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2026 Business Plan Administrative Services (1003)

Murray Daly, Chief Administrative Officer

Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region.

Department/Function Services

The Administrative Services function provides administrative services to all departments of the Cariboo Regional District. Services that benefit all functions of the CRD are included in the Administrative Services budget and include not only administration, but financial services, data management/clerical support, corporate communications, and computer technology support, each with a manager responsible for the daily operations.

Administrative Services is a mandated service under the *Local Government Act* and as such, has no taxation limits attached. Each Electoral Area, the City of Quesnel, the City of Williams Lake, the District of 100 Mile House and the District of Wells all participate based on assessed value of land and improvements.

All members of the Board are responsible for the governance of this service.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

1. **Goal:** Strengthen relations with First Nations partners throughout the region.
Rationale: A core tenet of the Regional District's Strategic Plan, it is important that the Regional District, its member municipalities and its First Nations communities support each other in endeavors of mutual interest. In order to be positioned to do so proactively, strong relations must exist to ensure that we are all aware of each other's priorities and challenges and have a foundation of trust from which we can build.
Strategy: Implementation of Indigenous Relations Framework and an identified strategy developed with input from the Indigenous Relations Committee will guide the advancement of these relationships for the coming year. Opportunities to

- work collaboratively with and engage through Community to Community forums will be exercised whenever possible as well as other relationship building activities aimed at reconciliation throughout the region.
2. **Goal:** Implement strategies and core values identified in the Northstar document.
Rationale: The CRD undertook an employee engagement exercise last year following a return from the labour disruption. A document was produced which identified the core values and cultural direction staff wish to see the CRD adopt. This product is known as our Northstar document.
Strategy: The CRD has created a committee comprised of staff members from multiple departments to identify strategies to bring the values conceptualized in the Northstar forward and to develop a culture and working environment which reflects those values.
 3. **Goal:** Negotiate Collective Agreement with Union.
Rationale: The Collective Agreement negotiated between the CRD and the BCGEU was secured in 2024 for a 3 year term retroactive to the expiration of the previous agreement in 2023. The Current agreement expires in December of 2026.
Strategy: Administration will notify the BCGEU of our intention to bargain in August 2026 with the goal to have a new agreement secured before the end of the year.
 - 4 **Goal:** Conduct the 2026 Local Government Elections in accordance with provincial legislation and local government standards.
Rationale: Local Government elections are held every four years with the next scheduled elections to be held on October 17, 2026.
Strategy: Develop workplan early in the year. Prepare comprehensive nomination packages, secure polling stations and staffing, partner with school districts where appropriate, develop strategies and communications to encourage voter turnout.

Overall Financial Impact

The 2026 requisition is increased by 5% from the 2025 level.

Significant Issues & Trends

The Cariboo Regional District has taken on a number of large capital projects in the past year. Escalating costs from concept to contract award have proved challenging and the Procurement team continues to work with Finance and Administration to address these challenges and deliver projects on budget.

Measuring Previous Years Performance

- Goal:** Strengthen relations with First Nations partners throughout the region.
- Ongoing. An Indigenous relations framework was developed in cooperation with the Indigenous Relations Committee. Liaisons from multiple First Nations were embedded in the EOC during activations in the past year and MOU's continue to be developed.
- Goal:** Develop an Asset Management Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan.
- Ongoing. A new position – Project Management Specialist was created to assist in the management of large capital projects and to take the helm of the Asset Management Committee and continue to develop the program moving forward.
- Goal:** Enhance our compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and records management best practices.
- Administration has added a full time position dedicated to managing and processing Freedom of Information requests and ensuring the organization follows best practices and maintains compliance with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.



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2026 Business Plan Communications (1011)

Kat Chatten, Manager of Communications

Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region.

Department/Function Services

The Communications Department falls within the Administrative Services function and budget and provides communication services to all departments of the Cariboo Regional District. The department manages the Regional District's internal and external communications, including corporate communications, media and public relations, digital and social media platforms, emergency and crisis communications, public engagement, and graphic design standards.

The Communications Department manages a corporate operating budget that supports organization-wide communications and engagement initiatives. The department also assists other CRD services with the delivery of advertising and public relations activities budgeted within their respective service budgets.

Administrative Services is a mandated service under the *Local Government Act* and as such, has no taxation limits attached. Each Electoral Area, the City of Quesnel, the City of Williams Lake, the District of 100 Mile House, and the District of Wells all participate based on the assessed value of land and improvements. All members of the Board are responsible for the governance of this service.

The department works collaboratively with all CRD departments to support consistent, timely, and accessible communication and engagement across the organization.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies - 2026 Goals

1. **Goal:** Realign the CRD website and communication tools to better serve the public.

Rationale: Residents increasingly expect quick, clear, and accessible information about CRD services and programs. The existing website structure reflects internal organization rather than how residents search for information. Realigning the website with the user experience will make it easier for the public to find what they need, understand CRD processes, and engage with ongoing initiatives. This goal supports transparency, accessibility, and consistency across all digital platforms.

Strategy:

- Restructure website navigation to reflect public needs, focusing on “actions” and “topics” rather than internal departments.
- Apply plain language standards and improve search functionality. Conduct a usability review and gather feedback from residents and staff to identify areas for improvement.
- Integrate consistent visual standards from the new Graphic Manual and ensure WCAG 2.1 AA compliance.
- Ensure web content and imagery reflect the diversity of the region and apply inclusive, culturally aware communication standards.

Measurable Outcomes: Completion of website refresh by mid-2026 and usability survey completed by end of 2026.

2. **Goal:** Strengthen public education and awareness through proactive communication.

Rationale: Residents rely on the CRD for a wide range of essential services, but information can be fragmented or overly technical. Building a consistent, proactive approach to public education will improve service understanding and help residents make informed decisions. Increasing awareness of topics such as transfer station hours, planning and permits, utility billing, water system updates, emergency preparedness, and community safety will also reduce misinformation and support positive relationships between the CRD and residents.

Strategy:

- Develop and launch the Good Neighbour Guide — a user-friendly reference that outlines key CRD services, contact information, and community standards in plain language.
- Integrate education components into all major projects and ongoing programs, ensuring residents understand what the CRD does, why it matters, and how to engage.
- Standardize communication practices for essential public information such as utility system notifications, transfer station schedules, bylaw updates, and planning processes.

- Expand the use of multiple communication channels — website, social media, newsletters, signage, and local media — to ensure messaging reaches both urban and rural audiences.
- Coordinate with operational departments to create clear, accessible materials that explain CRD services and responsibilities.
- Include regional context and place-based awareness in public education materials to strengthen understanding of the area’s communities and histories.
- Implement tracking and feedback tools to measure engagement, identify communication gaps, and guide future improvements.

Measurable Outcomes: Good Neighbour Guide launched by mid-2026, with at least six major public education campaigns completed by year-end.

3. Goal: Conduct Awareness Campaign for the 2026 General Local Elections.

Rationale: A General Local Election is scheduled for October 2026, as required by the *Local Government Act*. All 12 Director positions will be up for election.

Strategy:

- Use multiple communication tactics in a non-partisan manner to promote awareness of the election process.
- Provide information on the nomination period, voting requirements, and voting opportunities.
- Ensure election information is accessible and inclusive, reflecting the communication needs of all regional residents and communities.
- Share updates and reminders through CRD communication channels, including the website, social media, and print advertisements.
- Communicate official election results following voting day.
- Issue statutory notices as required by the Chief Election Officer.

Measurable Outcomes: Non-partisan election awareness campaign completed 90 days before the October 2026 election, with all statutory notices issued within legislated timelines.

4. Goal: Develop a Corporate Communications Framework to Clarify Government Roles and CRD Responsibilities.

Rationale: Residents often engage with the CRD through individual programs and services but may not fully understand the difference between regional, municipal, and provincial responsibilities. This can create confusion about who is accountable for certain services—such as roads, snow removal, and services like health care—where responsibilities typically rest with other levels of government. Developing a clear, organization-wide communications framework will help distinguish the CRD’s mandate from that of its partners and ensure consistent messaging about governance, service delivery, and decision-making processes. This framework complements ongoing public education efforts by helping residents understand what the CRD does and what it does not do, thereby improving transparency and public trust.

Strategy:

- Develop a corporate communications framework outlining CRD governance, service responsibilities, and relationships with other levels of government and community partners.
- Produce plain-language content and visuals that explain how decisions are made and how services are delivered.
- Integrate the framework into staff communication practices and public-facing materials to promote consistent messaging.
- Align with corporate branding, accessibility, and engagement standards to ensure information is clear and inclusive.
- Incorporate awareness of Indigenous governance structures and culturally informed communication approaches into the framework.
- Create supporting tools such as infographics, explainer videos, and web content for ongoing reference.

Measurable Outcomes: Corporate Communications Framework completed and approved by end of 2026, with supporting materials published to clarify CRD and partner government responsibilities.

5. Goal: Expand Initiatives for Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment.

Rationale: Several CRD volunteer fire departments are experiencing critical volunteer shortages, creating concern about maintaining the staffing and training levels needed to ensure consistent service delivery and community safety. Strengthening regional recruitment and retention efforts will support service sustainability, community safety, and compliance with operational standards.

Strategy:

- Collaborate with Fire Protection Services to expand regional firefighter recruitment initiatives.
- Support public outreach through local events, targeted advertising, and digital and print promotional campaigns.
- Coordinate consistent messaging and branding across all participating fire departments.
- Highlight the value and community impact of volunteer firefighters through storytelling and recognition initiatives.
- Explore outreach opportunities with underrepresented and diverse communities to strengthen local recruitment efforts.

Measurable Outcomes: Regional recruitment campaign implemented throughout 2026, with promotional materials and outreach delivered across all participating fire departments.

6. Goal: Support 2026 Referendum Communications.

Rationale: The Communications Department provides essential support for ensuring clear, accurate, and accessible public information during referendums. Anticipated service-related referendums in 2026 will require coordinated communications to help residents understand the purpose, financial implications,

and community benefits of each proposed. Delivering consistent, non-partisan messaging builds trust and supports informed decision-making.

Strategy:

- Work with senior management and project leads to prepare neutral and factual public information for each referendum.
- Develop and distribute educational materials, including FAQs, advertisements, brochures, and digital content.
- Support public engagement events through the creation of displays, presentation materials, and informational handouts.
- Ensure all referendum communications meet legislative requirements for neutrality, accessibility, and transparency.
- Maintain consistent branding and messaging across all communication platforms.

Measurable Outcomes: Referendum communication packages developed and distributed for all planned 2026 referendums, with public information sessions completed prior to each vote.

7. Goal: Advance Implementation of the CRD Engagement Strategy Through 2027.

Rationale: The Board adopted the CRD Engagement Strategy in 2024 to strengthen how the organization connects with residents, partners, and stakeholders. Early implementation was affected by external operational demands and competing priorities, resulting in some activities being deferred. Continued implementation through 2026 and 2027 will focus on embedding engagement practices across departments, evaluating outcomes, and preparing for the next strategy cycle. This ongoing work ensures that engagement remains an integral and accountable part of CRD decision-making.

Strategy:

- Continue implementation of the actions outlined in the 2024–2027 Engagement Strategy.
- Provide staff support and resources to promote consistent, high-quality engagement across all departments.
- Evaluate engagement tools, practices, and training to identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- Expand staff and Board development to include engagement best practices that reflect the region’s cultural diversity and relationship priorities.
- Gather feedback from staff, directors, and residents to guide future engagement priorities.
- Summarize outcomes and recommendations to inform development of the next Engagement Strategy.

Measurable Outcomes: Ongoing implementation of Engagement Strategy actions through 2026, with evaluation of engagement practices and a progress summary prepared by end of year.

Overall Financial Implications

The Communications Department manages an annual operating budget that supports corporate communications, advertising, and engagement activities, while coordinating project-specific costs through applicable service budgets.

The Communications Department functioned effectively through 2025, supporting both corporate and crisis communications across the organization. The department refined processes and aligned communication priorities to ensure greater impact and efficiency moving forward.

In 2026, departmental priorities include supporting referendums, the General Local Election awareness campaign, and continued implementation of the CRD's Engagement Strategy. These initiatives will be managed within existing capacity through careful planning and collaboration with other departments.

The department will continue to emphasize measurable and purposeful communication activities that demonstrate value and support transparency. Generic or stand-alone events with limited public impact, such as *Board on the Road*, have shown reduced effectiveness and should not be prioritized unless clearly linked to measurable engagement outcomes. Future efforts will focus on targeted public engagement opportunities that directly support decision-making processes and community outcomes. Communications will remain focused on cost-effective, efficient, and accessible service delivery across all corporate activities.

Measuring Previous Years' Success

1. **Goal:** Complete Implementation of Phase 1 of Engagement Strategy and Transition to Phase 2.
Rationale: Following completion of Phase 1 activities, the next step was to transition toward Phase 2 actions of the Engagement Strategy. Phase 2 focuses on enhancing and extending the CRD's engagement capabilities and activities.
Strategy: Building on Phase 1, provide further training for select staff, enhance policy and decision-making processes, and expand engagement activities.
Status: *Substantially completed.* Foundational work was advanced through 2025 with integration of engagement planning into departmental processes. Some activities were deferred due to competing operational priorities but will continue through 2026–2027 under the next phase.

2. **Goal:** Lead Public Engagement for Referendums on Firehall Replacement and Fire Engine Purchase in 150 Mile House.
Rationale: The 150 Mile House Fire Protection Service Area requires referendums to seek voter approval for both a replacement fire hall and a new pumper truck.
Strategy: Coordinate public awareness, feedback gathering, and voting information through print, radio, social media, and community events.

- Status:** *Ongoing*. Preparations and pre-referendum engagement activities have been completed, including development of neutral, factual materials and awareness campaigns to inform residents ahead of the 2026 vote. Communications will continue to support the process through voting day and final reporting.
3. **Goal:** Expand Initiatives for Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment in Coordination with Fire Protection Services.
Rationale: Several volunteer fire departments faced critical shortages in staffing and training. An expanded regional recruitment campaign was required to support these services.
Strategy: Develop coordinated recruitment messaging, promotional materials, and outreach campaigns in partnership with Fire Protection Services.
Status: *Ongoing*. Initial development of the regional recruitment campaign began in 2025, including the creation of new promotional materials and updated messaging templates. The next phase of the campaign will focus on distribution and active recruitment efforts throughout 2026.
 4. **Goal:** Transition Website Content Management System (CMS) to a New Platform.
Rationale: The current CMS platform is approaching end-of-life, requiring transition to maintain digital access to information.
Strategy: Evaluate platform options and initiate procurement for a new CMS that aligns with accessibility and user-experience standards.
Status: *In progress*. Initial assessments and vendor consultations were completed in 2025. The website migration is scheduled for completion before the current CMS reaches end-of-life to ensure uninterrupted service and content continuity.
 5. **Goal:** Support Engagement During the Bouchie Lake Sanitary Sewer Feasibility Study.
Rationale: The Board funded a feasibility study for a proposed sanitary sewer system in Bouchie Lake, requiring ongoing public engagement.
Strategy: Coordinate public information meetings, newsletters, and awareness campaigns to share study findings and collect feedback.
Status: *Completed*. The feasibility study was completed in 2025. Communications provided support through updates and information sharing to help keep residents informed during the process.
 6. **Goal:** Develop a Regular Feature Print Advertisement to Complement Radio Advertising.
Rationale: There is continued demand for non-digital communications in both rural and urban communities.
Strategy: Pilot a bi-weekly feature advertisement in regional newspapers to provide consistent public information space for CRD departments.

Status: *Completed.* A recurring print feature was successfully launched, allowing departments to share consistent updates and improving visibility in traditional media.

7. Goal: Conduct Public Consultation for the 2025–2029 Five-Year Financial Plan.

Rationale: Section 166 of the *Community Charter* requires public consultation before adoption of a financial plan. The consultation process ensures transparency and provides residents with an opportunity to share feedback on the CRD's budget priorities and proposed spending.

Strategy: Promote awareness and invite feedback through an online survey, public notices, and social media. Provide background information on the proposed 2025–2029 Financial Plan and collect resident input prior to final Board consideration.

Status: *Completed.* Public consultation was conducted through an online survey and supporting media outreach. The consultation invited residents to review the proposed 2025 budget and five-year plan, with feedback collected and summarized for Board consideration before adoption.

Conclusion

The Communications Department continues to play a vital role in ensuring CRD information is accessible, accurate, and consistent. In 2025, the team advanced several key initiatives, including implementation of the Engagement Strategy, progress on the website migration, and improved coordination of regional communications.

In 2026, the department will focus on strengthening public awareness, accessibility, and engagement across all service areas. The website migration will be completed during the year, followed by ongoing updates to enhance usability and public access to information. Building on the progress achieved in 2025, the Communications Department will continue to strengthen organizational outreach, align corporate messaging, and maintain strong relationships with residents, partners, and media to ensure ongoing transparency, consistency, and responsiveness.



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2026 Business Plan Governance (1024)

Kevin Erickson, Chief Financial Officer

Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region.

Department/Function Services

Commencing in 2011, the Governance portion of the Administration and Electoral Area Administration functions is shown as a separate function item. Included within this function is the attendance of all municipal and electoral area directors at Board, Committee of the Whole, budget, orientation and Strategic Planning Sessions.

All of the directors are responsible for the governance of this service.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

No new goals identified for 2026.

Overall Financial Impact

For 2026, the requisition is 5% to raise an additional \$19,208. The increase is necessary to maintain sufficient operating surplus and preserve financial stability in the service.

Significant Issues & Trends

The Cariboo Regional District is a signatory on the Province of BC/UBCM Climate Action Charter and has committed to continuing work towards carbon neutrality in respect of corporate operations. Inflationary pressures have been impacting CRD operations and this service is not immune. However, the increase to the current requisition is sufficient to offset any increase in costs.



2026 Business Plan Director Electoral Area Administration (1285 – 1296)

Kevin Erickson, Chief Financial Officer

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Department/Function Services

In 2007, the Board resolved to establish an administration function for each electoral area. The authority to establish these functions is Section 338(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act*.

The functions have been established to cover the costs of additional travel for special interest initiatives and individual Director's development unique to their electoral area. In 2016, Electoral Area Administration policy was reviewed and revised, resulting in the following definitions and requirements:

Area Administration

Director Initiative Funds

Director Initiative funds are discretionary funds to be used on a limited basis for:

- The cost for a Director's attendance at seminars/workshops associated with development as an elected official other than training offered by NCLGA and UBCM or specifically contained in the Board's Electoral Area Administration budget;
- The cost for a Director to conduct meetings within their Electoral Area on topics of interest to their constituents provided those topics are not inconsistent with established Board policies or decisions;
- The cost of a Director's additional travel outside of the region for special initiatives of importance to their electoral area. An example of such travel would be to meet

with provincial or federal ministers with respect to an issue, provided that the matters is not contrary to established Board policies or decisions;

- Annual volunteer appreciation events (no staff resources are provided for the organization/planning of such events); and
- The cost of Long Service Recognition for CRD Commissioners including:
 - The purchase of a retirement gift as a long service award to members of CRD Commissions who have served a minimum of 5 years;
 - Hosting of a luncheon or similar venue to present long service awards.

Ineligible projects include:

- Hosting special events such as community luncheons, dinners, barbeques, etc. (other than annual volunteer appreciation events);
- Advertising, mail-outs or other media except as related to conducting a meeting approved in accordance with the above guidelines; and
- Providing funds, gifts, or favours to third parties.

Process:

- Directors may request a requisition in any fiscal year for the Director Initiative Fund;
- Funds may be accumulated from year to year provided that the annual allocation for the Director Initiative Fund does not exceed \$5,000, with an additional \$5,000 allowed for FCM attendance;
- Requests to access the Director Initiative Fund must be submitted in writing for inclusion on a Board agenda in accordance with the Procedure Bylaw;
- Verbal requests to access the Director Initiative Fund will not be considered;
- Funds can only be expended with the approval of Simple Majority.

Each Electoral Area is taxed separately based on the amount requested by individual Directors on the basis of assessed value of land and improvements. The purpose of this function is to address director initiatives relevant to the individual Electoral Areas.

As each area administration has only one stakeholder, and the *Local Government Act* requires more than one vote, the entire Board is responsible for the governance of this service.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

2026 Goal

Goal: Allocate funds based on initiatives as identified by the Area Director.

Rationale: The CRD policy outlines the approval process and factors to be considered in expending director initiative funds.

Strategy: All director initiative fund requests must be presented to the Board for approval.

Overall Financial Impact

Taxation for these services is based on the amount determined by the Area Director, not to exceed a total fund of \$5,000, with an additional \$5,000 allowed for FCM attendance. At this time, final Director Initiative Fund expenditures for 2025 are not finalized; 2026 tax requisitions are expected to be in line with amounts taxed in 2025.

Significant Issues & Trends

None.