

Executive Summary

During this elected term, significant progress was made across Area D and the broader Strathcona Regional District (SRD) in infrastructure, community services, planning, and environmental initiatives. Key milestones focused on responsible community growth, enhanced public services, investments in essential infrastructure, and stronger, more transparent communication with residents. Notably, after past years of acrimonious relations at the Regional Board table, these achievements demonstrate a commitment to moving regional initiatives forward as a collaborative team player while balancing the needs of the rural community.

1. Infrastructure & Water Management

Substantial upgrades were made to regional water systems and public amenities to ensure long-term stability, modern utility billing, and improved community access.

Water System Upgrades

- **Funding Secured:** Secured \$2.8 million in provincial and staff-supported grant funding for water meter upgrades in the Campbell River Water System.
- **Installation Progress:** Completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 water meter installations on schedule and within budget for users connected to the Campbell River water system.
- **Standardization:** Awarded an additional phase to ensure all residential water meters purchased by homeowners since 2018 are identical, simplifying billing and meter readings.
- **Leak Detection & Planning:** Installed 1,100 technologically advanced water meters with leak detection capabilities, which will allow engineering planning to isolate and replace the worst water mains first.
- **Early Adopter Credits:** Secured a suitable water meter credit for households that were early adopters of meters, successfully protecting property owners who were promised reimbursement in older SRD public documents (2018–2022) despite a lack of support from Rural Directors A, B, and C.
- **BCOB Stability:** Committed funds for new water wells in the Black Creek Oyster Bay (BCOB) Water System to secure summer water access and stability.
- **Rate Restructuring:** Contracted an engineering firm with extensive experience in the Area D water system to revise the Water Rate Bylaw, with board approval anticipated in September 2026.

- **Contract Renewal:** Renewed the Bulk Water contract with a “**Reduction**” over previous bulk water rates

Public Amenities & Transportation

- **Transit Upgrades:** Added 6 transit shelters and upgraded local bus stops.
- **Parks & Playgrounds:** Built a footbridge in Storie Creek Park, installed new washrooms in Hagel Park, and added new play equipment in Mitlenatch Park—all completed without extra costs to taxpayers.
- **Strathcona Gardens Modernization:** Supported the Aquatics Centre modernization construction, with major milestones finishing in September 2026. This new facility will take Health and Wellness programs to new levels for our Regional District for decades.
- **Arena Expansion Realignment:** Paused the immediate arena construction timeline to prevent a 2-year closure. Partnered with the City of Campbell River and user groups to secure a path for a third ice sheet while remaining within budget to renovate the two existing, aging arenas. This new facility will meet the needs of a growing Regional District well into the future.
- **Strathcona Gardens Service Participant Expansion:** Over the past three years the Regional Board has supported my motion to explore expanding the the service participants for the Strathcona Gardens. The final consultants report did confirm that there is a strong case to include a portion of Quadra Islanders in the gardens service. For this upcoming election there will be a referendum question “**should a portion of Quadra Island be included as service participants**”. This is long over due and after decades of being the only Electoral Area paying in to this service, the Province is supporting this referendum.

2. Planning, Housing & Parks

Long-term structural plans were updated or initiated to replace decades-old frameworks and account for future growth.

- **Official Community Plan (OCP):** Developed and finalized a new OCP in December 2023 to replace the outdated 1996 plan, streamlining development applications and variances with common sense. This was completed in perfect time to position Area D well for Provincial Legislation implemented in January 2024.
- **Regional Housing Service:** Initiated board discussions that led to creating the “**Regional Housing Service**,” which has helped move projects like the construction of the Home Away from Home Lodge and Workforce Housing for medical personnel. These

services expand regional health support for the entire North Island and come online in September 2026.

- **Housing Studies:** Completed the Area D Housing Needs Report and a Short-Term Rental Consultation (opting out of the provincial short-term rental restrictions based on local feedback).
- **Development Charges:** Progressing toward a bylaw to implement "cost development charges" in Area D, ensuring developers contribute directly to local infrastructure and parks.
- **Master Plans:** Advanced the Parks and Trails Master Plan and the Active Transportation Network Plan, securing necessary funding that lacked in prior terms. Completed the Salmon Point Trail User Survey.
- **Traffic Study:** Engaged the Ministry of Transportation and Transit for a traffic study in mid 2023. **This traffic study completed Aug 2026. Public statements expected soon!**
- **Ministry of Transportation:** Ongoing advocacy regarding land planning and storm-water management with significant progress being made.

3. Bylaw Updates & Governance Transparency

Key systemic changes were implemented to remove bureaucratic red tape, establish independent accountability, and modernize communications.

- **Agricultural Relief:** Eliminated licensing and inspection requirements for building or updating farm buildings on ALR lands.
- **Food Security:** Revised bylaws to permit up to four chickens or ducks on properties under one acre.
- **Independent Advisory Panels:** Established a transparent selection process for the Advisory Panel Committee, which reviews all Development Permits and Variance Permits and makes recommendations to the Board. To ensure full independence, as per legal advice, the Area Director does not attend meetings or communicate with committee members regarding development applications.
- **Public Communication:** Initiated bi-annual town hall meetings, introduced monthly director updates via social media and a website that has no costs to taxpayers, and transitioned all official communications away from private emails to a dedicated SRD email account.
- **First Nations Partnerships:** Actively focused on building respectful communications with First Nations partners both locally and at the Regional District level.

4. Environmental, Safety & Utility Initiatives

Proactive measures were taken to improve community safety, reduce wildfire and flooding hazards, and extend digital connectivity.

- **Stormwater & Flood Mitigation:** Dedicated significant funds toward a Stormwater Management Study and Design project for flood-prone areas. This will position Area D to apply for provincial and federal infrastructure grants. **This report is expected Sept 2026.**
- **Flood Protection:** Completed updates to the Oyster River Flood Protection and the Bank and Dyke services.
- **Fire Protection Modernization:** Initiated a review of the 1979 Campbell River Fire Protection Contract and established a modernized Fire Protection Bylaw aligned with provincial rules. The contract renewal remains in progress.
- **Local Fire Service Feasibility:** Completed early costing and stakeholder discussions regarding the possibility of Area D establishing its own independent fire hall and service.
- **Animal Control:** Initiated an ongoing review of regional animal control services and escalating costs, with final reports due before the end of this term.
- **Community Wood Chipping:** Enacted a new wood-chipping service and bylaw, successfully launching its first community run in May 2026.
- **Fibre Internet Expansion:** Secured last-mile funding to bring high-speed Fibre Internet to Upper Campbell Lake and Strathcona Lodge.
- **Grid Electricity Exploration:** Explored options with BC Hydro to bring power to Upper Campbell Lake; alternative pathways are still being pursued following initial cost-related project delays.