well as several private systems. Construction of the collection mains is in progress. Kerry Village is now discharging to the Mill Bay plant. Kerry Village awaiting design for refit to pump station. Brulette will require a pump station at Stonebridge as part of the connection.</p> <p>Shawnigan Village Waterworks was purchased and transferred to the CVRD as of November 30, 2024.</p> <p>Marble Bay Cottages feasibility study to join the Bald Mountain Water system is currently underway.</p>	On Track	Senior Manager - Utilities
→ 6.10 Implement the Local Government Bylaw Dispute Adjudication System					Implementation of the Bylaw Dispute Adjudication System was completed and is now fully operational.	Complete	Manager - Bylaw Enforcement
→ 6.11 Review, update and modernize noise, nuisance, and building bylaws applicable to Electoral Areas					Staff are working with legal counsel to draft a new Unsightly Premises and Abandoned Property Bylaw for EASC consideration in early 2025.	On Track	Senior Manager - Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement
7.0 Make available a range of housing options and housing tenures at different income levels and stages of life							
→ 7.1 Update the regional housing needs assessment in 2024 (interim) and again in 2028					Housing Needs Report updates completed for Electoral Areas and new housing needs data included in Draft Modernized OCP Bylaw No. 4373.	Complete	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
→ 7.2 Complete the Workforce Housing Strategy					Between September-December 2024, the consultant and EDC staff provided presentations to CVRD municipalities on the draft Strategy. All municipal feedback has now been received, and a revised draft strategy is being prepared for Board consideration in Q1 2025.	Behind	Manager - Economic Development
→ 7.3 Collaborate with regional partners to protect existing affordable housing and encourage the development of additional, affordable housing options including those needed to attract workers and for vulnerable populations					Cowichan Housing Association annual budget and workplan for 2025 have been presented to the Board.	On Track	General Manager - Corporate Services
→ 7.4 Explore potential housing incentives					On June 12, 2024, staff provided a report to COTW regarding Authorities and Strategies for Affordable Housing. The report was referred until after decisions are made on regional growth and regional planning.	On Track	General Manager - Land Use Services
→ 7.5 Enhance enforcement of and modernize short term rental regulations in electoral areas					The Community Planning and Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement Divisions are coordinating on short-term rental regulation and enforcement. Staff will engage with APCs in early 2025 and report to committee thereafter. Legislative Services will lead the service establishment bylaw process.	On Track	Senior Manager - Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Initiative	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
8.0 Manage current and future demand for water resources in ways that recognize and respect resource limits and the needs of our natural environment						
→ 8.1 Undertake the initiatives in the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection work program, including research and data acquisition, and the development of watershed management plans for the Region's watersheds				<p>The fall round of baseline water quality sampling was completed successfully, including sampling lake sites. Staff also participated in focused water quality sampling on the Cowichan River in response to last year's fish kill. Continuing work towards establishing the Technical Advisory Team (TAT) for DWWP: Terms of Reference, membership, invitations have been developed, discussion underway with the Province regarding potential co-leadership of the TAT.</p> <p>Groundwater Quality Monitoring Strategy - project is well underway with completion scheduled for Q1 2025.</p> <p>A coordinator for the DWWP has been hired to start in January 2025.</p>	On Track	Manager - Environmental Services
→ 8.2 Provide support to community partners involved in local watershed governance				<p>CVRD partnership agreements have been signed and funding has been provided to Cowichan Watershed Board (3 yrs), Shawnigan Basin Society (1 yr), and Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC (3 yrs). A renewed agreement with the Shawnigan Basin Society, as well as an agreement with the Municipality of North Cowichan, to support water quality in Quamichan and Somenos Lakes, are anticipated in Q4 2024.</p>	On Track	Manager - Environmental Services
9.0 Strengthen, in collaboration with our partners, our airshed planning efforts improving the quality of the air we breathe						
→ 9.1 Implement Regional Airshed Protection Strategy				<p>The CVRD processed 30 applications for woodstove replacement to a cleaner, more efficient appliance, plus 17 applications for new heat pumps. 6 bounties for removing old woodstoves were also claimed. An application to the Province for funding for the 2025 woodstove rebate program was submitted in September 2024. The Airshed Roundtable is active and reviewing strategies.</p>	On Track	Manager - Environmental Services
→ 9.2 Update the Smoke Bylaw for Electoral Areas				<p>Staff have completed an initial review of the bylaw and will bring forward recommended revisions in Q1 2025. Work on updating educational materials is also underway.</p>	Behind	Manager - Environmental Services
10.0 Support efforts aimed at ecosystem protection and preservation						
→ 10.1 Protect and preserve the CVRD's existing regional parks – undertake Regional Parkland Strategy				<p>The first round of public/park user/interest groups engagement on the Regional Parks & Trails Master Plan Update was completed in Q4 2024.</p>	On Track	Senior Manager - Parks & Trails
→ 10.2 Review the Regional Parkland Acquisition Strategy				<p>The first round of public/park user/interest groups engagement on the Regional Parks & Trails Master Plan Update was completed in Q4 2024.</p>	On Track	Senior Manager - Parks & Trails

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Initiative	2...	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
11.0 Support the development and use of alternative transportation opportunities in the region							
→ 11.1 Enhance and expand regional transit service as funding allows		[Green bar spanning 2024 to 2026]			<p>The approved Friday and Saturday evening service expansion on the Nanaimo-Cowichan Express (NCX) route has been implemented.</p> <p>The transit service agreement with Halalt First Nation was renewed for another 5 years, effective October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2029.</p>	On Track	Senior Manager - Facilities & Transit
→ 11.2 Identify and pursue opportunities to develop and/or complete multi-purpose trails that connect and traverse jurisdictions		[Green bar spanning 2024 to 2025]			<p>Opportunities continue to be regularly reviewed to identify and pursue establishment of pathways and trails that traverse and interconnect jurisdictions associated with major land development proposals, road network upgrades and grant funding programs. Current initiatives underway are inclusive of previously Board approved Active Transportation projects in Electoral Areas A, E & H.</p>	On Track	General Manager - Operations
→ 11.3 Develop and implement a framework to identify, prioritize, and fund active transportation infrastructure within Electoral Areas		[Green bar spanning 2024 to 2025]			<p>Ministry of Transportation and Transit staff have been in communication with CVRD staff, and anticipate appearing as an EASC delegation in March 2025 with regard to active transportation interests within the Electoral Areas. Presentation topics are anticipated to address and clarify any gaps, expectations and overall direction about prioritizing active transportation initiatives, inclusive of funding opportunities and resources (internal and external), within the Ministry's road network.</p>	On Track	General Manager - Operations
→ 11.4 Advocate to MOTI for active transportation improvements in Electoral Areas		[Green bar spanning 2024 to 2025]			<p>Initial engagement has taken place with Ministry of Transportation and Transit representatives to review the CVRD Board's strategic Active Transportation objectives for the Electoral Areas and opportunities for next steps, inclusive of organizing a workshop with Electoral Area Directors.</p>	On Track	General Manager - Operations
12.0 Demonstrate strong fiscal stewardship							
→ 12.1 Fully implement an asset management program, including all asset groups and natural assets, which mitigate climate risks		[Green bar spanning 2024 to 2025]			<p>Updated Asset Management Policy has been approved by the Board. Asset Management maturity assessment has been completed, and results have been presented to the Board. Asset Management assessment results will be presented to SMT so that next steps are communicated and actions assigned.</p>	On Track	Manager - Asset Management
→ 12.2 Refine sustainable service delivery plans within the CVRD's asset management program			[Grey bar spanning 2025 to 2026]			Not started	Manager - Asset Management
→ 12.3 Increase regional service coordination to support cost efficiency		[Green bar spanning 2024 to 2026]			<p>The recently completed Organizational Efficiency Review is in the implementation phase, with priority areas within Corporate Services including IT, Procurement and Asset Management all underway.</p>	On Track	Chief Administrative Officer