



COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

**COVID-19 RESTORATION OF
PROGRAMS & SERVICES PLAN**

MAY 2020

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1 Executive Summary

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Plan for the Restoration of Programs and Services Affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (“Regional District Services Restoration Plan”) is a coordinated corporate strategy.

The restoration of Regional District services will be a gradual process and decisions will be guided by information and advice from health authorities, other levels of government, WorkSafeBC, and other stakeholder groups. Each program and service offered by the Regional District that has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic has been evaluated on criteria to mitigate risks to the public, staff, and the Regional District.

The Regional District Services Restoration Plan supports four primary strategic objectives guiding the Regional District’s collective efforts to respond to and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan is a living document, and will be updated as necessary to reflect emerging information and advice from public health authorities, other levels of government, WorkSafeBC, and member municipalities.

The restoration of services will have a financial impact. In some cases, new administrative controls, workspace modifications and changes to service delivery methods may be necessary to ensure current health guidelines are adhered to.

1.1 Acknowledgement

This plan has been developed with guidance from the City of Richmond’s *Plan for the Restoration of Services and Programs Affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic*; the CVRD thanks the City of Richmond for permission to build on their excellent work.

2 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the CVRD's ability to deliver programs and services to its citizens. Many Regional District services have been temporarily stopped or modified in response to COVID-19 under Stage One. These services are primarily in the parks, recreation and culture areas, but also include areas such as customer service at the CVRD head office in Duncan. These services were stopped or modified to ensure the health and wellbeing of the community and staff and in response to requirements by public health authorities for physical distancing among individuals. A summarized list of the Provincial Health Orders can be found in Appendix A.

The impacts to the affected Regional District services occurred primarily in the period between March 12, 2020 and March 30, 2020 and are ongoing.

In response to communication by senior levels of government that there has been some success in flattening the curve of COVID-19 infections and signals that aspects of the economy will soon be re-opening, the Regional District has begun planning for the restoration of programs services when the timing is appropriate. There will be some flexibility and discretion by the Regional District in many of the decisions around the restoration of services. Some actions to stop or modify services were originally taken in direct response to orders or advice from health authorities and senior levels of government, while other actions were in response to the needs of the community and directed by the CVRD Board or the CAO.

The CVRD Plan for the Restoration of Programs and Services Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic ("Regional District Services Restoration Plan") is a coordinated corporate strategy to re-open facilities and restore program and service delivery.

The restoration of Regional District services will be a gradual process and decisions will be guided by information and advice from health authorities, other levels of government, WorkSafeBC, and other stakeholder groups such as the BC Recreation & Parks Association (BCRPA), Lifesaving Society of BC, and provincial and national sport governing bodies. There is also a desire for alignment in the restoration of services with neighbouring municipalities in order to ensure balanced provision across the region and to avoid any one local government taking excessive risk and/or the load of participation from another local government. This alignment is expected to be achieved through collaboration by the Chief Administrative Officers.

It is to be noted that the Regional District Services Restoration Plan is a living document. Information is subject to change based on changing advice and information from public health authorities, other levels of government, WorkSafeBC, and other stakeholder groups.

3 Strategic Objectives

The Regional District Services Restoration Plan supports four primary strategic objectives guiding the Regional District's collective efforts to respond to and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. These include:

- Protect the health and safety of both employees and the public while serving as an essential service second line of defence against the COVID-19 pandemic as mandated by the Provincial Government;
- Protect Regional District assets while also continuing to the full extent possible to deliver Regional District services needed by the community, while adhering to restrictions and limits prescribed by the Provincial Health Officer and as mandated by Regional District Board;
- Do the necessary planning and complete all work needed to ensure that all facilities, programs, services and equipment will be in optimum condition and at operational status when re-opened for community use; and
- Ensure that the appropriate staff resources and remote work policies and procedures and appropriate technology is in place to provide the back of house services that will be needed over the full duration of the crisis to support all staff who are continuing to work on sustaining services as described above and on the recovery.

4 Restoring Programs & Services Along a Continuum

The restoration of programs and services consists of a carefully staged approach along a continuum that takes into account level of risk, exposure, and ability to effectively mobilize service delivery with strict adherence to health and safety guidelines.

4.1 Criteria

Each program and service offered by the Regional District that has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic has been evaluated on criteria to mitigate risk and determine the appropriate timing to restore program and service offerings. Factors considered to determine risk and impact of each service, or in some cases, groups of services, include the following:

1. Workforce and workplace requirements

This includes the level of staff training required, the level of exposure of staff members and/or the public to other staff members and/or members of the public, the need for personal protective equipment, and the need to adapt the physical infrastructure of the work environment in order to mitigate risks and exposure.

2. Risks to vulnerable populations

This includes, but is not limited to, seniors and those with compromised immune systems and/or pre-existing health conditions.

3. Ability to adhere to health protocols

This includes physical distancing, proper and frequent hand washing, not touching one's own face, and any additional health protocols and guidelines put forward by the BC Centre for Disease Control and public health officers.

4. Nature of participation in program or activity

This includes the mode of delivery (indoor, outdoor, or virtual), the extent to which equipment and materials are shared, the level of physical exertion involved, and the level of contact with others.

5. Additional risks

This includes any insurance implications, contractual agreements, and agreements with other user groups.

6. Timelines

This includes the length of time that it is estimated to take to be able to implement any necessary risk mitigation measures, train staff in necessary protocols, and/or complete physical adaptations needed.

7. Assumptions and prerequisites

This includes any assumptions made or prerequisites necessary in order to restore services according to the estimated timelines. This may include lifting of current government restrictions, access to other programs and amenities, or any other contingencies and dependencies for a particular program or service.

8. Financial Impact

This includes an analysis of the additional costs that may be incurred to mitigate risks, above and beyond existing expenses, timing of revenues, and any additional capital costs that may be required to modify facilities and work spaces.

5 Staged Approach to Service Restoration

The Regional District Services Restoration Plan consists of stages. The timing of each stage, and the restoration of individual programs and services within each stages, is subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial direction evolves. This plan assumes that there is no setback in the collective societal progress to flatten the curve of infections within the province.

The restoration of the Regional District's programs and services will necessitate changes in the way these services are delivered. A number of health and safety measures will be put in place across all facilities to ensure the safety of staff, elected officials and the public. The Regional District provides the opportunity for the public to safely participate in programs and services; however, it is the responsibility of the public to follow the established guidelines.

The additional measures to provide safe experiences for the public may include, but are not limited to:

- Encouraging, when feasible, services to be delivered electronically;
- Cleaning and disinfection at all facilities.
- Modification of facilities to include protective plexiglass barriers and stanchions for front counters where appropriate.
- Ensuring physical distancing is maintained through more appointment-based service provision, directional traffic modification and queuing strategies.
- Implementation of protective measures for vulnerable populations. This may include phasing in population-specific programs at a later point along the service restoration continuum.
- Ensuring participants and staff stay at home if they are sick, and contact 811 or their health care provider as needed (following the COVID-19 self-assessment).
- Promoting high levels of handwashing and personal hygiene as a key preventative measure. This includes providing access to washroom facilities and hand sanitizing stations.
- Permitting staff and participants to wear face masks if desired and where there is a risk that physical distancing may be hard to achieve or maintain consistently.
- Creating clear guidelines for staff, user groups and the public.
- Continuing to inform staff and the public of physical distancing, health and hygiene, and safety guidelines through signage, social media and other communications mechanisms.

Supply of materials to support these mitigating measures is not anticipated to be an issue based on current supplies at the Regional District. However, it will need to continue to be closely monitored for both availability and rising costs.

6 Plan for Restoring Services

6.1 Stage 1 (Mid-May Through Mid-June)

Characterized by the restoration of public access to most outdoor park amenities and outdoor programs with limits on group size. CVRD Head Office re-opened, with limited hours and access restrictions.

Parks & Trails Services

- Playgrounds, dog parks, bike park re-opened with signage
- Sport courts with limited users
- Remaining tennis courts/pickleball courts with limited users
- Volleyball courts with limited users

- Lacrosse boxes with limited users
- Outdoor field bookings where physical distancing can be maintained
- Majority of washrooms and porta-potties open

Recreation Services

- Outdoor recreation programming where physical distancing can be maintained
- Skate parks re-opened with signage

CVRD Head Office (Duncan)

- Following WorkSafe guidelines, front counter services limited to transit passes, dog licenses, courier deliveries and drop-off of documents
- Public enquiries via email and phone
- Meetings with applicants via WebEx by appointment
- Site visits and inspections by appointment
- Development applications - electronic only
- Increased digital engagement including transition to web-based advisory commission meetings and public hearings

6.2 Stage 2 (Late June Through September)

Characterized by the re-opening of recreation facilities and enclosed park facilities with limited hours and/or restrictions. Registered programs are restored with modifications.

Parks & Trails Services

- Picnic shelters with limited users following physical distancing guidelines (non-bookable use only)

Recreation Services

- Outdoor playground programs where physical distancing can be maintained
- Re-opening of CVRD recreation centres, inclusive of societies that operate the Saltair Community Centre, Shawnigan Lake Museum, South Cowichan Museum (Mill Bay Historic Church) and the Cowichan Bay Nature Centre to re-open their facilities
- Summer camps
- Indoor recreation programming where physical distancing can be maintained
- Indoor facility bookings where physical distancing can be maintained

CVRD Head Office (Duncan)

- Continued modified service levels

6.3 Stage 3 (September & Beyond)

Characterized by expanded public access to programs and services.

Parks & Trails Services

- Schedule limited size/scope park volunteer activities if appropriate

Recreation Services

- Recreation programming and facility booking where physical distancing can't be maintained (hockey, football and other contact sports)

Theatre

- Cowichan Performing Arts Centre limited programming, no audiences (rehearsals, live streaming)

CVRD Head Office (Duncan)

- Continued modified service levels

6.4 Stage 4

Characterized by full restoration of programs and services (return to normal operations)

Parks & Trails

- Lift restrictions on field bookings for sports tournaments
- Permit booking of group bookable facilities at Bright Angel Park and Glenora Trails Head Park
- Allow booking of park sites for third party special events

Recreation

- Events over 50 people

Theatre

- Cowichan Performing Arts Centre full programming with audiences

CVRD Head Office (Duncan)

- Front counter services resume fully to pre-COVID levels (following applicable WorkSafe guidelines)
- In-person Board and Committee meetings, public hearings, public consultation, etc.
- Continued provision of web-based services and meetings to enhance service delivery

7 Financial Impact

The restoration of programs and services will have financial implications. Many staff associated with the direct delivery of these services are not currently scheduled for work due to a shortage of work and to allow the Regional District to mitigate its financial losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Restoration of services will require re-scheduling these staff to deliver these services and incurring the cost of doing so. There will also be extraordinary costs (both one-time and ongoing) of offering these services in a modified manner in order to continue to ensure the safety of the public and staff. The Finance Division and budget Managers will monitor these costs and will report to the Board on any potential deficits and necessary measures to mitigate financial impacts.

8 Concurrent Planning and Initiatives

While planning for the restoration of programs and services at an operational level, it is necessary to develop concurrent plans to support each stage and transition for the public and for employees. The following initiatives are recommended to be developed to support the Regional District Services Restoration Plan.

1. A Workforce Resiliency Plan (or Return to Work Plan)

Just as the public will need clear information regarding the risk mitigation strategies that will be in place to protect the public, employees will need to understand their exposure risks, the appropriate safety measures being implemented, and resources that will be made available to them. CVRD employees may require additional support in the form of training, employee assistance/counselling services, or instruction on use of personal protective equipment as they transition back to work and to in-person service provision.

2. A Communication Plan

As programs and services begin to resume fully, the public will need to be informed. The public will also be looking to the Regional District for information to understand their risks and exposure, as well as to interpret the many, often ambiguous, guidelines provided by various authorities and the media. A Communication Plan for each Stage is recommended to support staff and the public as they navigate the various reactions that are to be expected as restrictions begin to ease and services expand. Public response to the COVID-19 pandemic locally has been commendable. The public will need clear communication to understand and make decisions for themselves and their families about how to receive and participate in programs and services as health authorities monitor the curve of transmission of COVID-19 on an ongoing basis.

3. A Cross-Functional Implementation Team

Upon approval of the Regional District Services Restoration Plan, the continuation of the COVID-19 Response Team is recommended to ensure the Regional District is coordinated and cohesive throughout implementation of this plan. The team will ensure that there is effective communication between departments and with senior management, and with member municipalities and other government agencies. As the plan is implemented, each stage will require careful review and monitoring to ensure it is current and relevant in light of any updates to health guidelines and other evolving factors

9 Appendix A: Provincial Health Orders & Guidelines

The Regional District Services Restoration Plan has been prepared following current Provincial Health Orders and guidelines and recommendations from local health authorities¹. The health and safety of Regional District employees and the public are at the forefront of any decisions regarding the restoration of programs and services. As Provincial Health Orders and guidelines and recommendations from health authorities evolve, the plan will be evaluated to ensure current information and protocols are strictly adhered to.

The provision of in-person programs and services is planned following Provincial Health Orders and guidelines and advice received from Island Health. All plans will be updated according to new information available from local health authorities. The following guidelines and recommendations pertain to the provision of Regional District programs and services.

9.1 Regarding Physical Distancing

- You must ensure that when there are people on your premises there is sufficient space available to enable them to maintain a distance of two metres from one another.
- Encourage customers to maintain a two metre distance from one another in line-ups to entrance, washrooms and other places where line-ups may occur, by placing distance indicators.
- Install markers on the floor (two metres apart) to support physical distancing in locations such as reception desks.
- Install physical barriers (e.g. plexiglass sneeze guards) in locations such as reception desks.
- Providers must not offer personal services.
- Providers must not host mass gatherings involving more than 50 people (but could have more than 50 people on site if physical distancing remains possible given the size of the facility).

9.2 Regarding Proper Hygiene & Sanitation

- Hand washing stations must be added if none currently exist.
- All common areas and surfaces should be cleaned at the end of each day. Examples include washrooms, shared offices, common tables, desks, light switches and door handles.

9.3 Regarding Signage & Communication

- Post signs encouraging people to maintain a two metre distance from one another throughout a space and ensure that there is sufficient space available for customers and staff to maintain that distance.

¹ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

- Post signs in your facility to encourage hand hygiene among all staff and guests.
- Prominently post signs encouraging regular hand washing.
- Post signage that limits the number of occupants in any elevator to four people at a time.

9.4 Regarding the Handling of Equipment & Materials

- Do not provide eating facilities, such as picnic tables or tables with chairs.
- Encourage staff to avoid touching personal items of clients.
- Wherever possible, provide guests/clients with single-use personal items (e.g. soaps, shampoos, sugar packets, creamers).
- Operators should follow routine cleaning practices with enhanced cleaning of high-touch surfaces or shared equipment.

9.5 Regarding Employee Interactions

- If an employee reports they are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and have been at the workplace, clean and disinfect all areas where that person has worked.
- Reduce in-person meetings and other gatherings and hold shop meetings in open spaces or outside.

9.6 Regarding the Public

- Anyone with COVID-19-like symptoms, such as sore throat, fever, sneezing or coughing, must self-isolate at home for a minimum of 10 days from onset of symptoms, until their symptoms have completely resolved.
- Customers may be on your premises only for the time that it takes them to purchase and collect their purchase.

9.7 Regarding the Handling of Food & Beverages

- Providers must NOT operate food or beverage services except for take-out or delivery service.
- Do NOT transport food on carts that have used dishes on them.
- Gloves are not required when delivering or picking up food trays.
- Regularly clean and disinfect carts used for transporting food and picking up dirty dishes.
- Disposable dishes are not required to stop COVID-19. Regular food trays, dishes and utensils can be used.
- Proper hand hygiene must be practiced before delivering and after picking up food trays.

The Provincial Health Officer has not [explicitly] issued any orders requiring the closure of outdoor recreation facilities such as parks, dog parks, skate parks, playgrounds, picnic areas, walking, running and cycling trails, beaches, piers, boat launches, athletics fields, outdoor

exercise equipment, tennis and basketball courts and golf courses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Island Health believes that the risk of COVID-19 transmission in these environments is low and that it is possible to safely operate these facilities at this time.

There may be additional measures related to the type of facility that operators can implement to further reduce the risk of COVID-19 such as limiting the number of participants or modifying hours of operation.