

2017 CRD Board Chair's Inaugural Speech

January 11, 2017

Introduction

Good afternoon. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the first Capital Regional District Board meeting of 2017.

I am honoured by the opportunity to continue serving the region as your Chair and I look forward to a year of continued progress on regional priorities.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Coast Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth peoples, on whose traditional territory the CRD resides, and in particular, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations on whose traditional territory we are all gathered today.

I am excited by the work underway with First Nations within the region to build relationships, nurture cultural understanding, and practice inclusive decision making.

This work is key to creating a strong future together and making our region whole. I'll speak more on this a little later.

50th Anniversary

Today, we have a stunning addition to our Boardroom.

As part of its 50th anniversary community engagement, the quilting community has worked to create a regional quilt.

A video has been created that summarizes our 50th anniversary activities and I am excited to share it with you publically for the first time.

[Video: <https://youtu.be/j6HW5M9JlAo>]

As you saw in the video, the regional quilt showcases our region and creates a sense of connection and inclusion.

Each municipality and electoral area that makes up the CRD is represented by a block of the quilt. Together, the blocks form a regional quilt - a community of communities.

Municipalities and electoral areas will be gifted a framed block, a duplicate from the one that is in the quilt.

I would like to thank the 35 quilters who, over many months, met in this boardroom to create this beautiful quilt together.

You will notice contributions from Indigenous artists on the panels which help make the quilt whole and complete.

With us here today is Susan Teece, who was a valuable member of the quilting team from start to finish. Susan was vital in coordinating both the team and materials required for this piece and I am pleased to acknowledge her and the team today.

The quilters have done, by stitching, what we at the CRD board do: work together, representing our local government but ultimately creating something great for the region.

This action is bound again by the strength of the stitching and the care in placement of each representative block. I will look to the regional quilt as an example of the meaning and value for regional governments.

Thank you to the quilting community as well as all the staff and partners who worked together to help us mark 50 years of shaping the region.

Accomplishments and Regional Activities

It is our task as we move forward into the next 50 years that we honour the past by approaching each day with a common effort and purpose for the benefit of our region.

2016 was a year of progress as we focused on delivering on strategic priorities that benefit the region while continuing to provide cost-effective core services.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and enthusiasm of the Directors in 2016 for participating on various committees and for taking on the role of chair or vice chair of a committee.

We have an amazing pool of skills, talent and experience around the table.

It is important to acknowledge the work of the Capital Region Housing Corporation and Capital Regional Hospital District and our many committees and commissions.

We could not function as regional district without these people and their passion and expertise.

I also would like to acknowledge the skill and capability of staff, as we look to them to help provide innovative ideas and opportunities for us to be the best at what we take on, and to lead in environmental, social and economic initiatives.

We ended 2016 with considerable discussion at the Governance committee and then the Board at a Committee of the Whole meeting regarding committee structures.

I provided all members with an opportunity to give input in a candid and open way and have considered this in making my decisions.

Key in my consideration for committee and chairperson choices were to look at regional representation and to utilize directors' passions and skills.

I have also looked to committee chairs for their input on the vice chair partnership.

The willingness of most board members to take positions of chairing speaks highly of your commitment to CRD.

Because of this interest I have also tried to provide opportunity for mentoring through former board and committee chairs as vice chairs for new chairs.

Committee work is essential to carrying out the many activities we undertake and at the Committee of the Whole we heard a call for respecting the work, discussion and decisions taken by committees to the board level.

There are many significant and exciting projects ahead for each committee this term with a wide range of activities planned in support of our strategic priorities. I would like to take a moment to highlight a few of them:

Climate Change

Climate change remains a top strategic priority as together we recognize the need to adapt, mitigate and reduce climate change.

At the community level, the Regional Climate Action Strategy will guide the CRD's services to support community-focused climate mitigation and adaptation action over the next five years.

The Strategy aligns with federal, provincial and regional initiatives to ensure a coordinated approach that identifies all opportunities and maximizes region-wide benefits.

The recent Forum of All Councils on Climate Change will provide valuable input. The Strategy will be finalized and presented to the CRD Board early this year.

I want to acknowledge the passion and coaxing we have had from Director Derman that there is urgency to plan and more importantly act on this issue.

I want to encourage the board to be bold, to leap forward with the required changes and actions that we must make, with the CRD leading by example and advocacy to encourage others to take similar steps forward.

Environmental Services

The Environmental Services Committee will take steps to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and address climate change while continuing to work on monitoring, education and remediation programs that support decision-making and management of natural resources.

The Environmental Services Committee will be chaired by Director Hamilton with Director Atwell as Vice-Chair.

Work will continue in 2017 to investigate integrated resource management solutions. We must, as a region, look to integrated resource management and for this reason the IRM Advisory committee will operate as a sub-committee reporting up through the Environmental Services Committee.

Solid waste, and biosolids, have great potential as resources, which can give the CRD that leap forward in climate action that I referred to. We need to get this done and develop the path forward on this initiative.

First Nations Task Force

First Nations relations is a critical priority for the Board and I want to acknowledge the work of the Special Task Force on First Nations Engagement, led by Director Alto and supported by Directors Windsor, Jensen, Tait and Kasper while Director Tait was on maternity leave.

The Task force will continue to be led by Director Alto.

2016 was a big year for Aboriginal Initiatives and the First Nations Task Force.

Many of the successes are a direct result of the foundational relationships that have been built since the Board identified the importance of government to government relationships with First Nations.

This year the Special Task Force on First Nations will move forward with an extended and expanded mandate.

I am looking forward to supporting the Task Force in the important work of establishing an inclusive model of governance while continuing the journey of reconciliation – both at the leadership, staff and personal level, by undertaking tangible initiatives that respond thoughtfully to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action.

Hospitals and Housing

A new Hospitals and Housing Standing Committee will be established with Director Howe as Chair and Director Tait as Vice-Chair.

This Standing Committee recognizes health and housing as areas for ongoing financial investment and strategic focus and will make recommendations to the CRD and Capital Regional Hospital District boards.

The Capital Regional Hospital District continues to invest in the development of health-related infrastructure through various projects including the development of The Summit at Quadra Village, a 320-unit residential complex and dementia care facility.

Work will commence on the newest Capital Region Housing Corporation housing project located at 3816 Carey Road. Geared towards families, seniors and individuals, this development will help support the goal of increasing affordable housing in our region.

This year, in an innovative partnership between the CRD, the Province and Island Health and working with the Coalition to End Homelessness, we expect to see the first projects take shape from the Regional Housing First Program.

This program will deliver housing units to address the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness while also helping stimulate the development of housing for low to moderate income households.

Wastewater

The Core Area Liquid Waste Management Committee will be chaired by Director Helps and Director Brice will fill the role of vice-chair.

We now have an approved plan that provides a high level of wastewater treatment and the Project Board is working on the necessary land tenures for all program elements.

This will be a great step forward to ensure that we will have wastewater treatment in the Core Area by 2020.

Planning and Protective Services

The Planning and Protective Services Committee will be chaired by Director Finall with Director Young as Vice-Chair.

An important piece of the work of this committee will be continuing to lead the Regional Growth Strategy which promotes the long-term livability of the region and seeks to optimize social, economic and environmental performance.

We have included \$16 million in the budget for a proposed unified 911 call answer and police dispatch centre. This is another regional cooperative initiative to create a centre that meets post-disaster standards and can accommodate shared services for the region.

Regional Parks

The Regional Parks Committee will be chaired by Director Hicks with Director Screech as Vice-chair.

The first phase of the Sea to Sea Regional Park is completed at the southern section of the park known today as Mount Manuel Quimper but referred to by the T'Sou-ke people as Chuck-snanit or Big Mountain. The park will be formally opened in April.

The 13 km Sooke Hills Wilderness Trail is being developed as part of both the Trans Canada Trail, now known as the Great Trail, and the Vancouver Island Spine Trail routes.

The trail will open in the summer of 2017 as part of the Great Trail's 25th and Canada's 150th anniversary celebrations.

Work continues on the E&N Rail Trail - Humpback Connector. The section that links the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations with View Royal and my community of Esquimalt is currently on track for construction in 2017, and an additional 2.3 km of trail will be complete by 2019, creating a continuous trail from Langford to Victoria.

These trails are an important part of the cycling and walking network and provide transportation and recreation opportunities for visitors and residents alike.

Regional Water Supply

Renewing and improving drinking water and wastewater infrastructure for the region's urban centres and local service areas continues to be a priority for 2017.

The Japan Gulch drinking water disinfection plant for the Regional Water Supply System is currently well underway, and planned infrastructure upgrades include those to existing wastewater conveyance and treatment infrastructure for the Core Area, Saanich Peninsula and Electoral Areas.

Electoral Areas

Salt Spring Island will continue work on various Capital Projects including the Ganges Sewer Plant, Maliview Sewer Plant and the Burgoyne Bay Liquid Waste Facility – all of which are important pieces of infrastructure for the community.

In addition, work will continue on the North Ganges Transportation Plan with Pedestrian, cycling, and intersection improvements.

Within the Juan de Fuca electoral area, work is underway at Jordan River to set up a world class early warning alarm system for local residents and guests in the event of a large offshore earthquake or tsunami.

This important piece of safety infrastructure will become operational this year.

On the Southern Gulf Islands, the CRD is developing a Regional Trails Plan for Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands.

The plan will identify a conceptual regional trail route on each of the six islands and will outline policies to assist with its implementation.

Transportation

The Transportation Committee will be chaired by Director Brice with Director Price as Vice-Chair.

In 2017, the Transportation Committee will continue to work towards establishing a transportation service and will now also advance transportation initiatives and projects across the region, including the *People Power program* and the *Active & Safe Routes to School Program*.

In the Fall, the CRD will conduct an Origin Destination Survey, a comprehensive trip diary which profiles residents' travel behavior and provides valuable updated information on regional travel patterns.

This survey will inform future transportation planning and priority implementation of projects across the region, as well as allow for planning and programming initiatives to be targeted where they are most needed.

Finance

I have asked Director Howe to Chair the Finance Committee with Director Williams to be Vice-Chair.

Building on the great work done in 2016, the Finance Committee will continue its focus on sound financial management as it works to achieve maximum value for local taxpayers' dollars and ensure the long term fiscal health of the region.

Governance

The Governance Committee will be chaired by Director Ranns and Vice-Chair Jensen.

The role of the Governance Committee has evolved to include important work that enhances our commitment to good governance. In particular, the Governance Committee reports and provides recommendations on committee structures.

The Governance Committee has also worked on improving efficiency through an enhanced service planning process that identifies potential service adjustments on an ongoing annual basis

In the coming weeks we expect to see a report from the provincial Capital Integrated Services and Governance Initiative which will provide recommendations related to local governance and service efficiencies.

Concluding remarks

As you can see, the CRD continues to shape the region by pushing ahead on strategic priorities and actions.

To my fellow Directors, I encourage you to be bold and push forward on changes that enable sustainable growth and enhance community well-being.

I challenge each of us as leaders to work together toward a common vision of a vibrant, sustainable and livable region.

I will look to the regional quilt as an example and a reminder to all of us that the diversity of our members and our shared commitment will ultimately benefit our region as a whole.