Corporate Communications & Engagement Strategic Plan

2024–2027

CRD

Making a difference...together

Territorial Acknowledgement

The CRD conducts its business within the traditional territories of many First Nations, including but not limited to BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEȽ (Malahat), Pʼaːchiːdaʔaht (Pacheedaht), Puneʼlaxutthʼ (Penelekut), Scʼianew (Beecher Bay), Songhees, SȾÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), TʼSou-ke, W̱JOȽEȽP (Tsartlip), W̱SIKEM (Tseycum), and xʷsepsəm (Esquimalt), all of whom have a long-standing relationship with the land and waters from time immemorial that continues to this day.
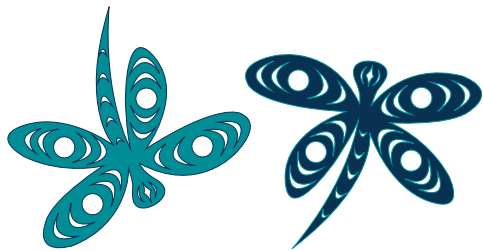
Organizational Overview

The **Capital Regional District** (CRD) delivers regional, sub-regional and local services to 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Governed by a 24-member Board of Directors, the CRD works collaboratively with First Nations and government partners to enable sustainable growth, foster community well-being, and develop cost-effective infrastructure, while continuing to provide core services to residents throughout the region.

Corporate Communication & Engagement Services are delivered across the organization equipping us with the tools necessary to enable consistent, credible, relevant, and timely information sharing both internally and externally.

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Executive Summary – a message from the Senior Manager

On behalf of the Communications team, I am pleased to present to you our comprehensive Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan. As the Senior Manager, I have had the privilege of working closely with our Communications team as well as other internal interested parties to build this plan, and I am confident that it will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our organization.

In today's fast-paced world, the field of communications is constantly evolving. To remain at the forefront, we recognize the need to stay innovative, adapt to changing priorities, and leverage industry trends. This plan provides the context of how communications services are structured and strategically aligned, provides a situational analysis, outlines our guiding principles and identifies our strategic priorities and supporting actions to advance work during the next four years.

Our plan is built on a foundation of several key areas of focus:

> ### Fostering meaningful connections with communities
> We strive to build trust with residents by fostering civic engagement, strengthening relationships, and connecting communities through open communication and compelling storytelling where diverse voices are heard and valued.

> ### Supporting a culture of organizational connection
> Deeper connections between colleagues allow for greater collaboration, shared learnings and organizational awareness. When employees feel supported, valued and engaged, the organization benefits.

> ### Providing quality information at the right time, in the right way
> What we say, how we say it and when we say it **matters.** All our audiences deserve communications that are accurate, thoughtful and meaningful.

> ### Placing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility at the heart of communications
> Connecting with people with diverse lived experiences leads to more innovative ideas, better decisions, and stronger democracies. Meaningful two-way engagement strategies help address barriers to participation.

> ### Adapting to changing digital landscapes
> In response to trends, organizations are not relying on one way of communicating and instead use advertising, social media, website content and relationships with journalists and influencers to increase reach. With the majority of Canadians engaging with services online, we must continue to evolve our use of digital tools to match the increasing expectations of residents in the capital region.

The Strategic Communications and Engagement Plan will guide us through the complexities of industry trends, foster innovation, and equip us with the tools necessary to reach wider audiences, all while seamlessly adapting to the priorities of our organization.

Although this plan is ambitious, I firmly believe that it aligns with our organizational goals and will significantly contribute to our continued success.

Andy Orr
Senior Manager, Corporate Communications

Context

Effective communication is crucial for the success of our organization and the region.

While the communications team, including the Corporate Communications & Engagement Division and program area-specific communications staff, plays a vital role in communication and engagement, the act of communicating is not restricted to a single department or team. Instead, it is a shared responsibility that involves everyone at the CRD. In today's interconnected world, open and transparent communication channels are crucial, recognizing that each staff member brings unique insight and connections to contribute to our collective efforts.

By embracing communication as a shared responsibility, we empower each individual within the organization. Encouraging a culture of open communication and collaboration across teams unlocks innovative ideas, diverse perspectives, and effective problem-solving. We encourage all employees to actively participate in communication initiatives, sharing updates, seeking feedback, engaging with interested parties, and enhancing outreach efforts.

Through the collective power of our organization, we aim to create a culture of communication excellence—building trust, transparency, and strong relationships. Together, we will foster an environment where information flows seamlessly, ideas are openly shared, and collaboration thrives for the betterment of our community and region.

Strategy Alignment

The CRD exists to foster municipal and electoral area cooperation in the region and contribute to creating a livable, sustainable and resilient region for generations to come. We do this by embracing collaboration, innovation and by being leaders in service delivery.

The Corporate Plan presents the work the CRD needs to deliver over the four-year Board term, along with the regional, sub-regional and local services, to meet the region's most important needs and advance the Board's vision and priorities.

This Plan nestles under the Corporate Plan, and is in alignment with other corporate strategies and plans and has the following target outcomes:

	Desired outcome	Goal
Open Government	Coordinated and collaborative governance, and leadership in organizational performance and service delivery	Foster greater civic participation among diverse community members
Advocacy	Effective and coordinated advocacy	Influence regional issues and advocate in a consistent, focused way that aligns with Board Priorities

Corporate Communications & Engagement initiatives in the Corporate Plan

> Enhance the public participation and engagement practices and framework to foster trust and understanding, informed by input from residents and equity, diversity and inclusion principles.

> Advance the Communications Strategic Plan to guide organizational communications practices and policies internally and externally.

> Modernize the **crd.bc.ca** website.

> Work collaboratively to address multi-jurisdictional issues that impact residents' well-being, in alignment with the Board's Strategic Priorities.

Mission

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Through strategic partnerships and collaboration, we create meaningful connections with residents, partners and colleagues by communicating at the right time, in the right way. We realize the CRD visions by ensuring residents, partners and colleagues can rely on us to provide information that is reliable and relevant. We deepen trust through every interaction by listening actively, being inclusive and fostering two-way dialogue.

A mission statement is a concise description of organizational purpose, intention and objectives.

The Communications mission statement is aligned with the CRD Mission and with the Board and Organizational Visions.
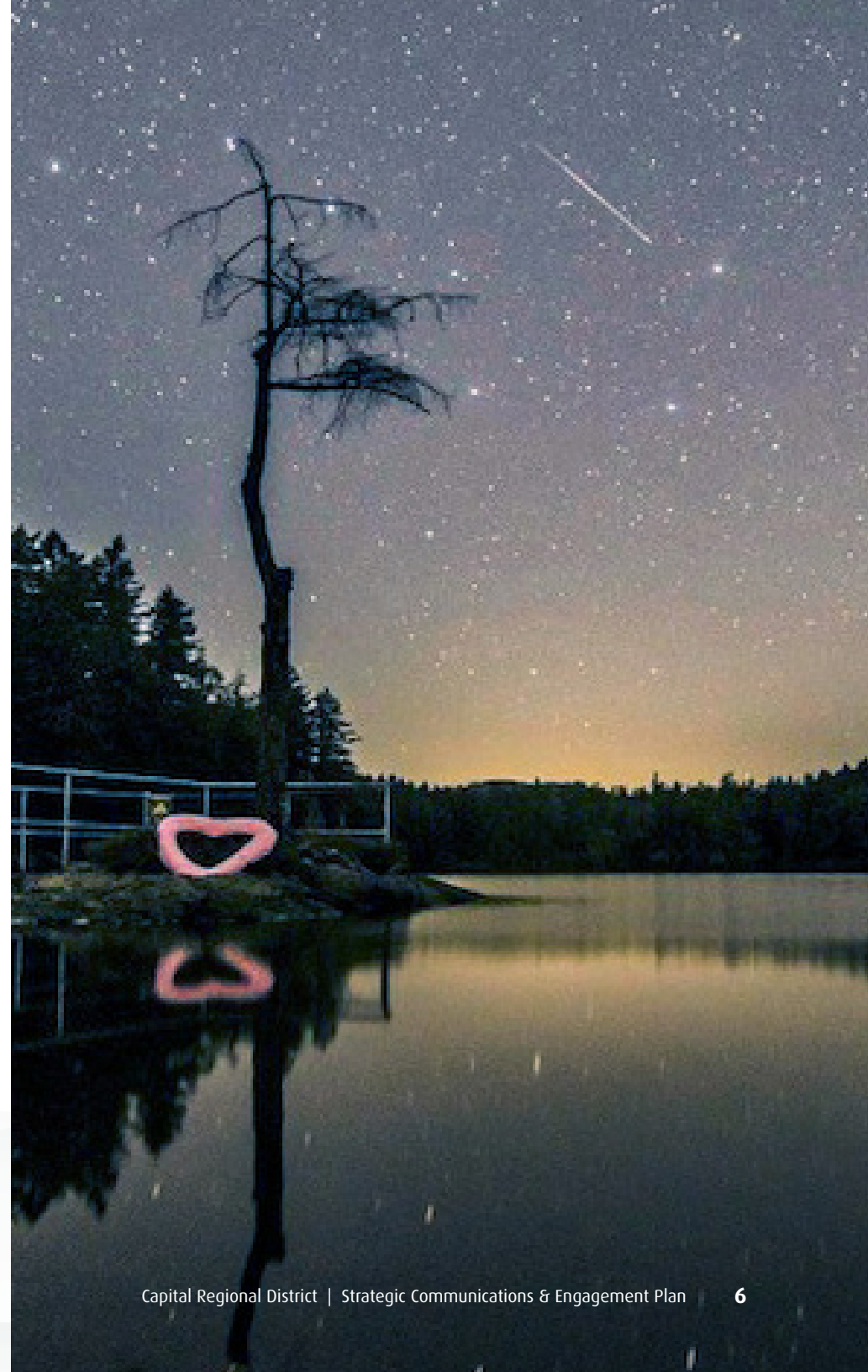
Guiding Principles and Values

Our guiding principles act as our guardrails. They describe what is considered when we make decisions about our work or set organizational standards. They are aligned to the CRD Cultural Traits which reflect what the broader CRD community values and the behaviours and mindsets all employees strive to demonstrate and apply throughout their work.

SERVE THE CUSTOMER
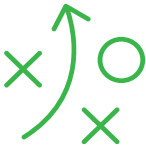**We deliver resident-centered experiences**

We understand who our audience is, our purpose for communicating with them and we listen to what they need. We value everyone, regardless of background, identity or beliefs.
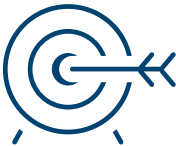
OWN THE OUTCOME
We are data informed

We measure outcomes instead of outputs and adjust our strategies based on what we learn.

LEAD THE WAY
We set the organizational standards for communications

Corporate Communications & Engagement develops communications strategies, protocols and tactics for organizational success in a consistent and flexible approach.

DEVELOP EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE
All staff have a role to play in representing the CRD through communication

Corporate Communications & Engagement provides guidance, develops tools and templates, and builds capacity to enable everyone to reach their communication goals within established practices.

WORK COLLABORATIVELY
We build and nurture relationships

We identify and work toward common goals and outcomes.

EMBRACE CHANGE
We anticipate communication needs and embrace change

We scan the environment, identify emerging trends, and act proactively to find solutions.

Audiences

The Strategic Communications & Engagement Strategic Plan intends to create an organizational vision for communications. The audiences for this plan are the Corporate Communications & Engagement divisional staff, communications specialists embedded in program areas, and any other employee who plays a role in communicating information about or on behalf of the CRD, up to and including the Executive Leadership Team.

External Audiences

The CRD, as a regional services provider and federation of local governments, engages with a multitude of audiences externally across a wide spectrum of activities. The key external audiences are summarized below.

Political

> Regional Boards (CRHD, CRHC, CRHD)
> Other local elected officials (councils, Islands Trust)
> CRD commissions and committees
> First Nations Governments
> Partners (Province/Federal government — grant providers)

Non-political

> Regional residents
> Regional businesses
> Media
> Public Sector Workers
> Non-Profit and Resident Organizations

The Team

The Communications team consists of the Corporate Communications & Engagement Division and program area-specific communications staff.

The Corporate Communications & Engagement Division supports the Board, Executive Leadership Team and the organization by providing strategic advice and support to ensure information is communicated appropriately through various channels. This is accomplished through the development and application of guidelines and tools that foster engagement and provide the public and employees with access to accurate, timely and consistent information.

Program area-specific communications staff are experts in the content and programs of their respective Divisions, and they report directly to their functional departments. They assist Divisions with issues management, strategic planning and product execution, offering a critical eye to assess products or narratives before they are distributed or presented publicly. Program area-specific communications staff plan for, develop and implement communications initiatives which reflect the program area's priorities and work plans. These staff liaise between their Divisions and the Corporate Communications & Engagement Division to provide program-specific content, ensuring corporate alignment and that all communications policies and procedures are adhered to within their service area. This is accomplished through the Corporate Communications & Engagement Division's oversight over CRD brand and messaging.

In late 2023 the executive leadership team announced the reorganization initiative "CRD Evolves", one outcome of this initiative changes the reporting structure of the communications team from a decentralized model to a more centralized approach with the program area-specific communications staff reporting to the Corporate Communications & Engagement Division which will build in additional integration and constituency between program areas.

PROGRAM AREA COMMUNICATIONS

Capital Region Housing Corporation
Communications Coordinator

Environmental Services
Communications Supervisor
Communications Coordinators
Communications Liaison
Communications Assistant
Visual Communications Specialist
Outreach Coordinator

Integrated Water Services
Communications Coordinator

Regional Parks
Communications Coordinator
Communications Officer

Planning & Protective Services
Communications Coordinator

Panorama Recreation Centre
Recreation Program Coordinator

COMMUNICATIONS EXTERNAL TO CENTRALIZED MODEL

Arts & Culture
Community Outreach Coordinator

SEAPARC Leisure Complex
Program Services Manager

Situational Analysis

The situational analysis provides a comprehensive assessment of the internal and external factors that influence the communication landscape — a landscape which is constantly changing, evolving and being reshaped, and one for which we must continuously evaluate and adapt. By examining these factors, we can strategically align our efforts to effectively meet the needs of the region.

As an organization responsible to our residents and local partners, there is a strong expectation that we continue to demonstrate responsible fiscal management, innovation and professionalism. As with governments in general, there is a continued expectation for clear, transparent communication and open governance. Our commitment to these principles remains.

Our overarching goals of fostering greater civic participation among our diverse community members, influencing regional issues and advocating in a consistent, focused way that aligns with Board priorities are supported by our efforts to ensure the right message is delivered to the right audience in a timely and effective way.

Key principles of effective communication include developing strategies and policies that ensure messaging is delivered consistently in alignment with the CRD's policy objectives and the broader open government principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and inclusion. This work includes building internal capacity to continually learn, adapt and ensure the necessary skills are in place to lead the transformation required of communicators working in a rapidly changing context.

Services

Together, the Communications team plays a vital role in supporting the organization by effectively managing and enhancing its communication efforts. With increased use of digital communications and engagement platforms, the communications team identifies, manages and supports emerging digital services. Resources and toolkits are available for all staff. The Communications team is also responsible for corporate document control so that all protocols, procedures and guidelines are followed to ensure consistency in brand handling and messaging.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLANNING: develops comprehensive communication strategies for both external and internal audiences aligned with CRD goals and objectives. Identifying target audiences, defining messaging frameworks and outlining communication channels and tactics to ensure consistent and impactful communication. It includes developing and applying communications guidelines and tools, as well as strategy, advice and alignment.

Supporting resources: Communication planning templates and guidelines

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT: crafts clear, compelling, and consistent content that aligns with the CRD's mission, values and priorities utilizing high levels of planning, audience perception and behaviour research to fulfill the organization's mission. Highly technical information is distilled into plain language to make the critical information accessible and readable for everyone. Messaging is tailored to specific target audiences and effectively conveys key information, initiatives, and achievements of the CRD.

Supporting resources: CRD Writing Style Guide

BRAND AND IDENTITY: develops and manages brand and visual guidelines. Ensures the consistent use of a strong visual brand in the projection of the CRD's image, standards and values. Graphic standards, a sign strategy and a brand identity are overseen to ensure that all CRD print, promotional and educational materials maintain a consistent look, feel and tone. The goal is to have the public and other interested parties immediately recognize our work is that of the CRD.

Supporting resources: Brand and Graphic Standards, Corporate Sign Strategy

MEDIA RELATIONS: establishes and maintains relationships with media outlets and journalists to facilitate accurate and timely coverage of the CRD's activities and initiatives. Proactively engaging with the media, responding to inquiries, and coordinating press releases and media interviews to ensure accurate representation of the CRD's work.

Supporting resources: Media Relations Protocols and Policy

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS: ensures effective communication within the CRD by developing and implementing internal communication strategies that deliver messages and campaigns to people who need to see them. Facilitating the flow of information among different departments, disseminating organizational updates, and fostering a culture of transparency, collaboration, and employee engagement. Develop and implement an internal communications framework outlining the strategic approach to effectively communicate CRD information, and identify resources that encourage accessible, relevant, understandable, timely and engaging communications.

Supporting resources: Internal Communications Framework

CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND ISSUES MANAGEMENT: is responsible for accurate, timely and consistent distribution of information to the public, media and staff. The CRD manages infrastructure and provides services that are essential to the health, livelihood and well-being of people within the region. Developing crisis communication plans, coordinating messaging, and providing guidance and support to CRD leadership and staff in effectively addressing and responding to emerging issues. A crisis communications response is appropriate for any situation that has the capacity to impact public safety or impair the organization's reputation and ultimately its ability to operate. Regular media routines and procedures are established and briefings are prepared for elected officials.

▤ **Supporting resources:** Emergency Communications Guidelines

SOCIAL MEDIA: manages the CRD's social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. Maintains an active and positive online presence by choosing the appropriate channels and audiences for different messages, developing engaging and informative content, monitoring online conversations, and responding to public inquiries or comments. Reviews and considers the advantages and disadvantages of stand-alone social media channels for some organizational functions. Social media platforms are monitored to identify opportunities and emerging issues, and to respond to public questions in a friendly, timely and credible manner.

▤ **Supporting resources:** Social media policy and guidelines,
Social Media Plan Template

WEBSITE: establishes, maintains and updates the CRD website to allow members of the public to quickly find relevant, credible and up-to-date information. Training is provided to staff and updates are reviewed to ensure that consistent web standards, copyright and brand requirements and approved communication plans are upheld. Coordinate with Information Technology staff on ongoing improvements to the website and timelines for implementation.

▤ **Supporting resources:** Website Content Roles and Responsibilities,
Corporate Communications Team

MARKETING: conceives, develops and implements paid media campaigns and materials to build awareness of CRD programs and initiatives or to address regulatory requirements to promote behaviour change and generate revenue. Generate media plans that identify the appropriate media and social media platforms and outlets to maximize the benefit of paid media opportunities.

▤ **Supporting resources:** Communication planning templates and guidelines,
advertising planning sheets

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: facilitates community engagement initiatives by developing communication materials, organizing public consultations, and coordinating outreach activities and events. Ensuring that the CRD actively seeks input from the community, listens to concerns, and communicates decisions effectively to foster meaningful engagement and community participation. Policies and related standards for survey creation and public participation initiatives are established and implemented to ensure a consistent and credible process is in place for engaging with the public on matters that impact them. Training and access to corporate engagement tools is provided and all materials are reviewed prior to the launch of a new initiative. Oversees "Get Involved", the corporate, web-based engagement tool.

▤ **Supporting resources:** Public Participation Policy and guidelines.

EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT: tracks and evaluates the effectiveness of communication strategies and initiatives through various metrics, such as media coverage, website and social media analytics, and interested parties feedback. This data is used to assess the impact of communication efforts, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions to optimize future communication activities.

▤ **Supporting resources:** Analytic Reports

By fulfilling these responsibilities, the Communications team supports the CRD in effectively communicating with interested parties, building trust and credibility, enhancing the organization's reputation, and ensuring that its initiatives and accomplishments are effectively shared with the public.

External Trends

To communicate effectively we need to understand the larger societal context we operate in as a regional government. These key external trends are shaping the way residents perceive and interact with government entities, emphasizing the need for strategic communication planning and adaptation.

SOCIETAL CHANGES
Reduced Trust in Government and Disinformation

One prominent trend is the reduced trust in government institutions. Residents may perceive information from government sources as untrustworthy, leading to a rise in disinformation and misinformation. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer in 2022, 58% of Canadians have an increasing concern that government leaders are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations (an increase of 12 points from 2021). In response, it is crucial for governments to demonstrate humanity, transparency, capability, and reliability. Building trust through open and honest communication becomes paramount, highlighting the need for well-crafted messages, reliable sources, and accessible information.

DIGITIZATION
Constant State of Flux and Impact on Engagement

More Canadians than ever are using the Internet to connect with governments, causing digital communication to be the fastest-growing area in the communications industry. The rapid pace of digitization brings about constant changes in communication channels, platforms, and tools. Government entities must stay nimble and adaptive, ensuring official forms of communication are up-to-date, timely, and responsive. Websites play a crucial role as an immediate information source, and residents now have higher expectations for real-time updates. Additionally, social media significantly impacts engagement with the public. Government organizations must actively engage and respond on social platforms to connect with residents effectively.

IMPORTANCE OF DATA
Countering Misinformation and Fostering Transparency

Data has gained immense importance in countering misinformation and disinformation. Obtaining data to understand resident awareness and sentiment towards the CRD is critical. By integrating data into the strategic communication planning process, the CRD can make informed decisions based on resident awareness and sentiment. This data-driven approach enables the government to identify areas where misinformation or misunderstandings may arise, allowing for targeted and effective communication efforts to dispel inaccuracies. In addition, emphasizing the use of reliable data and statistics in communication helps foster transparency and reinforces the credibility of government messages.

Internal Trends

Organizational culture and processes significantly impact government organizational communications. These internal dynamics and trends pose unique challenges and opportunities for aligning communication efforts and achieving organizational goals.

PROGRAM LEVEL DECISION MAKING
Aligning Corporate View and Organizational Goals

One significant internal trend is the distribution of communication responsibilities across various staff members, both formally and informally. This decentralized approach can result in challenges in understanding the value and purpose of aligning communications to a corporate view, message, and tone. Some staff may feel that aligning with a corporate view detracts from their original intention, leading to potential inconsistencies in messaging. Additionally, there may be a lack of alignment between communication content and the broader organizational goals, which can hinder the effectiveness of communication efforts.

CRD EVOLVES
Adjusting reporting structures and enhancing flexibility

In late 2023 the executive leadership team decided to move from a decentralized communication service to a more centralized reporting structure within the communications team to increase consistency and integration. This new structure will allow all communications specialists to be equipped with a more comprehensive understanding of available tools, policies and guidelines and ensure adherence to organizational standards. It also provides a mechanism to flexibly redirect the pool of communication specialists towards more urgent or priority initiatives.

ISSUES MANAGEMENT
Balancing Proactive and Reactive Work

A prominent internal trend is the prevalence of issues management taking precedence in Corporate Communications. The specialist capacity internally is often consumed by addressing reactive issues and crisis situations, leaving limited room for proactive and strategic communication activities. This reactive focus can hinder the organization's ability to plan and execute long-term communication initiatives, resulting in missed opportunities for advancing broader organizational goals.

ENHANCED INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
Open Communications and Streamlined Processes

With a new organizational vision introduced in 2023 improved and enhanced internal communications is a corporate priority. Data collected in the employee experience survey confirms that employees would like improvements in how and when we communicate to all employees. This includes being clear about why we make corporate and organizational decisions and what they are.

By addressing the impact of organizational culture and processes on communication, the CRD can overcome challenges and capitalize on opportunities to achieve communication goals more effectively. A culture that values open communication and streamlined processes can lead to improved interested parties engagement, enhanced transparency, and successful achievement of organizational objectives.

Achievements

Over the past few years, we have pursued innovative approaches to enhance our communication efforts. Our accomplishments have transformed our communication strategies and also reinforced our overarching goal of fostering transparent, efficient, and impactful communication.

- ✓ Agenda and Minutes subscription service
- ✓ Mobile navigation added to website
- ✓ Website alerts and public notices
- ✓ Corporate Writing Style Guide
- ✓ Internal Communications Framework
- ✓ CRD Central Launched
- ✓ Google and Facebook Ads Launched
- ✓ Board Highlights Launched

- ✓ Dashboard redesign
- ✓ First YouTube Live event
- ✓ Instagram Launched
- ✓ Corporate Sign Strategy
- ✓ Digital Engagement Platform Launch
- ✓ Graphic Standards Update
- ✓ Year over Year growth on Social Channels
- ✓ Templating progress reports

Strategic Priorities

Five strategic priorities have been identified by the Corporate Communications & Engagement Division. These capture the most significant and pressing areas of focus over the next four years and will address organizational and divisional challenges and opportunities.

For each priority, we have identified specific goals and actions we intend to take. Additional or alternative goals and actions may be identified in future years to remain aligned with emerging changes to the CRD's operating context and/or priorities. The priorities appear in no particular order.

1 Fostering meaningful connections with communities

2 Supporting a culture of organizational connection

3 Providing quality information at the right time, in the right way

4 Placing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility at the heart of communications

5 Adapting to changing digital landscapes

Fostering meaningful connections with communities

We strive to build trust with residents by fostering civic engagement, strengthening relationships, and connecting communities through open communication and compelling storytelling where diverse voices are heard and valued.

WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

a. Enhance public participation and engagement practices to build trust and understanding through honest and relevant communications.

b. Tell compelling stories to connect residents and communities to the places they live, work and play.

c. Support effective and coordinated CRD Board advocacy to create positive change for the region, in alignment with the CRD Advocacy Strategy.

ACTIONS ≫

1. Create "day-in-the-life" profiles to showcase and celebrate the diversity and complexity of work employees undertake at the CRD.

2. Identify parameters to review impact of marketing campaigns and digital channels on resident behaviour change.

3. Through the communications working group, explore options to raise the profile of CRD staff and how the work they do contributes to the region and to help residents feel connected to the region they live, work and play in.

4. Make content more relevant to CRD audiences by expanding news sections of the crd.bc.ca site to incorporate stories.

5. Contribute to organizational approach for advocacy to ensure consistency and alignment with Board Priorities.

6. Evaluate current organizational marketing and outreach approaches, identifying opportunities to link routine or program-specific communication with talent acquisition strategies.

Supporting a culture of organizational connection

Deeper connections between colleagues allow for greater collaboration, shared learnings and organizational awareness. When employees feel supported, valued and engaged, the organization benefits.

WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

a. Promote a culture where staff feel supported, connected and informed through authentic and transparent internal communication.

b. Cultivate staff connection to their workplace and each other.

c. Ensure everyone (staff, leadership and Board Directors) understands the role they play and the support they have in their communication efforts.

ACTIONS »

1. Explore ways to increase two-way staff engagement, such as pulse polls or other feedback mechanisms, to supplement the biennial CRD Employee Experience Survey and support departmental program activities.

2. Collect data about CRD Central usage (SharePoint Analytics) to measure and inform plans and strategies.

3. Support People, Safety & Culture to promote the successful rollout of SuccessFactors.

4. Increase the profile of our organizational visions and cultural traits to boost their awareness among employees in collaboration with People, Safety & Culture.

5. Collaborate with People, Safety & Culture to deliver staff connection and recognition programs.

6. Create a policy to mandate the adherence to corporate standards and processes for communications.

7. Support all staff in being 'brand ambassadors' by creating a Communications Overview package to orient new employees and guide existing employees to key documents, toolkits and expectations.

8. Establish a new collaborative, user-friendly quarterly communications work-planning and forecasting tool for all communicators, including embedded communications employees.

9. In late 2023, the Chief Administrative Officer changed the reporting relationships of embedded communication coordinators to a more direct line to Corporate Communications. This will increase communications capacity and alignment and allow for stronger support and oversight in developing department/division communication initiatives. This transition will unfold over 2024.

Providing quality information at the right time, in the right way

What we say, how we say it and when we say it matters. All our audiences deserve communication that is accurate, thoughtful and meaningful.

WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

a. Ensure internal and external communications are timely, clear and relevant, and content is easy to access.

b. Promote the CRD brand as a trustworthy and reliable source of information.

ACTIONS >>

1. Corporate Communications to identify ways to improve coordination and management of incoming media requests.

2. Formalize systems to promote early discussions with Corporate Communications to provide advice on how to deal with emerging issues so we can be proactive.

3. Strengthen relationship building and collaboration with communicators in other local governments to leverage information sharing.

4. Gain a better understanding of how the CRD brand is perceived by staff and the public, as well as gather valuable data by conducting surveys about what is known about the CRD and use this feedback to inform strategies and tactics.

5. Communicate which tools, templates and brand assets are available to staff and how to access them.

6. Participate in the creation of a corporate standard for policy review and renewal.

7. Roll out a Digital Asset Management System organization-wide so that staff can easily find and access corporately approved digital brand and photography assets.

8. Conduct a review of service levels for communication activities during non-traditional working hours (i.e., weekends).

9. Develop Response Guidelines and Standards for incoming queries for all channels (e.g., media, social media, email, etc.) to improve consistency across the organization.

Placing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility at the heart of communications

Connecting with people with diverse lived experiences leads to more innovative ideas, better decisions, and stronger democracies. Meaningful two-way engagement strategies help address barriers to participation.

WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

a. Ensure communications are written in plain language and avoid the use of jargon and acronyms.

b. Make public information available in a way that is accessible to all people, including those with disabilities.

c. Reflect the diverse communities the CRD serves in communication materials.

ACTIONS >>

1. Update the Public Participation Framework to reflect principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and create a toolkit that supports best practice to address barriers.

2. Work with People, Safety & Culture to support the implementation of the Accessibility Plan, which will identify barriers of access to CRD services and programs including information and communication materials.

3. Refresh website to comply with internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

4. Provide plain language and accessible content training to communicators and web authors.

5. Provide communications expertise and support to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion steering committee in the development of corporate documents, communications and initiatives related to corporately recognized awareness days as well as assisting with other ways to promote diversity and inclusion.

Adapting to changing digital landscapes

Organizations are responding to changing trends and no longer relying on one form of communication. They now increase reach using advertising, social media, web, and relationships with journalists and influencers. As most Canadians engage with services online, we must continually evolve our use of digital tools to meet the increasing expectations of residents.

WE ACCOMPLISH THIS BY FOCUSING ON THE FOLLOWING GOALS:

a. Help create an environment where digital transformation and capacity in the organization is championed and valued.

b. Establish baselines of success for communications plans.

c. Support staff that play a role in communication by developing and improving skills for using new and existing digital tools.

d. Ensure voice and tone on digital channels is consistent, engaging and effective.

e. Further develop strategic relationships between Corporate Communications and Information Technology and Geographic Information Systems (IT & GIS).

ACTIONS »

1. Modernize the crd.bc.ca website by updating design, navigation and content to meet current needs and plan for future use as a virtual front counter.

2. Measure reach and engagement of content across channels.

3. Leverage communication working group to share best practices and promote professional development and growth.

4. Participate in digital governance policy decisions with IT & GIS related to communication.

5. Corporate Communications and IT & GIS to implement an intake process so that staff can easily request communications support and track progress.

6. Co-develop programs with IT & GIS and People, Safety & Culture that are grounded in an understanding of workforce needs, are tailored to the different stages of digital literacy, encourage learning, and enable collaboration.

7. Review and consider the advantages and disadvantages of stand-alone social media channels for some organizational functions.

Monitoring & Reporting

Implementation of the plan and associated actions will be overseen by the Executive Leadership Team. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will report progress to the CRD Board through the Quarterly CAO Report.

The impact of the plan itself will be measured through the CRD Employee Experience Survey, through which staff are engaged every other year, and through action-specific measures.

CRD EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The following questions will be tracked as indicators of impact of the actions highlighted in this plan, among other factors.

› In my organization, important matters are communicated to me in a timely and effective manner (Q39)

› My organization does a good job of explaining why important changes are made (Q40)

› I am satisfied with the information contained in my organization's intranet (Q41)

Four-Year Action Plan

Fostering meaningful connections with communities

ACTIONS		IMPLEMENTATION YEARS			
		2024	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**
ACTION 1	Create "day-in-the-life" profiles to showcase and celebrate the diversity and complexity of work employees undertake at the CRD.	●	●	●	●
ACTION 2	Identify parameters to review impact of marketing campaigns and digital channels on resident behaviour change.				●
ACTION 3	Through the communications working group, explore options to raise the profile of CRD staff and how the work they do contributes to the region and to help residents feel connected to the region they live, work and play in.		●	●	
ACTION 4	Make content more relevant to CRD audiences by expanding news sections of the crd.bc.ca site to incorporate stories.		●		
ACTION 5	Contribute to organizational approach for advocacy to ensure consistency and alignment with Board Priorities.	●	●	●	●
ACTION 6	Evaluate current organizational marketing and outreach approaches, identifying opportunities to link routine or program-specific communication with talent acquisition strategies.		●	●	

Supporting a culture of organizational connection

ACTIONS		IMPLEMENTATION YEARS			
		2024	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**
ACTION 1	Explore ways to increase two-way staff engagement, such as pulse polls or other feedback mechanisms, to supplement the biennial CRD Employee Experience Survey and support departmental program activities.		●		
ACTION 2	Collect data about CRD Central usage (SharePoint Analytics) to measure and inform plans and strategies.	●			
ACTION 3	Support People, Safety & Culture to promote the successful roll-out of SuccessFactors	●	●	●	●
ACTION 4	Increase the profile of our organizational visions and cultural traits to boost their awareness among employees in collaboration with People, Safety & Culture.		●		
ACTION 5	Collaborate with People, Safety & Culture to deliver staff connection and recognition programs.	●	●	●	●
ACTION 6	Create a policy to mandate the adherence to corporate standards and processes for communications.		●		
ACTION 7	Support all staff in being 'brand ambassadors' by creating a Communications Overview package to orient new employees and guide existing employees to key documents, toolkits and expectations.		●		
ACTION 8	Establish a new collaborative, user-friendly quarterly communications work-planning and forecasting tool for all communicators, including embedded communications employees.		●		
ACTION 9	In late 2023, the Chief Administrative Officer changed the reporting relationships of embedded communication coordinators to a more direct line to Corporate Communications. This will increase communications capacity and alignment and allow for stronger support and oversight in developing department/division communication initiatives. This transition will unfold over 2024.	●			

Providing quality information at the right time, in the right way

ACTIONS		IMPLEMENTATION YEARS			
		2024	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**
ACTION 1	Corporate Communications to identify ways to improve coordination and management of incoming media requests.		•		
ACTION 2	Formalize systems to promote early discussions with Corporate Communications to provide advice on how to deal with emerging issues so we can be proactive.		•		
ACTION 3	Strengthen relationship building and collaboration with communicators in other local governments to leverage information sharing.		•	•	•
ACTION 4	Gain a better understanding of how the CRD brand is perceived by staff and the public, as well as gather valuable data by conducting surveys about what is known about the CRD and use this feedback to inform strategies and tactics.	•	•		
ACTION 5	Communicate which tools, templates and brand assets are available to staff and how to access them.		•		
ACTION 6	Participate in the creation of a corporate standard for policy review and renewal.		•		
ACTION 7	Roll out a Digital Asset Management System organization-wide so that staff can easily find and access corporately approved digital brand and photography assets.	•			
ACTION 8	Conduct a review of service levels for communication activities during non-traditional working hours (i.e., weekends).			•	
ACTION 9	Develop Response Guidelines and Standards for incoming queries for all channels (e.g., media, social media, email, etc.) to improve consistency across the organization.		•	•	•

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

4

Placing equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility at the heart of communications

ACTIONS		IMPLEMENTATION YEARS			
		2024	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**
ACTION 1	Update the Public Participation Framework to reflect principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and create a toolkit that supports best practice to address barriers.	●			
ACTION 2	Work with People, Safety & Culture to support the implementation of the Accessibility Plan, which will identify barriers of access to CRD services and programs including information and communication materials.	●	●	●	●
ACTION 3	Refresh website to comply with internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.		●	●	●
ACTION 4	Provide plain language and accessible content training to communicators and web authors.	●			
ACTION 5	Provide communications expertise and support to the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion steering committee in the development of corporate documents, communications and initiatives related to corporately recognized awareness days as well as assisting with other ways to promote diversity and inclusion.	●	●	●	●

Adapting to changing digital landscapes

ACTIONS		IMPLEMENTATION YEARS			
		2024	2025	2026	2027
ACTION 1	Modernize the crd.bc.ca website by updating design, navigation and content to meet current needs and plan for future use as a virtual front counter.	●	●		
ACTION 2	Measure reach and engagement of content across channels.	●	●		
ACTION 3	Leverage communication working group to share best practices and promote professional development and growth.	●	●	●	●
ACTION 4	Participate in digital governance policy decisions with IT & GIS related to communication.	●	●	●	●
ACTION 5	Corporate Communications and IT & GIS to implement an intake process so that staff can easily request communications support and track progress.		●		
ACTION 6	Co-develop programs with IT & GIS, and People, Safety & Culture that are grounded in an understanding of workforce needs, are tailored to the different stages of digital literacy, encourage learning and enable collaboration.		●	●	●
ACTION 7	Review and consider the advantages and disadvantages of stand-alone social media channels for some organizational functions.		●		