



STAFF REPORT

DATE: June 3, 2020

FILE: 0550-04 Board

TO: Chair and Directors
Regional Board

FROM: David Leitch
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: REGIONAL DISTRICT SERVICE RESTORATION PLAN

PURPOSE/PROBLEM

To consider a plan for managing the restoration of Regional District services that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic while respecting physical distancing protocols and other public health measures.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The attached report was considered at the May 27, 2020 meeting of the Regional Board at which time the following resolution was passed:

Anderson/Moglove: SRD 392/20

THAT a report and draft policy to address the Regional District's transition plan be prepared for consideration at the June 10, 2020 meeting of the Regional Board.

In accordance with the direction provided by the Board the attached policy has been prepared for consideration. The policy is based on the following assumptions:

- that the corporate-wide target for restoration of services would be approximately 60% over the next several months pending full restoration of services after the COVID-19 pandemic;
- that the restoration of services will be guided in part by the principle of equilibrium with service levels being achieved by other similar organizations;
- that specific details regarding the restoration of individual services and the implementation of safety measures will be left with administration to determine in accordance with evolving public health authority guidelines;
- that the Regional District will continue to move forward with its plans for technology to support remote participation in meetings by directors and the public.

While some Regional District services (eg. Strathcona Gardens Recreation Centre) have been significantly affected by the emergency declaration, other services such as nature trails and contracted utility services have been much less impacted. With respect to the corporate office, a number of employees have continued to work on-site while others have worked remotely since the emergency declaration. Moving forward it is anticipated that we will be able to accommodate more staff on-site to handle interactions with the public while respecting physical distancing and other public health requirements. In the short-term we will be encouraging members of the public to access staff via remote technology whenever possible while maintaining scheduled in-person meetings as an alternative where appropriate.

Insofar as Board and committee meetings are concerned, we have been assured that the Province will be implementing changes to allow remote participation by directors to continue

beyond the current state of emergency. We intend to continue evaluating technology that supports remote participation by directors and the public with a goal of achieving full webcasting capability within the time frame of the service restoration policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT the report from the Chief Administrative Officer be received.
2. THAT Policy CP- 025 [*Service Restoration Plan*] be approved.

Respectfully:



David Leitch
Chief Administrative Officer

Prepared by: *T. Yates, Corporate Services Manager*

Attachment: Policy CP- 025 [*Service Restoration Plan*]
Copy of May 20, 2020 report to the Regional Board



CORPORATE POLICY

No.: CP- 025

Date Approved: _____, 2020

Name: Service Restoration Plan

Purpose:	To establish a policy framework for incrementally restoring the delivery of services affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Authority:	Section 263 of the <i>Local Government Act</i> [Corporate Powers]
Scope:	This policy applies to all services, programs and other initiatives of the Regional District.

Definitions: “Regional Board” means the Strathcona Regional District Board of Directors.

“service” includes a program, activity or other initiative provided by or on behalf of the Regional District, or authorized under a contract with the Regional District.

Policy: Pending the full restoration of services affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regional Board will implement a plan designed to restore services to an aggregated 60% in the short-term while respecting physical distancing protocols and other public health guidelines intended to protect the public, staff and directors.

- General:**
1. The June 10, 2020 document attached to this policy and titled Service Restoration Plan (the ‘Plan’) is included in its entirety as an integral part of this policy.
 2. The Plan is designed as a flexible document to be administered in response to evolving public health guidelines.
 3. The Chief Administrative Officer shall be responsible for administering this policy.

Review Date:



Strathcona
REGIONAL DISTRICT



RECEPTION

◀ GENERAL INQUIRIES
PAYMENTS

Service Restoration Plan

A plan designed to restore those Regional District services that have been affected by restrictions placed by public health authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strathcona
REGIONAL DISTRICT





Service Restoration Plan

A plan designed to restore those Regional District services that have been affected by restrictions placed by public health authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

June 10, 2020

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1 Executive Summary

The Strathcona Regional District (SRD) Plan for the Restoration of Programs and Services (“Service Restoration Plan”) is a coordinated corporate strategy intended to guide decisions for restoring programs and services that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The Service Restoration Plan supports the four primary strategic objectives outlined in section 3 that guide the Regional District’s collective efforts to respond to and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan is a living document, and will be updated as necessary to reflect emerging information and advice from public health authorities, senior levels of government, WorkSafeBC and others.

The restoration of services will have a financial impact and, in some cases, new administrative controls and workspace modifications may be necessary to ensure that relevant health guidelines are being followed.

1.1 Acknowledgement

This plan has been developed based on the excellent work done by the City of Richmond, the Cowichan Valley Regional District, various Provincial departments and others.

2 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the SRD’s ability to effectively deliver programs and services to its citizens. Many Regional District services have been temporarily modified in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These include high-touch parks and recreation facilities that precluded physical distancing by users, but also include areas such as customer service at the SRD head office in Campbell River. In addition, meetings of the Regional Board and its committees have been held using remote participation technology which has precluded public observation of those proceedings as they occur. These services were stopped or modified to ensure the health and wellbeing of staff and the public, and in response to requirements by public health authorities for physical distancing between individuals and other measures.

While a number of services that involve interaction between staff and the public have been curtailed over the last few months, and there are several areas where the opposite is true. These have primarily been related to programs to support the COVID-19 response such as the ‘Regional District Delivers’ program which provided funding for organizations to support seniors and vulnerable populations to obtain groceries and other essential goods, as well as the provision of daily bulletins to staff, directors and the public regarding the status of federal, provincial and local services affected by COVID-19. In addition, the provision of some services such as nature trails and other outdoor recreational facilities have not been significantly affected by COVID-19.

The impacts to the affected Regional District services occurred primarily in the period between March 12, 2020 and June 1, 2020 and are ongoing.

In response to communication by senior levels of government that there has been some success in flattening the curve of COVID-19 infections, as well as indications that many aspects of the economy will soon be re-opening, the Regional District has begun planning for the eventual restoration of programs and services when deemed appropriate to do so. There will be some flexibility and discretion by the Regional District in many of the decisions around service restoration. Some actions to stop or modify services were originally taken in direct response to orders or advice from public health authorities and senior levels of government, while other decisions were made in response to the needs of the community and directed by SRD Board or the Chief Administrative Officer.

The Service Restoration Plan is a coordinated corporate strategy to re-open facilities and restore programs and services provided by the Regional District when considered appropriate based on the most recently available information.

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

The restoration of services may have a financial impact in some cases, especially where there is a need to invest in equipment and supplies to protect worker health and safety, or to protect the public. Many staff associated with the direct delivery of these services are not currently scheduled for work due to withdrawing of services and to allow the Regional District to mitigate financial losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Restoration of services will require re-scheduling these staff to deliver services and there will be a cost in doing so. There will also be extraordinary costs (both one-time and ongoing) of offering these services in a modified manner in order to continue to ensure the safety of the public, staff and elected officials.

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

3 Strategic Objectives

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

- protecting the health and safety of employees and the public while serving as an essential line of defence against the COVID-19 pandemic as mandated by the Province of B.C.;
- protecting and securing Regional District assets while continuing to the fullest extent possible to deliver Regional District services while adhering to restrictions and limits prescribed by the Provincial Health Officer and as mandated by the Regional District Board;
- doing the necessary planning and completing all work needed to ensure that all facilities, programs, services and equipment will be in optimum condition and at operational status when re-opened for community use; and

- ensuring that the appropriate staff resources and remote work capabilities are in place to provide the support services that will be needed over the full duration of COVID-19 to provide sustainable service levels as described above.

4 Restoring Programs & Services

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

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

1. Workforce and workplace requirements

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

2. Risks to vulnerable populations

This includes seniors, those with compromised immune systems and/or pre-existing health conditions, and those who have been identified within a high-risk cohort based on a variety of other factors.

3. Ability to adhere to health protocols

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

4. Nature of participation in program or activity

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

5. Additional risks

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

6. Timelines

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

7. Assumptions and prerequisites

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

8. Financial Impact

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

5 Staged Approach to Service Restoration

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

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

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

- cleaning and disinfection at all facilities.
- modification of facilities to include protective plexiglass barriers for public counters where appropriate.
- ensuring physical distancing is maintained where possible through more appointment-based service provision, directional traffic modification and queuing strategies, and appropriate signage.
- implementation of protective measures for vulnerable populations. This may include phasing in senior-specific programs to a later point along the service restoration continuum, setting aside specific times for serving the needs of seniors, or implementing specific programs and services designed for vulnerable populations.
- ensuring participants and staff stay at home if they are sick.
- promoting high levels of handwashing and personal hygiene as a key preventative measure. This includes providing access to washroom facilities and hand sanitizing stations.
- permitting staff and participants to wear face masks if desired, and where there is a risk that physical distancing may be hard to achieve or maintain on a consistent basis.
- creating clear guidelines for user groups that support health and safety objectives.

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

6 Plan for Restoring Services

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

This stage is characterized by the restoration of public access to most outdoor park amenities and outdoor programs with limits on group size. SRD Head Office re-opened to public access, possibly with limited hours and restrictions.

Parks & Trails Services

- Playgrounds, bike parks re-opened with signage
- Tennis courts, basketball courts and skateparks re-opened
- Nature trails, greenspaces and outdoor fields opened
- Portable washroom facilities re-opened

Recreation Services

- Outdoor recreation programming where physical distancing can be maintained

SRD Corporate Office (Campbell River)

- Front counter services limited to permits, payments and drop-off of documents
- Public enquiries via email and phone, or by appointment where required
- Meetings with applicants via remote technology or by appointment
- Site visits and inspections by appointment
- Development applications - electronic or by appointment only
- Board and committee meetings continued with remote technology

6.2 Stage 2 (Mid-June Through September)

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

Parks & Trails Services

- Picnic shelters with limited users (non-bookable use only)
- Re-opening of regional campground facilities

Recreation Services

- Outdoor playground programs
- Re-opening of Strathcona Gardens recreation centre for select indoor program offerings that have been pre-cleared through advance bookings or reservations
- Indoor recreation programming where physical distancing can be maintained

- Indoor facility bookings where physical distancing can be maintained

SRD Corporate Office (Campbell River)

- Continued operations with modified service levels
- Limited walk-in services subject to social distancing protocols
- Increased sanitization of public areas as service levels increase
- Board and committee meetings continued with remote technology, implementation of limited webcasting of meetings where feasible.

6.3 Stage 3 (September & Beyond)

Characterized by expanded public access to programs and services.

Parks & Trails Services

- Schedule limited size/scope park volunteer activities if appropriate

Recreation Services

- Recreation programming and facility booking where physical distancing can not be maintained

SRD Corporate Office (Campbell River)

- Continued operations with modified service levels
- Limited walk-in services subject to physical distancing protocols
- Increased sanitization of public areas as service levels increase
- Board and committee meetings continued with combination of remote technology and physical attendance, webcasting of meetings wherever feasible.

6.4 Stage 4 (Post COVID-19)

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

Parks & Trails

- Lift restrictions on field usage for sports tournaments
- Reinstate water fountain usage where applicable
- Permit booking of group bookable facilities at Quadra Island Community Centre and Blenkin Park
- Allow usage of park sites for third party special events

Recreation

- Events over 50 people resumed

SRD Corporate Office (Campbell River)

- Front counter services fully restored to pre-COVID levels
- Continued provision of web-based services and meetings to enhance overall service delivery
- In-person Board and committee meetings, public hearings, public consultation, etc. Webcasting of Board and committee meetings continued.

7 Financial Impact

The restoration of services may have a financial impact in some cases, especially where there is a need to invest in equipment, supplies or technology to protect worker health and safety, or to protect the public. Many staff associated with the direct delivery of services are not currently scheduled for work due to withdrawing of services and to allow the Regional District to mitigate financial losses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Restoration of services will require re-scheduling these staff to deliver services and incurring the cost of doing so. There will also be extraordinary costs (both one-time and ongoing) of offering these services in a modified manner in order to continue to ensure the safety of the public and staff.

Programs and services not currently being offered are, in normal operations, a net operating expense to the Regional District. As services are restored, there will be additional operating expenses. Further analysis will be required to consider these costs in the context of the Regional District's overall budget and further reporting will be provided to the Board in this regard.

8 Concurrent Planning and Initiatives

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

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

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

2. A Communication Plan

As programs and services begin to re-open to the public, citizens will need to be kept informed about what is available and how best to access those programs and services. They will also be looking to the Regional District for information to understand their risks and exposure, as well as to interpret the many, often ambiguous, guidelines provided by various authorities and the media. A Communication Plan for each Stage is recommended to support staff and the public as they navigate the various reactions that are to be expected as restrictions begin to ease and the economy begins to gradually expand in services. Public response to the COVID-19 pandemic locally has been commendable. Residents will need clear communication to understand and

make decisions for themselves and their families about how to participate in programs and services as health authorities monitor the curve of COVID-19 transmission on an ongoing basis.

3. A Cross-Functional Implementation Team

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

9 Appendix A: Provincial Health Orders & Guidelines

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

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

9.1 Regarding Physical Distancing

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

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

9.2 Regarding Proper Hygiene & Sanitation

- Hand sanitizing stations must be added near high traffic locations.
- All common areas and surfaces should be cleaned at the end of each day. Examples include washrooms, shared offices, common tables, desks, light switches and door handles.

9.3 Regarding Signage & Communication

- Post signs encouraging people to maintain a two metre distance from one another throughout a space and ensure that there is sufficient space available for customers and staff to maintain that distance.
- Post signs in your facility to encourage hand hygiene among all staff and guests.
- Prominently post signs encouraging regular hand washing.
- Post signage that limits the number of occupants in any elevator based on social distancing guidelines.

9.4 Regarding the Handling of Equipment & Materials

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

9.5 Regarding Employee Interactions

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

9.6 Regarding the Public

- Anyone with COVID-19-like symptoms, such as sore throat, fever, sneezing or coughing, must self-isolate at home for a minimum of 14 days from onset of symptoms, or until their symptoms have completely resolved.
- Customers may be on your premises only for the time that it takes them to purchase and collect their purchase.

9.7 Regarding the Handling of Food & Beverages

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

The Provincial Health Officer has not [explicitly] issued any orders requiring the closure of outdoor recreation facilities such as parks, dog parks, skate parks, playgrounds, picnic areas, walking, running and cycling trails, beaches, piers, boat launches, athletics fields, outdoor exercise equipment, tennis and basketball courts and golf courses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Island Health believes that the risk of COVID-19 transmission in these environments is low and that it is possible to safely operate these facilities at this time.

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