



***Capital Regional District
Government-to-Government Relationship
Building Initiative:
Summary Report***

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Executive Summary

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is working towards greater input and involvement from First Nations in the implementation of CRD's core areas of business.

Building on the recommendations of the Special Task force on First Nations Relations (2015 to 2018), the CRD has been pursuing more inclusive approaches to governance and decision-making with First Nations.

The CRD Board approved funding for staff to undertake a one-year engagement initiative with nine First Nations to identify Nation-specific principles, interests, and mechanisms to strengthen relationships, support regular and ongoing dialogue regarding CRD's business areas and inform a broader CRD Reconciliation Action Plan.

To help inform the plan, from April 2023 to March 2024, the Jemma Scoble Consulting Team along with staff from the CRD reached out to nine First Nations who have current population settlements in the capital region as part of the government-to-government engagement initiative.

This report summarizes the engagement process undertaken and feedback from these discussions with additional input captured from earlier pertinent discussions with First Nations. It includes the work CRD has advanced to date with First Nations and shares an overview of similar work in other jurisdictions. Together these learnings will inform the CRD's next steps in developing a reconciliation action plan.

Through meetings, emails, and calls, during the engagement initiative, CRD met and engaged with all nine First Nations on the topic of government-to-government relations. Key themes heard included:

- A desire for a new relationship;
- An interest in formalizing the relationship;
- Implementation of UNDRIP;
- The need for a flexible approach;
- A challenge with capacity and a need for resources;
- The importance of Nation-to-Nation dialogue; and
- The need to build the relationship around CRD core services.

Given the timeframe for the engagement, and the numerous requests of First Nations for project engagement on various CRD initiatives over the same time, the input heard is not exhaustive and additional interests may be raised over the coming years as the CRD continues to build its relationship with First Nation leaders in the region.

The report concludes with key recommendations for consideration in continuing this engagement and in support of a reconciliation action plan, including:

- Prioritize reconciliation with an intentional approach to funding;
- Prioritize reconciliation with resources & time;
- Develop and implement protocol agreements and MOUs with First Nations;
- Move forward with collaborative development of a Reconciliation Action Plan; and
- Continue to build on a principled approach to engagement with all First Nations within CRD's jurisdiction.

In summary, all nine First Nations have responded to the CRD's Government-to-Government Relationship Building Initiative as a positive first step toward improving relationships. Through the discussions, the CRD has begun to develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with some First Nations, and is learning about the preferences, priorities, and expectations of others when it comes to ongoing engagement with the CRD. CRD staff have recognized the critical need for funding to support ongoing engagement with First Nations, the need for a flexible approach that reflects the unique needs of each community, and the need for greater internal staff resources at the CRD to meet these objectives and support ongoing and meaningful engagement. First Nations desire concrete action that responds directly to their feedback as a demonstration of reconciliation in action, and a clear path toward alignment with UNDRIP, including free, prior, and informed consent, and the right to self-determination.

1. Introduction

The Capital Regional District is working towards greater input and involvement from First Nations in the implementation of CRD's core areas of business.

Building on the recommendations of the Special Task force on First Nations Relations (2015 to 2018), the CRD has been pursuing more inclusive approaches to governance and decision-making with First Nations. Recent consultation on the updated Regional Parks Strategic Plan has reinforced the desire of First Nations to have a more productive and holistic relationship with the CRD and confirmed that some of the constraints to improved relations identified during the Special Task force consultation remain barriers to greater collaboration between CRD and First Nations.

The CRD Board approved funding for staff to undertake a one-year engagement initiative with nine First Nations to identify Nation-specific principles, interests, and mechanisms to strengthen relationships, support regular and ongoing dialogue regarding CRD's business areas and inform a broader CRD reconciliation action plan.

This work is consistent with the CRD's Corporate Plan goal¹ to strengthen relationships with First Nations, and its Board priorities² to collaborate with First Nations to build and strengthen new processes for respectful, reciprocal government-to-government decision making and service delivery that uplift Indigenous self-determination.

The engagement initiative builds on all CRD's recent efforts to engage and consult First Nations on their interests and priorities as they relate to CRD's business areas. The feedback received, together with learnings from all business areas and from other similar organizations and jurisdictions, will inform the approach to the reconciliation action plan.

This report summarizes CRD's First Nations relations efforts to date, a scan of other similar jurisdictions and their approach to reconciliation, and the engagement process undertaken, and feedback received from April 2023 to March 2024 within the government-to-government engagement initiative. Direct input into government-to-government relationships captured from earlier pertinent discussions with First Nations has also been included. The report identifies key themes heard in the feedback from First Nations and makes recommendations to inform the CRD's next steps in pursuing a reconciliation action plan.

1.1 Project Overview

The CRD operates on the territories of 19 First Nations whose ancestors have been taking care of the land since time immemorial. CRD is working towards greater input and involvement from First Nations in the implementation of CRD's core areas of business. In 2023 and 2024, the CRD engaged with nine First Nations, who have current population settlements within the region and several service agreements with the CRD, to seek guidance on how the CRD may strengthen its government-to-government relationships. The CRD proposed to work together with individual First Nation governments to strengthen relationships and co-create mechanisms that support long-term, respectful, reciprocal engagement at both the leadership and operational levels.

1.2 Scope of Work

Jemma Scoble Consulting was contracted to support the CRD's First Nations engagement on the government-to-government initiative. This included supporting CRD engagement efforts to:

¹ CRD Corporate Plan First Nations Goal #3a

² CRD 2023-2026 Board Priority #4

- Strengthen government-government relationships with First Nations on matters pertaining to CRD business to identify areas of shared, mutual interest and potential areas of conflicting interests.
- Understand the preferred forums and frequency for government-to-government conversations.
- Understand the preferred topics and mechanisms for ongoing staff-to-staff operational discussions and how the government-to-government relationship-building initiative can support these conversations and the work at hand.
- Understand the high-level principles, processes, and meeting schedules that could support ongoing engagement with First Nations.
- Understand a model of ongoing funding that could address the administrative and financial resources required to engage with CRD on an ongoing basis.
- Understand possible next steps to continue to build strong relationships and inform a recommendation to the CRD Board to support on-going reconciliation work and inform a CRD Reconciliation Action Plan and alignment with UNDRIP.
- Seek input regarding future paths to participation on the Regional District Board per a request from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.
- Consider feedback provided by First Nations through CRD's concurrent engagement processes including other meetings, forums, and mechanisms during this time.

Due to the nature of this initiative, CRD leadership and staff have the best understanding of the goals and desires of First Nations in relation to CRD's business activities. The Jemma Scoble Team have deep experience on First Nations engagement but are outside of the everyday operations of the CRD and are not privy to all meetings and discussions with First Nations.

As such, a more considered and collaborative approach was taken that captured both the leadership, knowledge, and influence of the CRD executive team and the expertise and resources of the Jemma Scoble Team.

This report summarizes feedback provided by the nine First Nations between April 2023 to March 2024. This includes feedback provided through the CRD's concurrent consultation processes on other topics, including meetings, forums, and other activities during this time.

1.3 Limitations of the Work

While CRD's government-to-government Initiative took place over ten months and is ongoing, competing interests and resource constraints continue to limit the level and depth of First Nations engagement on CRD projects and initiatives. As such, participation from all

nine First Nations at both the staff and leadership level within the desired timeframe on the government-to-government initiative remained a challenge.

During this time, the CRD was also engaging with various First Nations on the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy, the Mount Work Regional Park Management Plan, Solid Waste Management Plan, the Royal Oak Golf Course Land Acquisition, Inclusive Governance, land altering works/ heritage conservation, numerous regulatory referrals, Liquid Waste Management Plan updates, water and wastewater servicing agreement, land use planning, and the Forum of All Councils. This report has not been reviewed by First Nations.

2. Background: CRD + Reconciliation

The CRD's work in reconciliation began almost ten years ago with the development of the Special Task Force on First Nations Relations in 2015. The work completed by the Task Force demonstrated the CRD's commitment to working with neighbouring First Nations and established government-to-government relationship-building as a priority focus of the Board.

The Task Force delivered its Final Report in 2018, which provided a summary of activities and lessons learned over the course of the Task Force's four-year term. It also presented 8 recommendations for the Board's consideration.

Below are the 8 recommendations and the status of work to date:

1. That the CRD Board commit to hosting an annual Forum of All Councils with political representation from all levels of government.
 - The CRD hosted a Forum of All Councils in 2016, 2019 and 2023. In 2020, 2021 and 2022, Forums were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The Forum of All Councils brings together elected representatives to network, share information and learn. Planning is underway for the 2024 Forum of All Councils.

2. That the CRD Board support the establishment of and participation in an Inter-governmental Working Group with the Province to foster stronger relationships between First Nations and Local Government.
 - Since 2019, the CRD meets quarterly with the province (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation) as a forum to raise requests coming from Nations where implementation will require provincial involvement.

3. That the Board adopt the proposed Statement of Reconciliation.
 - The Board adopted the proposed Statement of Reconciliation in 2018.
 - The Statement continues to guide the overall CRD approach to First Nations relations and inform the Board strategic priorities and corporate plan.

4. That the Board pursue a proposed First Nations Remuneration Policy, and direct staff to provide recommendations, for consideration by the incoming Board.
 - CRD adopted amendments to its Board Remuneration and Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy in November 2020, to remunerate First Nation representatives participating in CRD Standing Committees.
 - CRD adopted a First Nations Cultural Honorarium Policy and Guidelines in 2021, to establish consistency in how First Nations are recognized for voluntary work such as blessings, welcomes, and cultural ceremonies, in support of CRD projects and activities.

5. That the Board direct staff to provide recommendations on eliminating barriers and systemic discrimination to ensure a corporate environment that promotes equity and diversity in the workplace, for consideration by the incoming Board.
 - An Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Committee was established in 2020 and meets regularly.
 - Training sessions for staff offered since 2020 have included How to Be an Ally, Unconscious Bias, Unconscious Bias in Recruitment, Active Bystander, Inclusion Literacy and Allyship. EDI training is now foundational for all employees.
 - An EDI training seminar on Inclusion Literacy and Board Readiness was delivered to CRD Board members January 2024, with a follow-up scheduled.
 - Other actions include EDI vision statement drafted; EDI lens incorporated into Employee Experience Survey and action planning in response to feedback; Awareness, Observances and Celebrations calendar broadened; participation in the Pride Parade; and a project to phase-in inclusive washrooms is underway.
 - In 2024, a new Manager of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility was hired.

6. That the Board direct staff to draft a program of future concrete actions to support the CRD's commitment to Reconciliation, for consideration by the incoming Board.

- CRD staff anticipate that the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan will be the focus of its next round of engagement with First Nations.
 - The government-to-government initiative was undertaken as a step towards this goal, to build relationships and hear from Nations about their priority topics for a Reconciliation Action Plan.
7. That the Board direct staff to undertake a feasibility study for an Indigenous economic development partnership model to be considered by the incoming Board.
- In 2020, the CRD undertook a feasibility study for an Indigenous Economic Partnership Model. This feasibility study, led by the Indigenomics Institute, involved engagements with CRD staff and the nine First Nations with populated reserve lands in the capital region and included several goals and recommended actions related to CRD Indigenous employment initiatives, including increased opportunities for First Nations employment across the CRD.
 - The report recommendations have informed recent initiatives related to the Indigenous employment scoping project, cultural perspectives training for CRD staff, the development of a First Nations Communications Framework, inclusive governance at CRD Standing Committees, updating of water and wastewater service agreements, amendments to the procurement policy to encourage Indigenous procurement, development of the South Island Indigenous Business Directory, and incorporating Indigenous-led programming into Regional Park interpretive programs.
8. That the Board recommend to the incoming Chair the establishment of a First Nations Relations Committee as a Standing Committee of the Board.
- The First Nations Relations Committee was established in December 2018.

Since the Task Force, the CRD has pursued several additional reconciliation priorities and First Nation initiatives including:

First Nation involvement in CRD Standing Committees

- In January 2021, the CRD Board approved several bylaw changes to provide for the inclusion of First Nations elected representatives on CRD standing committees. The approved bylaw changes created a flexible model of inclusion where First Nations elected representatives can formally participate and vote on items of interest at CRD standing committees.

Liaison positions

- Through the Wastewater Treatment Project, agreements were signed with the Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, and with the Tsawout, Tsartlip and Tseycum First Nations via the WSANEC Leadership Council, that provided funding for liaison positions for the duration of the project and regular meetings with CRD staff.

Watershed Access Agreement

- In 2018, the *T'Sou-ke Leech Watershed Traditional Use Access Agreement* was signed to support the safe access of T'Sou-ke Nation to the Leech water supply area for traditional use purposes.

Inclusive Regional Governance Initiative

- In 2023, the CRD received a study grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to explore, with First Nations in the region, how First Nations could join the board table as voting members. These discussions were raised as part of the government-to-government initiative and are underway.

Heritage Conservation

- Long identified as a priority by First Nations, the CRD adopted a Conservation and Protection of Heritage Sites policy in 2020, hired an in-house archaeologist in 2022 and has been working across CRD operations to build collaborative relationships with First Nations regarding archaeological and cultural heritage conservation. CRD staff and managers are provided with heritage conservation training and work closely with Indigenous cultural monitors, Guardians, and technicians during land altering works. This works aims to ensure that CRD is respecting First Nations' heritage stewardship policies and perspectives and meeting regulatory obligations. Depending on the nature of the work CRD staff share project information with involved First Nations for input and to collaborate on methodological approaches prior to undertaking land altering works.

Regional Parks

- The *T'Sou-ke Sea to Sea Traditional Use Agreement*, signed in 2018, established the safe and sustainable use of the Sea-to-Sea Regional Park for T'Sou-ke Nation traditional use activities.
- Regional Parks hired an Indigenous Cultural Programmer to develop and offer *Exploring Indigenous Perspectives* programming, which has been offered in the past year to over 2,000 park visitors.

- The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan, updated in 2023, includes several reconciliation-related priorities, such as the inclusion of a new land use designation – a conservancy area – to facilitate the protection of natural or cultural features, primarily for their intrinsic value to First Nations. The Strategic Plan was informed by input from First Nations as summarized in the Strategic Plan Engagement Summary. Regional Parks staff are collaborating with First Nations on the development of management plans, approaches to heritage conservation, traditional use agreements, ecological restoration, and other priorities identified by Nations.
- In April 2023, CRD began engaging with First Nations on the development of a new Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy. Substantive feedback has been received and this work is still in progress.

Community Parks

- CRD community parks are located within the Salt Spring Island, Southern Gulf Islands and Juan de Fuca Electoral Areas, and are governed differently than Regional Parks, with few staff or volunteers and limited budgets. A recent focus has been on heritage conservation within community parks, collaborating on heritage management and relationship-building with First Nations.

Indigenous Employment:

- In 2023, an Indigenous Employment Scoping Project sought to learn how First Nations and Indigenous organizations in the capital region would like to be engaged on employment initiatives, assess CRD readiness to collaborate on employment partnerships and initiatives with Indigenous partners, and research wise practices related to Indigenous employment and workplace cultural safety. Recommendations are outlined in the [2023 Indigenous Employment Project Summary Report](#), [Capital Regional District Indigenous Employment Project Findings and Recommendations Report](#), and [Report on Wise Practices: Indigenous Employment and Culturally Safe and Supportive Workplaces](#). The next step is the development of an Indigenous Employment Strategy for the organization.

Solid Waste Partnership Agreement:

- Since 2022, negotiations are underway with First Nations to identify collaboration opportunities for priority economic, employment and environmental protection initiatives associated with the operations and future build out of the Hartland Landfill.

Indigenous Procurement:

- In May 2022, the CRD Board amended the Procurement Policy to better enable procurement from Indigenous businesses. This included language to encourage Indigenous procurement opportunities in a way that supports regional economic capacity building.
- In June 2023, the CRD, in partnership with the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, the South Island Prosperity Partnership, the City of Victoria, and the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, launched the [South Island Indigenous Business Directory](#). The Directory is a listing of self-identified Indigenous businesses and was developed to learn more about Indigenous businesses in the southern region of Vancouver Island, to find opportunities to procure more goods and services from Indigenous businesses, and to support the greater goal of Indigenous economic reconciliation.
- Direct procurement from First Nations includes silviculture operations in the Watershed, operation of the Spring Salmon Place Campground (Sooke Potholes), standing offer contracts for cultural workers, archaeological inventory contract(s), and a trucking company working with the Residual Treatment Facility at the Hartland Landfill.

Water & Wastewater Service Agreements:

- The CRD is in discussion with First Nations to update water and wastewater service agreements that address the Nations' needs and priorities.

Juan de Fuca Local Area Services:

- The CRD is collaborating with First Nations regarding infrastructure feasibility studies, official community plans, heritage conservation and land use referrals.

Recent Education and Training for Board Directors:

- In February 2022, the CRD Board of Directors were offered a 3-hour online Introduction to Cultural Perspectives Training, delivered by Indigenous Perspectives Society. Twenty-six Directors and alternate Directors participated, along with the Executive Leadership Team.
- In May 2023, the CRD Board was offered a 3-hour in-person Indigenous Intercultural Skills Training, delivered by Indigenous Perspectives Society. Twenty-four Directors and alternate Directors participated, along with the Executive Leadership Team.
- The 2023 Forum of All Councils provided an opportunity to learn from guest speakers and hear from the Nations directly, as outlined in the [Summary Report](#).
- In 2023 and 2024, the CRD Board of Directors were offered individual one-on-one Indigenous Relations Coaching with Porttris Consulting Group.

- Two Board Directors and many Commissioners participated in a 2023 gathering on Pender Island to learn from WSANEC elders and cultural workers.

Recent Education and Training for CRD Staff:

- In 2022, 664 CRD staff participated in a 2-hour Cultural Perspectives training, offered by Indigenous Perspectives Society. This training is now foundational for all employees.
- In 2022, 134 staff who work directly with members from the local First Nations, including CRD executive leadership, attended a 3-hour in-person Building Local Relationships Workshop, delivered by Indigenous Perspectives Society.
- Archaeology Policy and Process, Heritage Site Conservation, and Archaeological Chance Find Management training are offered to staff involved in land altering works. Heritage Site Conservation and Chance Find Management trainings have also been offered to CRD contractors, volunteer CRD Commissioners and volunteers doing invasive species removal and maintaining mountain bike trails in regional parks.
- The First Nations Relations Division supports and facilitates opportunities for staff to learn directly from First Nations in community and on the land, wherever possible, including site visits and gatherings involving staff and First Nations representatives related to archaeological and cultural heritage conservation, the role of cultural workers, ecosystem restoration, park management planning, and more.

Resources for CRD staff and Board Directors

- In addition to trainings and the procurement policy, cultural honoraria policy, Conservation and Protection of Heritage Sites policy, Indigenous employment reports, and South Island Indigenous Business Directory, several resources have been provided to support CRD staff and Board in their work with First Nations, including:
 - Guide to offering Territorial Acknowledgements (2019)
 - First Nations Communications Framework (2022)
 - Working with Indigenous Elders Guidance Document (2023)
 - First Nations Implications: Guidance for Writing CRD Staff Reports (2024)

Enhanced Level of Engagement:

- In many cases, the CRD is engaging with First Nations on plans and projects even where not legally obligated to do so under the *Local Government Act*. This is being done in response to requests from First Nations, to facilitate operational

requirements (e.g. obtain Crown permits, co-develop project plans, avoid delays), and to support the CRD's goal of relationship building.

Resource Sharing

- The CRD shares resources with First Nations as resources are made available through CRD works, including logs for firewood, logs for art and ceremonial purposes, gravel for Nation-led infrastructure projects, and deceased eagles for ceremonial purposes.

3. Learnings from Other Jurisdictions

On November 28, 2019, British Columbia enacted the *Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA)*, establishing the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the province's framework for reconciliation and mandating the provincial government to bring all its laws into alignment with UNDRIP. On March 30, 2022, the Province released the DRIPA Action Plan, developed in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples as required by section 4 of DRIPA.

The DRIPA Action Plan identifies goals and outcomes that form the long-term vision for implementation of UNDRIP in British Columbia.

As part of the DRIPA Action Plan the Province is requiring the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to support inclusive regional governance by advancing First Nation participation in regional district boards. The DRIPA Action Plan also requires the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to review the principles and processes that guide the naming of municipalities and regional districts and evolve practices to foster reconciliation in local processes.

Several local governments in British Columbia have already acknowledged UNDRIP's applicability to their operations by explicitly adopting UNDRIP, or by stating their intention to do so. Others are looking for ways to adopt UNDRIP but are unclear on the implications. Given the important role local governments play in land-use planning, environmental protection, emergency planning, services provision, and economic development, it is imperative for local and regional governments to understand their obligations to First Nations and to ensure those obligations are met, and that the inherent rights expressed and recognized in UNDRIP are upheld.

To support this report and its recommendations, a regional scan of reconciliation initiatives across the 28 regional districts in BC was completed. Additionally, a few key municipalities leading the way in reconciliation were also examined.

Overall, the regional scan indicated that the CRD is on the right path and taking steps aligned with other regional districts to advance reconciliation. And while the regional scan

demonstrates that this work has taken many different shapes, key themes emerged. Many of these are identified in Strategic Plans and include the following objectives, goals, and priorities:

- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan
- Create principles of reconciliation or a statement of reconciliation to guide this work
- Develop Protocol Agreements with interested First Nations
- Support the Province’s work around inclusive governance
- Find opportunities to increase greater understanding of staff and board around UNDRIP and reconciliation in the region
- Create a committee of the Board to guide First Nations relations and reconciliation goals; and
- Consult in a meaningful way on regional plans and projects.

Appendix A includes a summary of some of the work being led by local and regional governments in BC, and while it is not exhaustive, it demonstrates strong alignment across regional governments and the various efforts being taken to support the implementation of DRIPA. This scan informed the recommendations section of this report.

4. Government-to-Government Initiative 2023

4.1 Engagement Approach

The Jemma Scoble Consulting team approaches engagement and consultation with First Nations in a manner that is grounded in respect for the lived experiences, knowledge, priorities, available time, interests, and perspectives of each Indigenous group. Our team understands that a Nation’s priorities are often not those of another organization or project proponent. We work to ensure that consultation timelines and requirements are communicated respectfully and meaningfully. We understand that engagement activities may need to be flexible and that plans can be affected by factors that disproportionately impact Indigenous communities such as the COVID 19 pandemic. Recently we have witnessed the trauma and pain associated with finding children’s remains at former residential schools. Awareness and consideration of this trauma and of the effects of colonization must inform any work with Indigenous communities.

The CRD’s Government-to-Government Engagement Initiative was intended to follow two concurrent streams of work:

1. Outreach to First Nations leadership, coordinated by CRD staff with support from the Jemma Scoble Team, and
2. Outreach to First Nations staff, coordinated by the Jemma Scoble team with involvement of CRD staff as needed.

However, in practice, due to the Nations' preferences, desire to focus the discussions, and limited resources, the CRD and the Jemma Scoble Team collaborated to implement one approach. In some instances, meetings on the government-to-government initiative were held at the leadership level with key staff present, and in some instances, meetings were held at the staff level.

CRD and its leadership were the key representatives to support relationship building and government-to-government dialogue.

This work focused on the following nine First Nations:

1. X^wsepsəm (Esquimalt) Nation
2. Songhees Nation
3. P'a:chi:da?aht (Pacheedaht) First Nation
4. Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation
5. T'Sou-ke Nation
6. BOĶÉĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation
7. SṪÁUTW_ (Tsawout) First Nation
8. WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip) First Nation represented by the WŚÁNEĆ Leadership Council
9. WŚIKEM (Tseycum) First Nation represented by the WŚÁNEĆ Leadership Council

4.2 Engagement Methods

For the government-to-government initiative, various methods of engagement took place led by both the CRD First Nations Relations Division and the Jemma Scoble Team. This included:

- Introductory Letters
 - All identified First Nations were sent a letter from the CRD Board Chair on April 21, 2023, regarding the government-to-government initiative.
 - The following information was included:
 - Background on the government-to-government initiative
 - Intended goals and desired outcomes of the initiative
 - Offer of funding
 - A request to meet

- Engagement Letter
 - Following the initial letters, CRD and the Jemma Scoble Team followed up with First Nations with a draft Engagement Letter detailing the funding offered and proposing how the funds can be used to support the initiative.
- Inclusive Governance Update
 - In October, First Nations were provided with information on a Ministry of Municipal Affairs initiative on inclusive governance. A backgrounder was provided, and additional funding was offered for their participation and feedback.
- Emails and Phone Calls
 - All First Nations were contacted by both phone and email with follow-up information, meeting requests, and other details as requested.
- Meetings and Follow-ups
 - Meetings took place with First Nations, in-person or virtually, as requested.
 - Follow up after meetings occurred to ensure feedback shared was properly captured and additional thoughts could be shared, as appropriate.
- Feedback
 - Feedback was provided through meetings, phone calls, emails, and written submissions, according to the preferences of each First Nation.

The engagement methods varied Nation to Nation depending on how communication unfolded. In some cases, CRD was organizing additional meetings with First Nations on other topics and for reasons of synergies, and creating one point of contact, the CRD took the lead. In other cases, where the Jemma Scoble Team had direct relationships with staff and where their work on other CRD initiatives aligned, the Jemma Scoble Team took the lead. The flexible engagement approach allowed the CRD and the Jemma Scoble Team to respond to First Nations on an individual basis.

4.3 Engagement Outcomes

In summary, all nine First Nations have responded to the CRD's Government-to-Government Initiative. The CRD has met with some First Nations, has upcoming meetings scheduled with other First Nations, and has established regular meetings for 2024 with two First Nations. The CRD has had discussions with First Nation staff, leadership, and legal counsel depending on their preference, capacity, and priorities. The CRD has signed one Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and is working on additional MOUs with four other First Nations that outline key priorities, communication methods, and a new path forward for meaningful government-to-government relationship building.

Key outcomes of the initiative overall when compared with objectives are as follows:

- Outreach from the CRD and a renewed approach to government-government relationships with First Nations was received as a positive first step to more productive relationships.
- CRD learned from many First Nations their priorities for engagement frequency, expectations around process, preferences for communications and key topics, and in some cases principles to guide longer-term relationships.
- Overall, there is no “one size fits all” approach to government-to-government relationships. A sincere, considered, and flexible approach to the engagement process led to productive and forward-facing conversations.
- All levels of government remain in a “trust deficit” with many First Nations who are repeatedly asked to engage and share perspectives, which has rarely resulted in lasting change compared with the level of effort invested to try and achieve it.
- Funding the ongoing government-to-government relationship in a substantive way was well-received as it signaled respect for the First Nation’s time, and their lack of resources compared with the volume of government requests they receive.
- Funding remains a critical element of ongoing engagement and must be flexible to accommodate differing demands on First Nations from the CRD.
- Development of a reconciliation action plan with concrete implementation steps was also well-received as part of CRD’s next steps with First Nations.
- Alignment with UNDRIP, including free, prior, and informed consent, and the right to self-determination incorporated in CRD’s actions remain a foundational expectation of all First Nations.
- First Nations continue to provide consistent and important feedback through all engagement processes led by the CRD and it remains critical to build on this input, rather than request its repetition across various independent CRD initiatives.
- Many First Nations are interested in discussing further the request for input by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs regarding representation on regional district boards. CRD’s role in assisting Nations to gather to discuss this further with one another was a topic of discussion.

5. Key Themes

5.1 A Desire for a New Relationship

In discussions with First Nations and through the Forum of All Councils held on October 14, 2023, all First Nations expressed a desire for stronger working relationships with the CRD.

Overall, it was felt that a stronger relationship at the governance level is needed to support better relations.

- There was a **desire for a less transactional approach** and a more open and collaborative model for working together. First Nations referenced frequent and regular meetings at both the leadership and staff level.
- Some First Nations **stressed the need for action** and were frustrated with the slow progress despite some recent positive meetings. There was a desire to see more reconciliation in action, and begin real discussions on a Reconciliation Action Plan, Memorandum of Understandings, and other agreements.
- First Nations shared that a relationship is two-way and that the CRD must **understand and appreciate Indigenous ways of being** more fully.
- The call for a new relationship **stressed the need for a meaningful commitment by the CRD to reconciliation, including greater capacity and resource support for First Nations**, regular interactions, and mutually beneficial relationships.

5.2 An Interest in Formalizing the Relationship

As referenced above, First Nations expressed an interest in developing formal agreements with the CRD that outline the relationship, objectives, and priority topics and interests. The current informal approach has not been producing meaningful relationships at the leadership level, and the importance of having a document to guide discussions and lead work efforts was noted.

- Generally, First Nations identified that having **an agreement that identifies priority topics, roles and responsibilities, communication principles**, and an associated workplan and budget would help to support the development of a new relationship.
- There was also an understanding that the relationship would evolve over time and a desire to see **progress over perfection**.
- Several First Nations noted **the importance of formal agreements to guide future discussions** between the organizations when current leadership individuals have moved on.
- First Nations were **interested in co-developing draft agreements**, and some First Nations were open to have the CRD share a first draft for consideration.
- Many **First Nations have prioritized these discussions** and are actively resourcing the development of an agreement with the CRD.

5.3 Implementation of UNDRIP

All meetings with First Nations on the government-to-government initiative led back to UNDRIP and the need to actively implement the BC government's *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA). Articles 26³ and 32⁴ of UNDRIP were specifically referenced, which speak to Indigenous Peoples rights to the land.

- Discussions around **early involvement, consent, and decision-making** were referenced repeatedly. First Nations raised **the importance of developing a Reconciliation Action Plan** that identifies priority areas, lists concrete actions, and lays out a timeline.
- To this end, First Nations repeatedly referenced **the need to be part of the decision-making process and the limitations of the *Local Government Act***. This aligns with the current initiative the CRD is leading on behalf of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on inclusive governance and possible considerations for greater participation of non-Treaty First Nations in regional district boards. This work is ongoing, but First Nations have stressed the importance of **having a seat at the table and recognition of Indigenous self-determination**. They expressed concern that First Nations are often regulated to advisory positions that have little to no power, and that feedback is requested, but the outcome often feels pre-determined.

5.4 The Need for a Flexible Approach

While First Nations are interested in working with the CRD in a new way, there was a desire for flexibility in approaches and a movement away from a 'one-size-fits-all' perspective.

- **Some First Nations prioritized leadership discussions** and wanted to see a formal government-to-government relationship established, where **others prioritized staff interactions and movement and progress on current projects** and initiatives.
- In terms of scheduling, some First Nations have established Chief and Council schedules a year in advance, while others, particularly the smaller communities, do not have established council calendars. **The need to adapt to changes and arrange meetings at the last minute is necessary**. In the same vein, the limited

³ Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories, and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.

⁴ Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

capacity of First Nations requires an adaptive approach. **First Nations are under resourced, and many staff perform multiple roles.**

- Generally, the **CRD will want to follow the lead of each First Nation in determining the best way forward.** No two First Nations will work with the CRD in the same way and **being open to different approaches will help the CRD be successful** in its work with First Nations.

5.5 A Challenge with Capacity/A Need for Resources

A significant limitation facing First Nations is the lack of time and resources. There is a continued need for core funding to support and resources government-to-government relationship building.

- For example, the Tsawout First Nation Referrals Coordinator referenced that **they receive over 600 referrals a year.** These requests from external agencies, industry groups, and the business community demand their time and resources often requiring immediate responses, meetings with Chief and Council, technical expertise, and cultural knowledge.
- **In 2023, the CRD alone was engaging with many of these First Nations on more than 10 initiatives during the time of this initiative** - Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy, the Mount Work Regional Management Plan, Solid Waste Management Plan, the Royal Oak Golf Course Land Acquisition, Inclusive Governance, heritage conservation, Liquid Waste Management Plan, water and wastewater servicing agreement, land use planning, the Forum of All Councils, and multiple regulatory referrals. These areas of work represent the many facets of the CRD - and a staff base of 746 regular and 480 auxiliary employees - who are interacting with Nations whose staff may number less than 10.

5.6 The Importance of Nation-to-Nation Dialogue

During many discussions with First Nations the importance of ongoing dialogue between First Nations on shared issues and interests was stressed.

- CRD received positive feedback regarding the acknowledgement that First Nations want to caucus first before further advancing discussions with the CRD regarding the Royal Oak property.
- **Acknowledging this important step, when desired by First Nations** regarding issues and interests that require or would benefit from shared decision making and/or discussion and input **demonstrates respect for Indigenous ways of working and improves relationships overall.**

5.7 The Need to Build the Relationship around CRD Core Services

During many discussions with First Nations, operational issues were at the forefront of the conversation, with some First Nations agreeing to advance government-to-government discussions through the lens of operational topics only.

- With respect to topic matters, **many discussions turned to operational matters quickly, highlighting the importance of a working relationship with First Nations around CRD's core business areas.** Topics such as water rates and park management often took precedence to broader high-level topics. **For many First Nations these are urgent issues** that must be addressed with the CRD before other matters can be discussed.
- For First Nations, **developing relationships with multiple levels of government takes time and resources.** There is a **need to focus the relationship on the core services that CRD provides** as well as the role CRD plays in the region on other topics.
- For the CRD and First Nations, CRD's role as a service provider will shape much of the discussion and **there will always be a need to operationalize the feedback shared between parties** to result in an overall positive, productive, and long-term relationship.

6. Recommendations & Proposed Next Steps

6.1 Prioritize Reconciliation with an Intentional Approach to Funding

The success of the government-to-government Initiative was partly due to the funding support the CRD provided to First Nations. Nine First Nations were offered \$25,000 to:

- facilitate leadership and staff meetings between the CRD and the Nation,
- provide verbal or written input and guidance on strengthening our government-to-Government relationship, as desired.
- provide verbal or written input regarding the principles, protocols, and meeting schedules that could support ongoing engagement, and
- identify and share Nation priority topics for developing a CRD Reconciliation Action Plan.

Given First Nations' competing interests, the approach to provide significant funding contributed to the high response rate with all 9 First Nations signing the Engagement Letters and arranging meetings with the CRD. Staff time is significantly limited due to

competing priorities and demands from other levels of government and industry as well as the needs of their members and community.

Generally, a piecemeal project-by-project approach with limited funding is not well received. Nations feel like no one is considering the broader effects and impacts on their community and the fragmented funding means that they are continually submitting invoices, tracking funding, and piecing together staff to review, meet and comment on projects. There is generally little to no warning of an increase in project demand year to year.

While it is difficult to avoid project funding in this way, it is recommended that if project funding is made available to support CRD's operational work that the funding is tracked Nation by Nation to demonstrate the ask and work requested of each First Nations. At the beginning of the year, a project list and funding offers could be presented to allow First Nations to consider their staffing and resource requirements.

Generally, given the CRD's requests for First Nations input and involvement, and the overall relationship-based dialogue, it is recommended that funding be considered in these categories:

- **Intergovernmental Relationship**
Annual funding to be used at the discretion of First Nations to support government-to-government work including leadership meetings, implementation of protocol agreements or MOUs, and liaison positions.
- **Project-specific**
Funding tied to specific projects with clear requests/expectations outlined. For example, regulatory referrals and non-regulatory projects where CRD is requesting input. Amount to be determined based on estimated level of effort and project duration. Where possible, CRD to provide an overall project list to First Nations in a coordinated manner at the start of the year.
- **Engagement funding**
Project-specific, for larger projects. Funding available for periods of peak demand on First Nations time and resources such that a portion of a staff person's time would be remunerated. This type of funding may only be applied to specific Nations during exceptional times, to ensure that resources are supported and to reduce administrative burden (e.g., 25% of a staff person's wage for 6 months to be engaged on time sensitive deliverables).
- **Cultural monitoring & ceremony**
Project-specific honoraria, for example for blessings, welcomes, cultural ceremonies, elders' knowledge sharing, and to those knowledge keepers who

provide oversight pertaining to project approach and implementation. Also funding for requests related to archaeological and cultural work at specific sites and/or for specific initiatives. Funding for ceremonial and spiritual purposes may be required to honor traditional law and protocol.

Funding ranges could be estimated and presented to First Nations for discussion and refinement, based on professional services fees from various disciplines. Effective tracking and management tools would be required to ensure requests, amounts and status are easily known by CRD and Nation staff. The approach should be documented and available to share with First Nations to ensure transparency.

6.2 Prioritize Reconciliation with Resources & Time

With 19 First Nations having traditional territories that overlap CRD's jurisdiction, reconciliation is a big job that requires significant staff time and commitment. Currently, the First Nations Relations Division has four full-time permanent positions: Manager, First Nations Relations; Manager, Archaeology; Advisor, First Nations Relations; and Administrative Support Clerk. Feedback received during the government-to-government initiative around the level of engagement and flexibility required is far greater than can be accomplished with only these positions.

Relationship building is central to this work and identifying key leads who can regularly attend meetings to create a lasting and meaningful relationship is critical. Ideally, leads from the Board, the Leadership Team, and the First Nations Relations Team would be identified for each Nation, and participation would vary depending on the type of meeting arranged. Because this work is so heavily based on relationships, having the key contacts remain as consistent as possible is critical.

Recommendations include:

- Hiring additional experienced staff to support reconciliation work and the development/implementation of MOUs with First Nations.
- Identifying Board and staff leads for ongoing government-to-government work.
- Prioritizing meetings with First Nations and being open to scheduling based on their availability.
- Consistently ensuring that First Nations representatives are meeting with their counterparts from CRD (e.g., Chief to Board Chair)

6.3 Develop and Implement Protocol Agreements and MOUs with First Nations

CRD has made considerable progress in formalizing new relationships with First Nations in the last year. One agreement has been approved and many are in draft. While this takes

significant resources, the real work is in the implementation of these agreements, which will require work plans, budgets, experienced staff, and working groups.

To support this work, the following steps are recommended:

- Continue to formalize relationship agreements with the nine First Nations with communities in the region.
- Develop a system for managing the implementation of Agreements with First Nations.
- Ensure appropriate resources are identified to support the implementation of the Agreements.

6.4 Move Forward with Collaborative Development of a Reconciliation Action Plan

With active discussions underway with nine First Nations, the CRD is well positioned to move forward with the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan. One of the key goals of the G2G initiative, as outlined in the letter to First Nations, was to learn more about First Nation priority topics for the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.

This work would be guided by these discussions and the various engagements the CRD has had with First Nations over the last two years and would respond directly to First Nations concerns that energy is too often focused on CRD projects, priorities, and planning and that concrete actions that respond directly to the issues and interests raised by First Nations is essential to building lasting relationships.

A Reconciliation Action Plan would guide CRD's actions to advance truth and reconciliation for the next 5 to 10 years and would build on the CRD's existing commitments to First Nations, while also advancing the earlier work of the Special Task Force on First Nations Relations.

Typically, Reconciliation Action Plans are high-level, action-oriented documents that identify goals and priorities in key pillars like employment, business development, community relations, land use, etc. Operational work plans may be developed to support the implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan over a specific timeline. Many organizations choose to report on their efforts to advance reconciliation annually to demonstrate the work completed and the progress made.

Creating a concrete plan to support reconciliation is paramount. To date, the CRD has formalized a Statement of Reconciliation, created a First Nation Relations Committee, is working to establish new relationships with First Nations through the Government-to-Government Initiative, and is pursuing reconciliation-related initiatives across a variety of CRD works. A Reconciliation Plan, focused on clear actions the CRD will take, is a logical next step that would indicate that the CRD is committed to prioritizing this work.

Recommendations include:

- Develop a CRD Reconciliation Action Plan in collaboration with First Nations and CRD leadership.
- Explore the opportunity of the 2024 Forum of All Councils to allow for the co-development of key pillars, and the identification of a preferred approach on the plan's development.
- Work together with First Nations through their preferred process to receive input on Reconciliation Action Plan priorities, and action steps.
- Incorporate the themes heard during government-to-government engagement and other consultation processes to inform commitments and actions.
- Build on the priority topics heard through the government-to-government discussions to inform a Reconciliation Action Plan.
 - Operational topics raised as priorities include water & wastewater infrastructure, parks & protected areas, heritage conservation, land use planning, referrals processes, solid waste management, land acquisition, environmental protection, harvesting opportunities, cultural learning opportunities for Board & staff, and art, place names & public education.
 - Over-arching topics include, but are not limited to, governance, funding, economic opportunities, and employment.
- Track actions and implementation to demonstrate how the CRD is responding to First Nations issues and interests and taking a relationship-based approach with an emphasis on ongoing learning.

6.5 Continue to Build on a Principled Approach to Engagement with all First Nations within CRD's Jurisdiction

The CRD's administrative boundaries overlap the traditional territories of 19 First Nations. While the government-to-government initiative focused on the nine First Nations that have population settlements in the region, we know that the other ten First Nations work regularly with the CRD around referrals, service delivery, and operations. For example, all 19 First Nations prioritized providing input into the Regional Parks Strategic Plan update and the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy update.

While day to day engagement with these ten First Nations is less frequent than the nine engaged in the government-to-government initiative (who each have multiple service agreements with the CRD and communicate regularly), all interactions CRD has with First Nations in carrying out core business activities should be based on the same principles.

Building on the government-to-government engagement process, a principled and interest-based approach to engaging these additional 10 First Nations is recommended. An approach of engaging with respect, listening to learn, demonstrating a commitment to UNDRIP through actions and continuing to fund the unique demands that the CRD may have would continue to build positive working relationships. The method of approaching these relationships should reflect the requests put forth by the CRD and the input received to date from these Nations around their specific preferences and priorities.

It is recommended that the CRD continue to build these relationships through the opportunities of project-based initiatives by providing funding and consistent points of contact, actioning feedback received and looking for ways to honour the knowledge shared during engagement with respect and reciprocity.

Appendix A: Governance Scan, Reconciliation Public Commitments, and Initiatives

Updated as of March 11, 2024

REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

There are 28 regional districts in BC, including the Capital Regional District. Below is a high-level scan of publicly available information as it relates to a regional districts' public commitment to Indigenous reconciliation.

1. **Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD)**

- ACRD was the first municipal government to welcome treaty First Nations to its board as full voting members in April 2012. The four members of the Maa-nulth Treaty - Huu-ay-aht, Toquot, Uchucklesaht, and Yuułuʔiłʔath - currently all have voting seats on the ACRD Board.
- ACRD's [2024-2027 Strategic Plan](#) identifies a strategic planning focus of partnership and communications. The plan highlights objectives including:
 - o Develop protocol agreements with regional First Nations communities to support reconciliation and partnering efforts.
 - o Advance options for legislative change that facilitate the option for adding non-treaty nations to the regional Board in accordance with Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) legislation.
 - o Work with Huu-ay-aht First Nations and the Bamfield community on the exploration of a joint community master planning initiative.
 - o Develop airport development plans in collaboration and/or partnership with First Nations whose land the airports operate on.
- The 2021 [Government-to-Government Accord](#) between ACRD and Tseshaht First Nation acknowledge UNDRIP and TRC Calls to Action as guiding principles.

2. **Bulkley-Nechako Regional District (BNRD)**

- BNRD and the Nechako First Nations have an MOU to rehabilitate Nechako River, 2021. See press release [here](#) and signed MOU [here](#).

3. **Cariboo Regional District (CRD)**

- At a [Board meeting on May 26, 2022](#), the CRD's Board approved the First Nations Liaison's UNDRIP as a Framework for a Reconciliation Action Plan memorandum.
- The CRD's [2022-2026 Strategic Plan includes a strategic focus area:](#)
 - o To foster a healthy and inclusive region by building and strengthening our relationships with First Nations and embracing the principles of reconciliation.

4. Central Coast Regional District (CCRD)

- The CCRD has a strategic focus of Indigenous relations in their [2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#).
 - o This includes continuing to participation in the Inclusive Regional Governance Program to identify and advance opportunities for First Nations participation in regional governance.
 - o It also includes advancing discussions regarding the development of engagement protocols to guide and support government to government collaboration and communication and investigating the establishment of a liaison position(s) to enhance communication and collaboration with Nuxalk, Wuikinuxv, and Heiltsuk governments.
- In a [November 14, 2019 Board meeting](#), a motion was carried to develop a standalone UNDRIP policy.

5. Central Kootenay Regional District (CKRD)

- CKRD has commemorated a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. <https://www.rdck.ca/EN/meta/news/news-archives/2021-news-archive-1/rdck-to-commemorate-national-day-for-truth-and-reconciliation.html>

6. Central Okanagan Regional District (CORD)

- CORD held a [half-day forum in September 2023](#) dedicated to advancing reconciliation and strengthening the collaborative relationship between the two governments.
 - o The forum featured a presentation by Dr. Tim Raybould, focusing on WFN's self-government and the B.C. Government Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
 - o The forum provided a platform for the two governing bodies to engage in collaborative learning, fostering a comprehensive grasp of DRIPA and UNDRIP and their implications for WFN and the Regional District. Outcomes of the meeting will be used to inform the RDCO's Reconciliation Framework and play a foundational role in RDCO's pursuit of more inclusive governance.
- CORD's [2023-2026 Regional Board Strategic Priorities identifies Truth and Reconciliation as a strategic priority](#):
 - o Complete Regional District Reconciliation Framework
 - o Development G2G relationships
 - o Continue work underway to explore full representation of First Nations on the board.

- CORD engaged JWR Business Group to develop a [discussion paper](#) that outlines potential models for inclusive regional governance.

7. Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD)

- In June 2023, CSRD received a presentation from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation on [Reconciliation Negotiations in BC](#).

8. Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD)

- Comox Valley Regional District adopted an [Indigenous Relations Framework](#) in 2019. One key action is to explore and respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and UNDRIP as a framework for engaging with First Nations peoples and advancing national and provincial objectives/commitments.
- In 2021, the Comox Valley Regional District adopted a [Statement of Reconciliation](#).
 - o In the statement, CVRD identifies self-determination as key theme, and declares its commitment to supporting First Nations when they wish to participate in CVRD's decision-making process. The CVRD will look to First Nations for leadership in understanding how to create new decision-making systems together.
 - o CVRD also acknowledges UNDRIP as the reference framework for the CVRD's commitment to Reconciliation, which builds from the CVRD's Indigenous Relations Framework and aims to address activities within the scope of the CVRD's authority.
- In 2021, CVRD also produced an [Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Assessment Report](#), which includes a jurisdictional scan of what local governments are doing to advance reconciliation.
- In 2021, CVRD, in partnership with KFN, hosted a meeting to discuss how local governments can move towards implementing the UNDRIP, with presentations and discussions led by the BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and an Indigenous Resource Law practitioner and part of the co-development team for the provincial Declaration Act.

9. Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD)

- CVRD's [Strategic Plan, 2023-2026](#) identifies a strategic objective of reconciliation,
 - o This includes four actions:
 - Support community-led reconciliation and relationship building through engagement with First Nations.
 - Support watershed governance and stewardship with local First Nations.
 - Work with local First Nations to develop initiatives that support our shared environmental, social, economic, and governance goals.

- Develop an Indigenous relations framework to Integrate UNDRIP, DRIPA and implement Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action into our work at the CVRD.

10. East Kootenay Regional District (EKRD)

- EKRD's [Strategic Plan includes a strategic focus area on Indigenous relations with two key objectives:](#)
 - Extend invitations to meet with each Indigenous government to share and discuss respective goals and objectives and identify opportunities for cooperation and collaboration on areas of mutual interest.
 - Explore Indigenous government interest in, and opportunities for their involvement in Regional District governance through participation on the Regional District Board and committees.

11. Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD)

- FVRD's [Regional Growth Strategy 2050](#) notes a commitment to a collaborative, government-to-government relationship with Indigenous communities which is built around the principles of UNDRIP.
 - The Regional Growth Strategy includes a goal of collaboration:
 - Recognize that working with Indigenous communities will best serve all residents and facilitate cooperation by fostering a mutual understanding of governing structures, cultures, roles and responsibilities.
 - Develop sustaining relationships with Indigenous communities and governments which embody the principles of UNDRIP, work together to develop a common vision for the future of the region and remain open, without prejudice to ongoing treaty negotiations, to innovative opportunities for information sharing, and coordination of planning and services in areas of mutual interest.
 - Recognize and support work led by Indigenous governments, both established and developing self-governance structures, and advancing self-determination, as expressed in the principles of UNDRIP.
 - Support establishing MOUs and service agreements between Indigenous and local governments that address issues of mutual concern, such as water and sewer systems that protect public health and the environment.
- FVRD's [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) sets out four themes, including one on Indigenous relationships. It includes two priorities:
 - Nurture Strong Relationships Based on Reconciliation and Shared Goals

- The FVRD will invest the time and resources necessary to nurture relationships with Indigenous governments and communities based on the principles of Reconciliation, and the pursuit of shared goals.
- Educate FVRD Directors and Staff on Reconciliation
 - The FVRD will provide opportunities for Directors and staff to learn about Reconciliation, including the Regional District's commitment to Reconciliation, the importance of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to Reconciliation, and the use of British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act as the framework for Reconciliation.

12. Fraser-Fort George Regional District (FFGRD)

- The Regional District enhances and exercises relationships with First Nations by:
 - coordinating Community-to-Community Forums and other events with First Nations and municipal partners
 - facilitating McLeod Lake Indian Band and Lheidli T'enneh First Nations participation in regional governance, including participation on the Regional District Board of Directors by the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation following final treaty

13. Kitimat-Stikine Regional District (KSRD)

- KSRD's [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) has a strategic focus area on Governance and Partnerships with First Nations with two main strategies:
 1. Advance First Nations governance and participation opportunities with RDKS Board and committee.
 - Fully implement Treaty First Nation Membership Framework and Associate Member provision of the [Procedures Bylaw](#).
 - Note: "Associate Member" means a person, other than a Director, appointed by a treaty First Nation or First Nation actively pursuing Treaty/Self-Governance to participate in Regional District Regular, Special and Committee of the Whole meetings in a non-voting capacity and includes their alternate if acting in the place of an Associate Member.
 2. Understand and fulfill local government responsibilities and opportunities to advance reconciliation with First Nations.
 - Undertake orientation and training for staff and Board with respect to TRCC and UNDRIP and BCDRIPA
 - Develop long-term action plan to address TRCC, UNDRIP and BCDRIPA recommendations and obligations.

14. Kootenay Boundary Regional District

- KBRD's [2023-2026 Strategic Plan has goal of fostering relationships and partnership and states:](#)
 - o We value our First Nations residents and actively pursue acts of reconciliation.

15. Metro Vancouver

- Metro Vancouver has an Indigenous Relations Committee, a Statement of Reconciliation, and has adopted the TRC Calls to Action.
- Tsawwassen First Nation, a Treaty First Nation, is on the Board of Directors.
- Metro Vancouver's [Strategic Plan 2022-2026](#) identifies 'reconciliation' as one of its five key priorities.
 - o Action: Strengthen government-to-government relationships with First Nations by building trust through genuine collaboration, creating a mutually respectful space for meaningful dialogue and outcomes, and creating opportunities for Board-to-Nation relationships to thrive
 - o Engage Indigenous Peoples to advance economic reconciliation and Indigenous prosperity through regional economic development opportunities and partnerships/
- In Metro Vancouver's Strategic Plan they also state:
 - o Recent legislation at both the federal and provincial level codifies commitments to aligning laws with the objectives and obligations contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - o Metro Vancouver is working in particular with the Province and local First Nations, to realize those commitment.
- On February 18, 2020, sálílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nation and Metro Vancouver signed a co-operation agreement that will protect and enhance təmtəmíxʷtən/Belcarra Regional Park.

16. Mount Waddington Regional District

- Mount Waddington Regional District has two Protocol Agreements with First Nations.
 - o <https://www.rdmw.bc.ca/media/NIRPA2010agreement.pdf>
 - o <https://www.rdmw.bc.ca/media/wossagreementunsigned.pdf>

17. Nanaimo Regional District

- NRD has a [Reconciliation Statement](#).
- NRD's 2023-2026 [Strategic Plan has an Advocacy focus with a goal to effectively communicate the region's challenges, objectives and potential solutions to the provincial and federal governments and compel an appropriate response to the](#)

[critical issues impacting our communities. The goal has two strategies related to First Nations relationships.](#)

- 5.2: Partner with First Nations, local governments, associations, and the Province to modernize the legislative framework within which BC's local governments operate.
- 5.3: Collaborate with First Nations, regional districts, and the Province to facilitate discussion and engagement about First Nation representation on regional district boards outside the treaty process.
- NRD has two agreements with First Nations.
 - [Protocol Agreement 2009 Nanaimo Regional District and Snuneymuxw First Nation](#)
 - [2002 Cooperation Agreement between Nanaimo Regional District and Qualicum First Nation](#)

18. North Coast Regional District

- North Coast Regional District's [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) has a few references to collaboration.

19. North Okanagan Regional District

- No information publicly available.

20. Northern Rockies Regional District

- On October 15, 2021, 6 First Nation Chiefs and 7 Mayors in the Treaty 8 region of BC (McLeod Lake/Mackenzie to Fort Nelson) met together for the first time to initiate discussions to work towards reconciliation at a community level. [Media Release: Inaugural Reconciliation Meeting - Northern Rockies Regional Municipality](#)

21. Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District

- No information publicly available.

22. Peace River Regional District

- Peace River Regional District is working on an MOU with Doig River
 - <https://prrd.bc.ca/071122-1/#more-33760>
- Peace River's 2023-2026 [Strategic Plan identifies six priority areas, including "Collaboration and Cooperation with First Nations."](#) This priority area has three goals:
 1. Advance the development of individual MOUs;
 2. Share PRRD strategic goals with First Nations to identify opportunities for cooperation and collaboration; and

3. Investigate governance participation models under Local Government Act.

23. qathet Regional District

- qathet Regional District underwent a name change in 2018 from Powell River Regional District to qathet Regional District.
 - o Elders from the Tla'amin Nation gifted the word 'qathet' to the Regional District. The word, qathet, which is pronounced "KA-thet", means working together.
- qathet's 2023-2027 [Strategic Plan](#) has a focus area on community connections, noting that the District will honor and respect the First Nations on whose land they operate.

24. Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

- In September 2016, the SLRD Board [resolved to be a Regional District of Reconciliation](#), and to continue to work towards turning these words into actions
- SLRD adopted the following TRC Calls to Action, #47, #57, #75, and #77.
- The SLRD, in collaboration with the relevant member municipalities, has recently established two committees to further relationship building efforts:
 - o Northern St'át'imc Intergovernmental Relations Working Group (current representation includes District of Lillooet, P'egp'ig'lha Council – T'it'q'et community, SLRD)
 - o Nukw7ántwał Intergovernmental Relations Committee (current representation includes: Líl'wat Nation, N'Quatqua, Samahquam, SLRD, Village of Pemberton)
- [2018 Protocol Agreement for Communication and Cooperation](#) between SLRD, District of Lillooet, and P'egp'ig'lha Council.
- SLRD with the relevant member municipalities, has recently established two committees to further relationship building efforts:
 - o Northern St'át'imc Intergovernmental Relations Working Group (current representation includes District of Lillooet, P'egp'ig'lha Council – T'it'q'et community, SLRD)
 - o Nukw7ántwał Intergovernmental Relations Committee (current representation includes: Líl'wat Nation, N'Quatqua, Samahquam, SLRD, Village of Pemberton)has a First Nations Relations Task Force but doesn't seem to be meeting.
- SLRD has identified an Indigenous Relations Plan in the Strategic Actions for 2023.

25. Strathcona Regional District

- Under Maa-nulth Final Agreement, Ka:'yu:'k't'h' / Che:k'tles7et'h' became a treaty First Nation and has a seat on the SRD board. In April 2021, they joined the board for the first time.
- Strathcona Regional District's 2023-2027 [Strategic Plan](#) includes a focus area on good governance, which states "Continue to build relationships with First Nations communities and provide opportunities to explore areas of shared focus and interest.
- The Board's vision is to create a connected, resilient, self-sufficient region that honours and values diversity, seeks collaboration and partnership opportunities, promotes reconciliation with First Nations communities and actively stewards our natural environment.
- The Strathcona Regional District has a First Nations Relations Committee of the Board. In April 2023, the Committee [passed a motion to develop a First Nations Consultation policy that aligns with UNDRIP](#).
- For more information on UNDRIP and how the Regional District is considering its implementation, see [here](#).

26. Sunshine Coast Regional District

- shíshálh Nation is a member of the Regional District
- [Strategic Plan](#)
 - o Enhance First Nations Relations and Reconciliation
 - Tactics: shíshálh Nation: Meet at the governance and administration levels to discuss opportunities for collaboration and process improvement; Develop or update protocol agreements with First Nations government

27. Thompson-Nicola Regional District

- [Strategic Plan 2023-26](#): Priority: Relationships and Reconciliation
 - o Carrying out projects with a regional benefit and with a lens on Indigenous culture, processes and reconciliation, and developing stronger relationships and partnerships with First Nations based on trust, mutual respect, and working cooperatively on shared goals.

MUNICIPALITIES

There are 119 municipalities in BC. A few municipalities actively sharing information about their work in Indigenous reconciliation are:

City of Victoria

- In 2017, the City of Victoria began a journey of Truth and Reconciliation. This journey involved the Lekwungen peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose homeland the city stands. City Council created the Witness Reconciliation program

and appointed a City Family. This City Family includes members of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, other urban Indigenous people, the Mayor and select City Council members.

- In 2022, the City of Victoria established the Reconciliation Contribution Fund. This fund allows voluntary contributions to the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

City of Vancouver

- The City of Vancouver was designated a City of Reconciliation when the [Reconciliation Framework](#) was adopted by Council on July 8, 2014. In 2021, City Council created the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) Task Force that was tasked with providing recommendations and a strategy to implement UNDRIP. The Task Force was assembled in partnership with the Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation, and resulted in the City of Vancouver's [UNDRIP Strategy](#), which was passed by Council on October 25, 2022.
- The Strategy is a comprehensive list of calls to action to the City of Vancouver sorted into colour-coded categories based on complexity.
- The actions are also listed into four themes:
 - o Social, Cultural, Economic Well-being;
 - o Ending Indigenous-Specific Racism and Discrimination;
 - o Self-Determination and Inherent Right to Self-Determination; and
 - o Rights and Title of Indigenous Peoples.

City of Powell River

- The [2003 Community Accord](#) (resigned in 2018) further commits the city and Tla'amin Nation to work together respectfully to address challenges and take opportunities to reconcile relations between our two governments that will ultimately help build a better future for our children.
- In 2014, during an update to the City's Official Community Plan, the City recognized two parcels of Treaty Settlement Land within municipal boundaries as specially designated lands in the new plan. In 2018, at the request of Tla'amin, the City provided consent to designate two parcels of land in the historic townsite area to Tla'amin.
- Over the years, qathet Regional District, Tla'amin Nation, and the City of Powell River have collaborated on a number of regional planning initiatives including a Sustainability Charter (2009), Regional Emergency Plan (2013), Regional Transportation Plan (2014), Regional Trails Plan (2016), and most recently a Regional Recreation Initiative (2018).

- On May 31, 2016, Powell River City Council passed a motion to:
 - o endorse the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Committee Final Report and adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- In May 2021, Tla'amin Executive Council requested the City of Powell River consider a name change in light of the devastating legacy the actions of Israel Powell has had and continues to have on the Tla'amin people. Discussions are ongoing.
- A full summary of reconciliation efforts between the City of Powell River, qathet regional District, and Tla'amin Nation can be found here: https://www.ubcm.ca/sites/default/files/2021-08/Tlaamin_PowellRiver_20190909.pdf

District of Squamish

- In July 2023, the District of Squamish and Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) signed a [Protocol Agreement](#). The agreement lays the groundwork for the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that both the Nation and District will work together on.
- District of Squamish's Strategic Plan states: We will continue our work towards genuine Truth and Reconciliation, actively engaging with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) to foster equitable and trusting relationships.

City of Mission

- April 19, 2021, Council adopted the [9 principles of Reconciliation](#), as Mission moves forward to becoming a City of Reconciliation. These principles are:
 1. Reconciliation occurs through the development of government-to-government relationships based on the recognition of indigenous rights.
 2. Local governments are crucial to the implementation of UNDRIP and the TRC calls to action. Advancement of this work can occur while recognizing the sovereign to sovereign (or Crown to Nation) relationships that occur between Federal, Provincial and First Nations governments.
 3. Plans and strategies for the implementation of UNDRIP and the TRC Calls to Action will be 'co-created' with First Nations communities, namely Matsqui, Sema:th, Kwantlen, Katzie, Sq'ewlets, and Leq'a:mel through engagement and collaboration, including 'Reconciliation Dialogues' and 'Community to Community Forums'.
 4. Reconciliation promotes a mutually supportive climate for economic partnerships with regional First Nations communities.
 5. Collaboration with First Nation communities will define how best to communicate and engage on economic and land development policy.

6. Continuous learning about indigenous peoples, cultural, traditions and laws is a requirement of reconciliation.
 7. Cooperation and collaboration will guide the City's approach to issues that impact First Nations.
 8. Relationships take time, as does exploring what mutual commitment to reconciliation means; we will endeavour to engage our neighbouring First Nation communities to build those relationships around shared interests and common concerns.
 9. Systemic racism exists and that there are many ways of understanding the world and ways in which societies create and implement laws and that valid laws existed here before Canada. The City will question assumptions and remain open when faced with different legal traditions and ways of knowing.
- The City of Mission manages the [Stave West Forest & Recreation Area](#) in collaboration with Kwantlen First Nation, Matsqui First Nation, Leq'a:mel First Nation and the Province of British Columbia. This model establishes three voices at the table: local First Nations, the District of Mission, and the Provincial Government,
 - In 2021, [an agreement](#) signed by B.C., Leq'a:mel, Matsqui and Sumas First Nations and the City of Mission to return traditional lands to the First Nations and establish new public parklands and recreation areas. The lands will be subdivided to create a park parcel of approximately 50 hectares, which will be leased to the City of Mission to manage for public use as a community park and recreational area, and two development parcels, to be developed by the First Nations to support much-needed housing in the area and increase economic and social opportunities.
 - In 2022, the City of Mission partnered with Kwantlen First Nation, Leq'a:mel First Nation, Matsqui First Nation, and the Mission Public School District to deliver an Indigenous Guardians Training Program.

City of Courtenay

- In November 2020, the City of Courtenay [adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(UNDRIP\)](#), pledging to use it as the framework for indigenous reconciliation.
- The City of Courtenay's Strategic Plan, 2023-2026 is based in its four cardinal directions: reconciliation, equity, climate action, and community well-being.
 - o One action identified in the plan is to develop a Reconciliation Framework.