



REGIONAL  
DISTRICT  
OF NANAIMO



# Resilience & Renewal Framework

JUNE 2020

[rdn.bc.ca/pandemic](https://rdn.bc.ca/pandemic)



*“This Framework is a living document that is responsive to evolving circumstances within the region relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.”*



## Introduction

The **Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Resilience and Renewal Framework** (Framework) charts a path for recovery in the region. The role of the Framework is to align with the COVID-19 response and recovery approach of the Province of British Columbia, including BC’s Restart Plan.

The Framework is a living document that is responsive to evolving circumstances within the region relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategies and timelines are tied to directives and guidance of the Provincial Health Officer to allow for approaches that are fluid and reactive to the evolving situation.

This Framework has been developed in close alignment with, and inspiration from, the excellent work of other local governments, including Cowichan Valley Regional District, Comox Valley Regional District, Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, the City of Richmond and other municipalities, in order to support consistency and uniformity as contemplated by the BC Restart Plan and Provincial guidance.



# Background

In January 2020, the **World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease**, and on March 11, 2020 the WHO characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic. On March 18, 2020, the Province of British Columbia declared a provincial state of emergency after Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, had declared a public health emergency the previous day. These states of emergency remain in place.

On March 12, 2020 the RDN activated a Level One Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) to support the response to COVID-19 in the RDN. The purpose of the EOC is to gather and share information related to COVID-19, to carry out advance planning, and to determine the potential for operational impacts to local government services.

On May 6, 2020, the Province of British Columbia unveiled its Restart Plan, a plan to work closely with public health officials, businesses and labour organizations to lift restrictions in graduated phases, slowly allowing for more social and economic activity, while monitoring health information to minimize risk.

The RDN Framework considers organizational procedures, economic recovery initiatives, business continuity and public health strategies with the goal of promoting resiliency and guiding the return to normalcy within the region. In addition to strategies that guide recovery, the Framework will also facilitate recommendations to better prepare the RDN for a similar event in the future.

The Framework is subject to change depending on emergent conditions and information and will incorporate direction from the Provincial Health Officer and fit within BC's Restart Plan.





# Strategic Objectives

The following **four strategic objectives** will guide the path forward to a more resilient region in accordance with the priorities identified in the RDN's strategic plan.

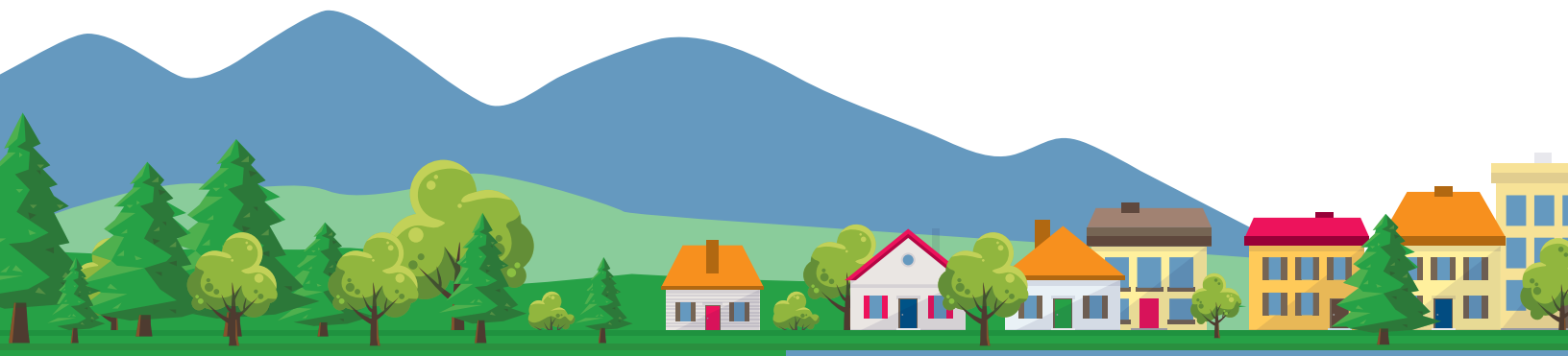
- 1** To **promote** the health and wellbeing of residents and staff of the RDN.
- 2** To **facilitate** economic continuity and resiliency in the region following the COVID-19 pandemic and a gradual return to normalcy.
- 3** To **protect** RDN assets while continuing to deliver services to the fullest extent possible, in line with public health direction and guidance.
- 4** To **evaluate** the organizational response to the pandemic, including fiscal and business continuity planning, to better prepare for a similar event in the future.



# Guiding Principles

The Framework is informed by the following guiding principles:

- Follow Federal and Provincial health guidance and employ evidence-based decision making
- Maintain core RDN functions and services to the region at an affordable cost
- Leverage expertise, data and collaborative partnerships to optimize efficiencies
- Align with Federal and Provincial governments, member jurisdictions and other regional jurisdictions
- Act nimbly and with purpose in response to changing focus and priorities
- Communicate clearly and transparently about plans and actions





# Criteria

Programs, projects and services offered by the RDN are being evaluated on criteria to mitigate risk and determine appropriate timing to restore program and service offerings, and have been classified in the following manner:

## ■ Core Functions

- Legislated (i.e. mandated by legislation or regulation, e.g. emergency services)
- Critical (i.e. necessary services due to their vital nature to community and public health, e.g. water, sewer, solid waste, transit)

## ■ Non-Core Functions

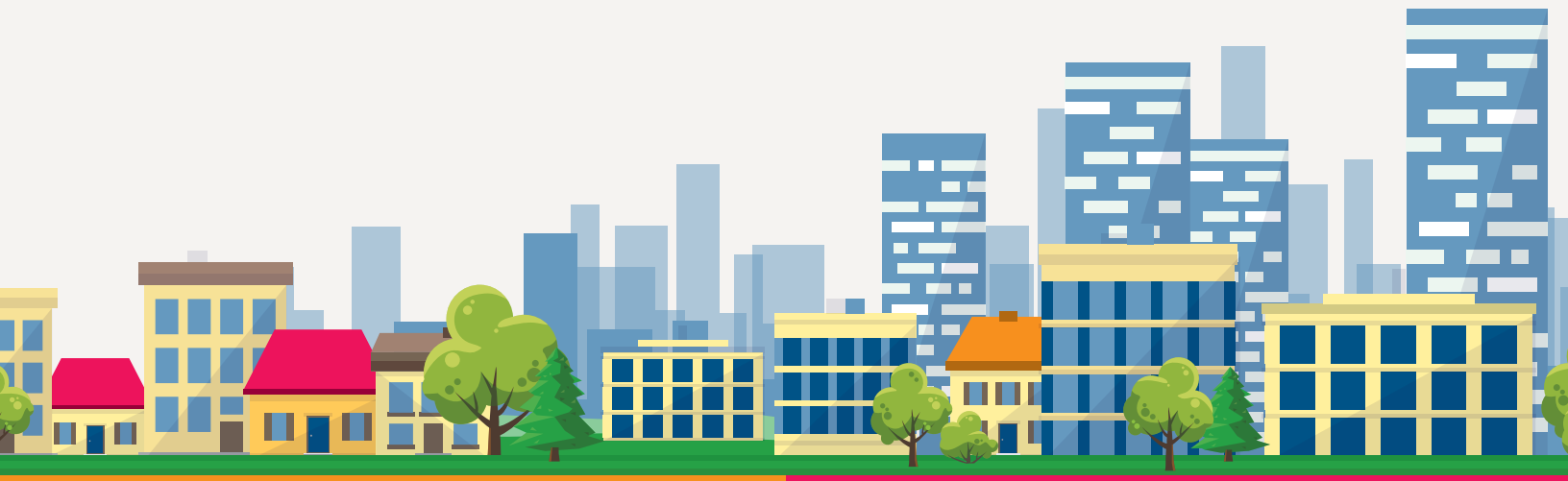
- Tasks, projects or services for which there is more flexibility to consider adjustments

Considerations for evaluation include:

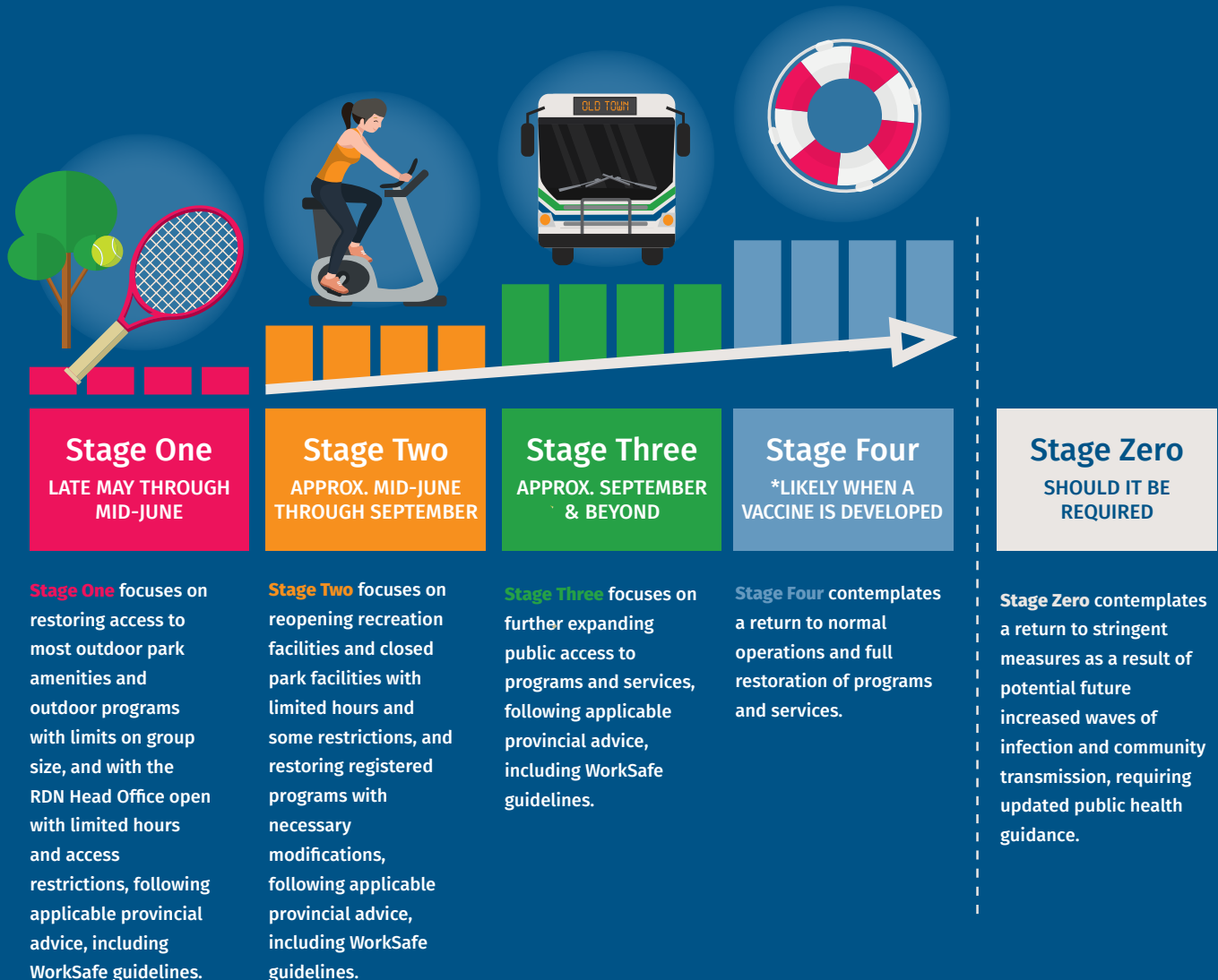
- The relevance and priority of the project, relative to regulatory requirements, strategic priorities, operational plan, financial plan and service delivery
- The financial impact for 2020 and 2021, in the context of the 5-year financial plan
- Procedures and processes that may change as a result of COVID-19
- The dependence on stakeholders and/or regulatory agencies that may not be able to support the project post-COVID-19

Results of the evaluation may include recommendations to:

- Continue with the project/service
- Stop or reduce the project/service; adjust timelines
- Amend financial plan to provide relief to taxpayers
- Streamline procedures and processes
- Make changes to RDN bylaws or policies
- Identify possible regulatory changes or processes of other levels of government to support RDN services
- Consult with partners, stakeholders, community



# Stages for Restoring Services Graphic Outline





# Stages for Restoring Services

**The Framework includes a plan that consists of four stages**, which exist along a continuum of lower risk on one end, to higher risk on the other. The timing and order of each step, and the restoration of individual programs and services within each step, is subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. Evolving information and advice may require movement back and forth along the spectrum between operations. This fluid, staged plan is provided for general guidance and planning purposes.

## Stage One LATE MAY THROUGH MID-JUNE

This stage focuses on restoring access to most outdoor park amenities and outdoor programs with limits on group size, and with the RDN Head Office open with limited hours and access restrictions, following applicable provincial advice, including WorkSafe guidelines.

### Recreation and Parks Services

- Sport courts with single players only unless playing with people from the same household
- Boat launch re-opened
- Playgrounds re-opened with signage regarding protocols to be observed
- Majority of washrooms and porta-potties remain open
- Skate parks re-opened with signage regarding protocols to be observed
- Regional campgrounds re-opened with enhanced protocols and signage
- Regional and Community Parks and Trails remain open with signage regarding protocols to be observed
- Virtual recreation programs provided

### RDN Administration Office

- Following WorkSafe guidelines, limited front counter services
- RDN services available via phone, email or scheduled appointment
- Building and bylaw services available through web portal
- Development applications — electronic submissions
- Increased digital engagement including continuation of online meetings and virtual public hearings

### Transit

- Front door loading and fare collection
- Lost and found office available by email or phone





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## Stage Two APPROX. MID-JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER

This stage focuses on reopening recreation facilities and enclosed park facilities with limited hours and some restrictions, and restoring registered programs with necessary modifications, following applicable provincial advice, including WorkSafe guidelines.

### Recreation and Parks Services

- Park shelters with limited users
- Summer camps conducted under provincial guidelines and enhanced protocols
- Outdoor recreation programming where physical distancing can be maintained
- Indoor recreation programming where physical distancing can be maintained
- Re-opening of RDN recreation facilities based on demand and conducted under provincial guidelines and enhanced protocols
- Indoor facility bookings for small events under 50 people where physical distancing can be maintained
- Park permits issued for small events under 50 people where physical distancing can be maintained



## Stage Three APPROX. SEPTEMBER & BEYOND

This stage focuses on further expanding public access to programs and services, following applicable provincial advice, including WorkSafe guidelines.

### Recreation and Parks Services

- Schedule limited size/scope park volunteer activities if appropriate
- Recreation programming and facility booking where physical distancing cannot be maintained (contact sports) conducted under enhanced protocols

### Transit

- Full service levels
- Limited transit office services

### Solid Waste

- Full service levels



## Stage Four \*LIKELY WHEN A VACCINE IS DEVELOPED

This stage contemplates a return to normal operations and full restoration of programs and services.

### Recreation and Parks Services

- Lift restrictions on trails, sports courts, playgrounds, campgrounds and park permits
- Lift restriction on recreation programs and facility rentals

### RDN Administration Office

- Front counter services resume to pre-COVID levels
- Continued provision of online services and meetings to enhance overall service delivery
- In-person Board and Committee meetings, public hearings, public consultation, etc.

### Transit

- Transit office services resume to pre-COVID levels





## Stage Zero SHOULD IT BE REQUIRED

This stage contemplates a return to stringent measures as a result of potential future increased waves of infection and community transmission, requiring updated public health guidance.

### Recreation and Parks Services

- Reduce, adjust or close public access to recreation facilities
- Reduce, adjust or cancel in-person recreation programs
- Reduce, limit or close access to park amenities
- Maintain access to parks and trails where physical distancing can be maintained
- On-line recreation programs continue

### Transit

- Reduce and adjust transit services back to early COVID-levels
- Re-institute full cleaning, sanitation and safety protocols

### RDN Administration Office

- Close RDN Administration Office to public once again
- Re-institute work from home policies and procedures
- Re-institute virtual meetings for Board, committees, staff

### Emergency Services

- Activate EOC and expand as required





# Financial Impact

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the services provided by the RDN have incurred extraordinary costs and revenue losses due to facility closures, the continuation of services in a modified manner and reduced usage. **The RDN is identifying areas where costs can be saved**, and is monitoring 2020 expenditures to maximize surplus carry forwards to assist in reducing tax impacts in future years, as well as creating COVID-19 budget scenarios, reviewing the impacts of reduced revenues, potential deferral of operating and capital projects, and expense projections.

## Financial Mitigation Considerations

- **Reserve Transfers and Reserve Funds:** The Province has permitted local governments to borrow from their capital reserve funds to address temporary operating revenue shortfalls with up to five years to repay the funds. Interest is optional. This option is more complex to implement for regional districts compared with municipalities. An amendment to the 2020 financial plan to reduce the transfer to reserves is also possible without the requirement to repay the funds.
- **Revenue Anticipation Borrowing:** The Province has extended the term for repayment of the revenue anticipation borrowing to two years and has implemented two property tax deferral programs – a regular deferral program for those 55 years and over, those with disabilities and families with children.
- **Government of Canada Stimulus Packages:** The Federal government has announced that future economic stimulus funding will become available for “shovel worthy” projects. Details are still to be determined; this funding could provide financial relief to capital projects impacted by a reduction to reserve transfers.
- **Service Level Review:** RDN is reviewing tasks, projects or services for which there is more flexibility to consider adjustments, cancellations, or deferrals in order to mitigate financial pressures.



## Implementation/Measurement/ Reporting & Accountability

Subject to developments in the COVID-19 pandemic, including successive “waves” of infection and associated reduction and expansion of social and economic activities, **it is anticipated the Framework will cover an 18 to 24-month timeframe**. During that time, the RDN will regularly monitor and report on progress, and evaluate and re-align actions as required.



## Communications

**Public response to the COVID-19 pandemic locally has been commendable.** Residents will need continued clear communication to understand and make decisions about how to participate in programs and services as health authorities monitor the curve of transmission of COVID-19 on an ongoing basis. The RDN has a clear leadership role in that regard.

As programs and services begin to open to the public, citizens will need to be informed about what is available. They will also be looking to the RDN for information to understand their risks and potential exposure. Open communication will be essential to the support and cooperation of the community and in building confidence and avoiding misinformation. The Communications and Engagement team will lead RDN communications throughout each stage.





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