



COWICHAN VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

175 Ingram Street Duncan, BC V9L 1N8 250.746.2500 or 1.800.665.3955 reception@cvrd.bc.ca cvrd.ca

# STRATEGIC PLAN QUARTERLY REPORT January to March 2025

#### **QUARTERLY SUMMARY**

The CVRD created a Memorandum of Understanding with Cowichan Search and Rescue Society for development of new facility at the site of the Bings Creek Recycling & Waste Management Centre.

Emergency Management Cowichan, in partnership with the City of Duncan and Town of Ladysmith, launched a FireSmart Rebate program to support homeowners in performing FireSmart activities on residential properties in Town of Ladysmith, the City of Duncan and the Electoral Areas of the CVRD.

The CVRD launched the 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey to better understand resident satisfaction with service delivery. The survey ran for three weeks in March, with a summary report expected to be presented to the Board in late April.

The CVRD acquired approximately 75 hectares (185 acres) in Electoral Area I – Youbou/Meade Creek that will significantly increase the size of Bald Mountain Park. The acquisition increases the overall park size to approximately 425 hectares.



#### **ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS**

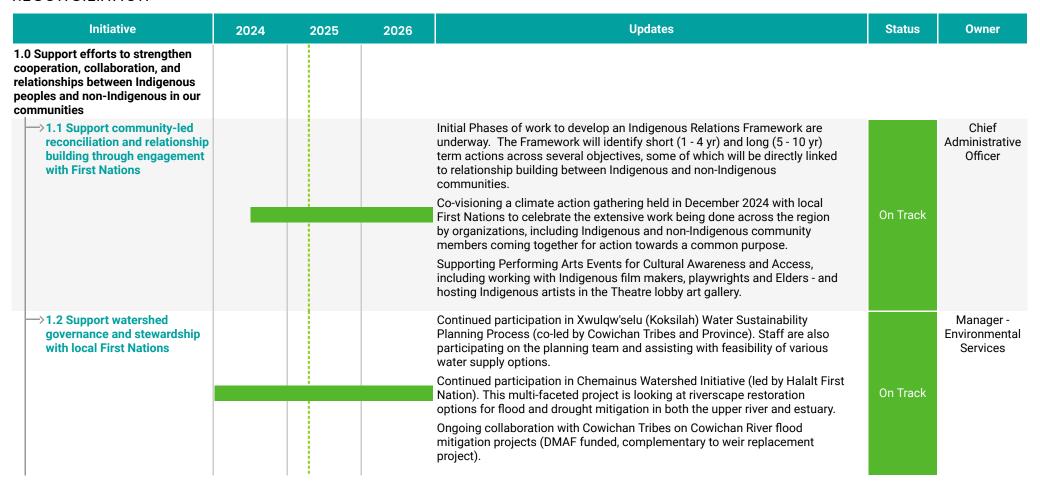
- CVRD Finance received the Canadian award for Financial Reporting for its Annual Financial Report (submitted 2024) from the Government Finance Officers Association
- Three-stream curbside collection totes beginning delivery to Electoral Areas
- CVRD Solid Waste Management received Leader in Sustainability Award 2024 from Call2Recycle Canada for battery recycling





#### 2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

#### RECONCILIATION



Initiative	2024	2025	2026	<b>Updates</b>	Status	Owner
Nations to develop initiatives that support our shared environmental, social, economic, and governance goals				The first phases of work to develop a CVRD Indigenous Relations Framework are underway. The Framework will identify short and long-term actions across several objectives linked to government to government (G2G) relations.		Chief Administrative Officer
				EMC has begun an Indigenous relations project, under the <i>Emergency Management Act</i> , for building out agreements with all Nations who identify traditional territory within the region.	On Track	
				Working with Malahat First Nation to plan next steps for establishing a G2G agreement for working together, expanding on the Community Economic Development Intitiative (CEDI).		
				Working with Ts'uubaa-asatx First Nation on next steps for establishing a G2G agreement which is now in the final draft stage.		
>1.4 Develop an Indigenous relations framework to integrate UNDRIP, DRIPA, and				Indigenous Relations Framework draft goals and project phasing developed with input from the CVRD Staff Advistory Group and senior management. The first two phases include:		Deputy CAO, General Manager -
implement Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Actions into our work at the CVRD				<ol> <li>Learning - Gathering of information already available from Elders, Knowledge Holders, governance bodies and community organizations. Already underway. Supports internal assessment. Continues throughout the establishment of the Framework.</li> <li>Internal assessment - Draft workplan has been prepared for internal assessment and summary of CVRD's current policy and practices related to Indigenous relations and advancing reconciliation. The assessment is intended to include recommendations for improving coordination and information sharing within the organization, and potential objectives for framework development.</li> </ol>	On Track	Corporate Services

## **OUR COMMITMENTS**

Initiative	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
.0 Serve, strengthen, and connect owichan communities through ollaborative governance						
>2.1 Work collaboratively with member municipalities and First Nations towards the development of a Regional Growth Strategy				Following the 2024 Q4 CVRD referral of the RGS and Steering Committee Terms of Reference, Duncan, Ladysmith, Lake Cowichan and North Cowichan Councils have appointed representative (professional planners) to the RGS Steering Committee. Further appointments to the broader Intergovernmental Advisory Committee should be made following a formal Board resolution to initiate the RGS, notification to the Province and invitations to local First Nations.	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.  Feasibility study to be undertaken in Q4 2025.	On Track	General Manager - Land Use Services
2.3 Undertake a preliminary governance study for the southern Electoral Areas				Study complete and received by the Board in Q1 2025. Staff will return with recommendations for next steps.	Complete	Chief Administrative Officer
>2.4 Enhance community engagement and responsiveness with a variety of strategies						
Completing a communications and engagement strategy with a focus on climate readiness and adaptation				Staff will commence this project and provide timelines and scope, upon completion of the 2025 Resident Satisfaction Survey. The Survey is expected to be completed by the end of Q2 2025.	Not started	Manager - Communicatio & Engagemen
-> Website improvements and public information				Information Architecture phase of project almost complete, pending final review approval.		Manager - Communicatio
campaigns to raise awareness of the CVRD and its services				Discovery phase of project nearing completion. Internal engagement on Information Architecture complete; consultant to present updated document to staff on March 12, 2025, for review.	On Track	& Engagemen
> Public information meetings prior to public hearings					Complete	Manager - Communicatio & Engagemen
Community Satisfaction Survey	•			Both versions of surveys completed and closed on March 18, 2025; consultant is currently preparing the reports. CVRD staff and the consultant are to present summary reports to the Board on April 30, 2025.  Community Satisfaction Survey launched on March 4, 2025, including radio, print and online advertising. High uptake on both the phone and online versions of the survey after the first week.	On Track	Manager - Communicatio & Engagemer

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				GHG and energy reduction strategy is underway with anticipated completion Q2 2025. This will include an updated GHG inventory, identification of emissions reductions pathways, and recommendations for corporate and community mitigation actions. Staff report to committee anticipated by Q3 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				Climate action has been limited in Q1 due to temporary reduction in staff capacity.  Climate Mitigation Strategy development continues: draft GHG inventory completed Q1 2025; identification of emission reduction pathways and recommended actions anticipated Q2 2025.  Climate Forum Planning group continues to meet to co-ordinate future regional climate initiatives.  LGCAP funding has been approved for:  Regional climate projection update  Cool It Climate Leadership training program for local schools  Organics Diversion through 3-stream curbside collection	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				The Cowichan Local Authority Emergency Management Agreement was renewed with member municipalities through December 2025, with an option for an additional two years.  Initiated projects to address Regional Emergency Operations Centre location needs and projects associated with Emergency and Disaster Management Act 2023 compliance, including Indigenous Engagement Requirements and options for regional mitigation strategies.  Significant progress towards regional training and exercise model; several training offerings completed and targets for staff training levels for REOC and Emergency Support Services established across CVRD and Member Municipalities.	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						
—>Lake Cowichan Weir Replacement				CVRD staff continue to participate in the Cowichan Weir Technical Working Group. Current work involves finalizing cost estimates for operations, maintenance and insurance. Successful visit by Minister of Water Land and Resource Stewardship to learn more about the weir project.	On Track	Manager - Environmental Services
Stocking Lake Dam Replacement				Consultant design work is ongoing. Estimated completion of design work is Q3 2025. Tendering into Q4 2025/Q1 2026 with construction completed by 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 - Corporate Services
-> 4.2 Be an employer of choice - celebrate and communicate recognition and appreciation of staff				Staff continue to advance initiatives that foster a culture of recognition and well-being. The review and revision of all HR-related administrative policies is underway, with major completion anticipated in Q2 2025. Meanwhile, the 2025 employee recognition event calendar is being finalized to offer informal appreciation opportunities for all staff, and new employee performance development and management tools are set for full implementation in Q2 2025 alongside coaching and training workshops.		Senior Manager - Human Resources
				The wellness program is also expanding in 2025 to promote overall staff well-being. Highlights include seasonal events such as Bowling Night, GoByBike Week, and a Run Club launch in Q1; race days, hiking series, and social gatherings in Q2; a financial wellness seminar series and Fall GoByBike Week in Q3; and mindfulness challenges, an 8-week BCalm Mindfulness Course, and a Flu/COVID Vaccination Clinic in Q4, with quarterly Wellness Days throughout the year.	On Track	
3 Develop and report on measures to improve recruitment and retention of employees				Staff are developing and reporting on measures to improve recruitment and retention of employees through several key initiatives. Staff continue to explore options for an HRIS system, targeting implementation in 2026, which will support enhanced HR practices and data-driven decision-making. In anticipation of this system, staff are also investigating options for a workflow efficiency analysis—focusing initially on Payroll and Advisory Service functions—with completion slated for 2025.		Senior Manager - Human Resources
				The exempt compensation review survey is complete, and data analysis is nearing completion, with recommendations expected to be presented to the Board in Q2 2025. Additionally, preparations for COR Safety Certification in 2027 have commenced. These preparations include an internal review to identify gaps in the current CVRD-wide safety program, the creation of a project charter to outline the necessary steps and resources, and the development of a business case that outlines the organizational benefits of obtaining COR certification.	On Track	
→ 4.4 Promote a learning culture to support effective decision-making and program delivery				Staff have secured contracts for significant learning and development opportunities in 2025, including Coaching for Performance, Managing People and Performance, Leading Virtual Teams, Strength-Based Leadership, and Leading with Emotional Intelligence. Additional sessions with dates to be determined include Indigenous Allyship & Antiracism, Two-Eyed Seeing, Strengthening Your Working Relationships, Strengthening Your Communication, Employee Engagement, and Supervising in a Unionized Environment.	On Track	Senior Manager - Human Resources
				In addition, the new CVRD Learning & Development Program brand and supporting communication materials have been completed, reinforcing our commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning and effective program delivery.		6

## 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					A draft EDC Strategic Plan has been prepared by project consultants, for staff review. Once a CVRD and municipal staff review is complete, a revised draft Strategic Plan will be prepared. A Service Review of EDC will take place between April to September 2025. It is anticipated the draft EDC Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board as part of the EDC Service Review process, likely in Q2 2025. Previously, the EDC Strategic Plan was expected to be completed in Q1 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					Draft Local Area Plans (LAPs) for CVRD Electoral Areas and details regarding engagement and consultation are available on PlanYourCowichan.	On Track	Manager - Strategic Initiatives

# OUR COMMUNITIES

Initiative	2023	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
O Create healthy, livable, and ficiently 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 Board received the Final Report: Towards a Shared Vision for the Island Rail Corridor.	On Track	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
6.2 Modernize the Official Community Plan for the Electoral Areas					Following a presentation to EASC for consideration of OCP Bylaw No. 4373 amendments, second reading and public hearing, the Board (March 26, 2025) requested additional engagement with Advisory Planning Commissions.  A revised project charter and project timeline has been prepared for EASC consideration.	Behind	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
-> Strengthen climate action policy					Corresponding climate action policies have been included in the draft Modernized OCP Bylaw No. 4373.	Behind	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
Strengthen ecological and water protection measures					Corresponding policies have been included in the draft Modernized OCP Bylaw No. 4373.	Behind	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.	Behind	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 - Developmer Services
Enhance development approval processes through improved policies, procedures and bylaws					Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw (CZB) is under development; project may be delayed due to delays in the MOCP process and limited GIS resources.  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 Q2 2025.  Development procedures bylaw and fees are under review.	Behind	Manager - Developmer Services
Enhance public     awareness and     participation in     development processes					Information about current applications and initiatives is maintained on the CVRD website and PlanYourCowichan.  Development guides are currently being updated.	On Track	Manager - Developmer Services

Initiative	2023	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
-> Support Advisory Planning Commissions					Current APC terms run from January 1, 2025 (or later) to December 31, 2026.  APC members received orientation on APC bylaws, procedures and conduct matters in February 2025.  The annual CVRD Code of Conduct training will be provided to members again in 2025.	On Track	Manager - Development Services
→ Implement a Land Management System					Planning module user acceptance testing was unsuccessful. The project is being re-scoped and a new RFP will be issued in Q2 2025.	Behind	General Manager - Land Use 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, including advancing individual community plans. EDC and IT are actively investigating opportunities to make better use of used IT equipment, in line with the Connectivity Strategy recommendations.	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					<ul> <li>The Board attended AVICC on April 11-13, 2025, and presented the following resolutions:</li> <li>1. Facilitating First Nations' Participation in Local Government Planning and Land Use Processes.</li> <li>2. Support and Resourcing for Active Transportation Projects by the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.</li> <li>3. Addressing local communities concerns with private managed forest lands.</li> <li>In addition, the Board decided to send six Electoral Area Directors to Federation of Canadain Muncipalities (FCM) in May 2025.</li> </ul>	On Track	Chief Administrative Officer
→ 6.6 Establish a new South Sector Liquid Waste Management Plan					Meeting with primary consultant and financial consultant of draft SSLWMP.  Development of frameworks to reinitiate this project is ongoing. Workplan development identified for Q3 2025.	Not started	General Manager - Operations
→ 6.7 Implement 3 stream collection for solid waste, recycling, and organics					The new curbside collection calendar was mailed to residents at the end of Q1 and will conclude in early Q2 2025. The procurement for the new software program is anticipated in early Q2. Two out of the three curbside trucks were delivered in late Q1, and the third will arrive in early Q2 2025.	On Track	Senior Manager - Recycling & Waste Management
->6.8 Explore design and planning improvements to Bings Creek facility					Project work is commencing on time and on budget. Multiple consultation sessions, both in-person and virtually, have occurred with internal stakeholders (Parks & Trails, Recycling & Waste Management, Utilities, Emergency Management). Anticipate the Development Plan report for Q2/Q3 2025.	On Track	General Manager - Operations

Initiative	2023	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
Service coordination and consolidation incorporating the recommendations of the Utility Service Review					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 complete. Kerry Village is now discharging to the Mill Bay plant. Kerry Village design for refit to pump station complete. Construction to be completed in-house when staff capacity permits. Brulette's connection will require a pump station proposed to be built as part of the Stonebridge development.  Marble Bay Cottages feasibility study to join the Bald Mountain Water system is on-hold at the request of the strata which is currently investigating alternate options.	On Track	Senior Manager - Utilities
→ 6.10 Implement the Local Government Bylaw Dispute Adjudication System						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.	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						Complete	Manager - Strategic Initiatives
→ 7.2 Complete the Workforce Housing Strategy					A draft revised Workforce Housing Strategy has been prepared by the consultant following receiving feedback from municipalities. It is anticipated that the revised Strategy will be presented to the Board, as part of the EDC Service Review process, likely in Q2 2025. Previously, the Strategy was expected to be completed 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					Staff continue to liase with Cowichan Housing Association in delivery of their annual workplan.	On Track	Deputy CAO, 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 deferred until after decisions are made on regional growth and regional planning.	On Track	General Manager - Land Use Services

Initiative	2023	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
>7.5 Enhance enforcement of and modernize short term rental regulations in electoral areas					STR workshop has been scheduled as a Special EASC for April 30, 2025.  Draft bylaw amendments and temporary use permit guidelines were referred to Advisory Planning Commissions.  The Community Planning and Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement Divisions are coordinating on short-term rental workshop for Directors. Target date is April 2, 2025.	On Track	Senior Manager - Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement

## **OUR ENVIRONMENT**

Initiative	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
.0 Manage current and future emand for water resources in ways nat recognize and respect resource mits and the needs of our natural nyironment						
>> 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				DWWP Coordinator started January 2025, and is advancing priority actions of the DWWP Program.  Water sampling (including sampling on Shawnigan and Somenos Lakes) scheduled for spring/Q2 2025.  Groundwater Quality Monitoring Strategy completion anticipated for Q2 2025.  Technical Advisory Team (TAT) for DWWP: first meeting planned for Q2 2025.	On Track	Manager - Environmenta Services
→ 8.2 Provide support to community partners involved in local watershed governance				Cowichan Watershed Board and Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC agreements are continuing (both in year 2 of 3 year agreements).  Shawnigan Basin Society and Municipality of North Cowichan partnership agreements have been approved for 2025.  Revisions to the partnership policy will be considered in 2025.	On Track	Manager - Environmenta Services
O Strengthen, in collaboration with ur partners, our airshed planning forts improving the quality of the r we breathe						
→ 9.1 Implement Regional Airshed Protection Strategy				In 2024, CVRD processed 30 applications for woodstove replacement and 17 applications for new heat pumps. 6 bounties for removing old woodstoves were also claimed. The 2025 rebate program is now open and initial response has been strong.	On Track	Manager - Environmenta Services
-> 9.2 Update the Smoke Bylaw for Electoral Areas				Staff have reviewed and are drafting revisions to the bylaw.  Educational materials were updated for 2025.  Public enquiries during the spring burning window indicate additional public education is needed regarding land-clearing debris and overlap with the Landclearing Management Regulation Bylaw.	On Track	Manager - Environmental Services
0.0 Support efforts aimed at cosystem protection and esservation						
10.1 Protect and preserve the CVRD's existing regional parks     undertake Regional Parkland Strategy				Summary of What We Heard Report prepared and provided to Regional Parks & Trails Master Plan (RPTMP) Advisory Group and Committee of the Whole by the consulting team in Q1 2025.	On Track	Senior Manage - Parks & Trails
→ 10.2 Review the Regional Parkland Acquisition Strategy				Summary of What We Heard Report prepared and provided to Regional Parks & Trails Master Plan (RPTMP) Advisory Group and Committee of the Whole by the consulting team in Q1 2025.	On Track	Senior Manage - 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							
The second second second regional transit service as funding allows					Both the CVRD and the RDN Boards have agreed to reduce the transit fares on the NCX service, with the approved reductions in transit fares implemented on April 1, 2025.  A labour dispute between BC Transit's contractor and their unionized employees of locals 114 and 333 resulted in a transit strike effective February 8, 2025. The strike resulted in a service suspension on all the Cowichan conventional routes, as well as the interregional service to Victoria. The handyDART service has been deemed essential for customers with appointments related to serious medical conditions, and will continue to operate during the service disruption. Mediation meetings have commenced to support further bargaining. The next set of meetings is scheduled for early April with dates in mid-April also set aside.	On Track	Senior Manager - Facilities & Transit
11.2 Identify and pursue opportunities to develop and/or complete multipurpose trails that connect and traverse jurisdictions					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.	On Track	General Manager - Operations
>11.3 Develop and implement a framework to identify, prioritize, and fund active transportation infrastructure within Electoral Areas	1				Ministry of Transportation and Transit staff and CVRD staff are planning an interagency workshop during Q2 2025 to discuss topics such as active transportation, drainage and communication protocol.	On Track	General Manager - Operations
>11.4 Advocate to MOTT for active transportation improvements in Electoral Areas					The Board approved submission for consideration to AVICC a resolution to request that the Ministry of Transportation and Transit commit necessary staff resources to work with local governments to support the planning, design, and expedient approval and development of active transportation infrastructure along rural Provincial roadways. Staff are also working on hosting an interagency meeting during Q2 2025 to discuss how to jointly advance issues of concern.	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					Asset Management Strategy & Roadmap now completed. High priority improvement tasks have been identified and communicated to departmental staff. Asset Valuation project for facilities has been awarded and will start in Q2 2025. Project charter and steering committee terms of reference have been completed.	On Track	Manager - Asset Management
-> 12.2 Refine sustainable service delivery plans within the CVRD's asset management program					Project planned to commence in Q2 2025, during the development of the 2026 financial plan process.	Not started	Manager - Asset Management 13

Initiative	2	2024	2025	2026	Updates	Status	Owner
→ 12.3 Increase regional service coordination to support cost efficiency					Implementation of the 2024 Organizational Efficiency Review Recommendations is well underway, which included a significant organizational restructuring to better coordinate services. Environmental Services has moved into the Land Use Services Department, Emergency Management has moved to the Community Services Department and other former Strategic Services Department Functions have been consolidated into Corporate Services for added efficiency.	On Track	Chief Administrative Officer