

Directors Report Dec 2025

As 2025 winds down I would like to wish everyone a safe and Happy Holiday and New Year.

It has been a pleasure to serve the community and I am very proud of the work that has been completed over this past year. The staff at the SRD have been awesome!

As our last board meetings of the year were short I do have a few items to share.

Connected Coast and City West

As some may know the SRD is a partner on the Connected Coast project which is responsible for the Fibre Cable that has been laid along the BC Coast which now provides high speed internet to remote communities, coast guard stations, early warning devices to name a few. This project has allowed remote communities to enjoy better access to medical and even to enjoy digital services from the Vancouver Island Library Service.

While the Fibre Cable Internet Backbone is nearly complete, there are many communities that are struggling to obtain last mile connections to this extensive High Speed Internet. In 2023 the SRD applied on behalf of Area D with an application for last mile funding for all the areas that are currently under served for internet. Those area's do not have the option for internet except satellite dishes. In 2024 the province was ready to give the SRD and Area D a sizable last mile grant that would have allowed City West to connect how many homes with a competitive option for High Speed Internet and Digital Services.

Sounds great so what happened to the funding?

In 2025 as we all saw in the community a company called F3 which is owned and operated by Telus hastily string Fibre throughout the community where the greatest population is. As Telus is the only company that is permitted to utilize BC Hydro Poles without going through the extensive permitting process with BC Hydro, they were able to install a basic Fibre Network and connect some homes to Telus Fibre over a few months. I acknowledge that many homes including my own will not be able to get Telus Fibre for another Two Years yet Telus was able to claim to the province that area D is now well served for high speed internet.

In short, Area D did not get the funding that was promised by the province in 2024. This would have provided for all the homes that only have satellite as an option for internet services with high speed competitive internet services.

Telus has zero interest to install any fibre into area's where homes are spread apart and they continue to create considerable road blocks for companies like **Connected Coast** and **City West** as they see them as a threat to their monopoly.

The SRD on behalf of Area D is still working hard to ensure that High Speed Fibre Internet Services will be brought to Strathcona Lodge and the all the residents of Upper Campbell Lake and Cedar Creek.

Strathcona Gardens Update

At the last Strathcona Gardens board meeting there was a presentation from Minor Hockey and a considerable number of concerned people who attended the board meeting to voice their concerns. As the SRD did announce through their own official media outlets nothing will be moving forward for 2026 with regards to the ice rinks.

I can appreciate the desire for all the user groups who are advocating that looking to the future the Regional District and the City of Campbell River needs to consider a facility that has three sheets of ice vs two. There was the feeling with some user groups that spending \$59 million was too much and did not produce enough value and requested that the SRD produce costs comparatives which they did.

That cost comparison can be found at

<https://agenda.strathconard.ca/SRDAttachments/SRDCommittees/Open/SG/10-Dec-25/20251203-Arena-Cost-Comparison.pdf>

Those cost comparatives do show that the current estimate of \$59 million is not out of line when compared to other facilities being built in the province.

On the other side of that, board members, myself included are trying to grapple with how much will this cost and are there any opportunities to build in another location.

I expect that in 2026 there will be an exhaustive investigation to determine what are the next best steps while keeping in mind that one of the current rinks is now well past its prime and in need of millions in repairs.

On a good note the construction of the new pools continues on track and well within approved budgets. It is exciting to see this work advancing at its current pace.