



MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 6, 2025
TO: CVRD Board of Directors
FROM: Kris Schumacher, Manager, Communications & Engagement Division
SUBJECT: 2026 Budget and Engagement Update

The CVRD Board directed staff to create a comprehensive public engagement campaign for the 2026 CVRD Budget. Communications & Engagement (CED) staff have been working with Finance to determine activities and assets that will support the campaign, including the following:

- 1) **Plan Your Cowichan** – CED and Finance staff have worked together to create a 2026 CVRD Budget page on the Plan Your Cowichan engagement site. The page includes overview information, budget timeline, related documents, and opportunities for residents to submit feedback related to the budget.

Cost: N/A

Timing: Published September 29, 2025



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Planning for Tomorrow: The CVRD 2026 Budget


The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Budget is comprised of 179 separate services (139 General and 40 Water & Sewer). The Local Government Act requires Regional Districts to keep separate records for each service. The 2025 Annual Budget (CVRD Bylaw No. 4629 - Five Year Financial Plan) was adopted by the Board on February 26, 2025.

2025 Draft Budget Virtual Presentation

The CVRD hosted a virtual presentation in December 2024 to walk through the Draft 2026 Budget. The recording is a great way to get an overview of how the regional district builds its annual budget, what's included in the draft, and how it could affect residents depending on their Electoral Area or Municipality.

You can watch the presentation anytime on the CVRD YouTube channel:
[CVRD 2026 Draft Budget Presentation](#)





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Timeline for the 2026 Financial Planning Process

- August 2025
Department budgets and financial plans submitted to Finance for review
- September 2025

- 2) **Budget/Services Explainer Video** – CED and Finance staff created a whiteboard explainer video similar to what other local governments and regional districts have done as a high-level, easy to understand introduction to regional district budgets. The video will help anchor our ongoing online engagement, and serve as a legacy asset that can be used in future years.

Cost: CED has utilized its advertising budget to cover the approximate cost of \$4,000

Timing: Published to Plan Your Cowichan budget page and CVRD YouTube channel on Monday, November 3, 2025



- 3) **Social Media** – CED staff created a series of posts on social media channels using new technology to create GIF images with information about CVRD services in hopes of increasing engagement, particularly with younger demographics and mobile users.

Cost: N/A

Timing: Began September 29, 2025



- 4) **Radio Advertising** – a series of 50 radio ads were placed with SUN FM to encourage residents to visit the CVRD website and Plan Your Cowichan page to learn more about the 2026 Budget.

Cost: CED will be utilizing its advertising budget to cover the cost of \$425

Timing: Began September 29, 2025

- 5) **Farmer's Market Booths** – Finance staff attended the Duncan's Farmer's Market two Saturdays in October to talk with residents about CVRD budgeting and encourage participation in virtual and in-person opportunities for providing feedback. Other staff, including the Transit Division, attended to speak with residents about their services/projects.

Cost: No cost as per agreement with Duncan Farmer's Market and using CVRD tent, table and chairs

Timing: October 4 and October 25, 2025

- 6) **Open Houses** – the CVRD Board has expressed interest in having additional in-person opportunities for engaging residents. In past years, the CVRD has typically held 4 open houses on a sub-regional level, although those opportunities have been poorly attended. If the Board would like to proceed with in-person open houses, Finance staff can work to identify dates/times/locations between November – January, prior to final decision making on the 2026 budget.

Cost: TBD

Timing: TBD

Despite this effort to increase early engagement in the 2026 CVRD Budget, staff have not yet seen participation through the Plan Your Cowichan page or comments submitted to the Finance email address. Finance staff did experience interest from residents in learning more through conversations at the Duncan Farmer's Market, but most residents engaged provided feedback related to City of Duncan and Municipality of North Cowichan services.

It is anticipated that following the November 6, 2025 meeting and the presentation of the Draft 2026 Budget, engagement from residents will increase, as in previous years. A more comprehensive engagement summary/report will be provided to the Committee in the coming months.

END OF MEMO
KS/jr