



CAPITAL INTEGRATED SERVICES & GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

URBAN SYSTEMS

#312-645 Fort St.
Victoria, BC V8W 1G2
victoria@urbansystems.ca

CIRCLE SQUARE SOLUTIONS

#1-4522 Gordon Point Drive
Victoria, BC V8N 6L4
info@circlesquaresolutions.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Capital Integrated Services and Governance Initiative (CISGI) originated from a common interest amongst Capital region citizens and local governments in gathering facts about current service delivery, increasing understanding about service delivery best practices and exploring further the opportunities to better integrate services and governance in the Capital region (defined for the purposes of this report as the 13 municipalities and the Capital Regional District (CRD) located on southern Vancouver Island).

A key objective of the Capital Integrated Services and Governance Initiative is to help facilitate fact-finding and discussion among local governments and citizens in the Capital region to explore and inform opportunities for the efficient delivery of service.

What This Initiative Is

This initiative is not about amalgamation – but regardless of whether you view the issue as one of amalgamation or integration, services and how they are delivered are core to both. Based on the framework established by the Capital region’s local governments, and the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development this initiative is about the following:

- ▶ Establishing the facts regarding current service delivery and governance in the Capital region.
- ▶ Identifying and discussing the issues, barriers, and opportunities facing local governments in regards to service delivery.
- ▶ Gathering information on what other jurisdictions and public bodies are doing to create efficiencies within organizations.

Critical to fulfilling these objectives is providing the opportunity for differing perspectives to be heard. Ideally, feedback collected through this process helps to develop specific solutions that will aid local governments, if desired, to pursue greater integration of services and governance.

Service Profiles

The largest part of this report is the service profiles. Services are grouped into 16 categories with descriptions of how each service is generally delivered by local governments in the region. Each service profile reviews general service coverage, the sharing of any attributes of the services, service delivery methods, decision making, service delivery costs (where applicable), and funding.

What We Heard

Throughout the process feedback was collected from local government officials, stakeholders and the public on current service delivery, their vision for this process, as well as thoughts on barriers and opportunities for service delivery in the region. A summary of comments collected during consultations are presented. Some overarching themes from these discussions are listed below:

- ▶ Local communities are valued. Citizens have worked hard to create and form their communities – large and small – and there is an expectation that local community decisions will be respected.
- ▶ We are all citizens of both the local community and the region.
- ▶ All thirteen municipalities are part of a broader regional economy and political boundaries should not unduly limit a healthy regional economy.
- ▶ There is currently considerable sharing of services in the region.
- ▶ Finding a resilient approach to service integration can be challenging, but it is needed.
- ▶ The CRD is an important institution. It does a good job on some things and has a harder time with others. Getting to ‘yes’ on big contentious issues is a problem.

The virtual open house conducted through PlaceSpeak also provided a substantial amount of feedback, largely from the general public. Information provided on the online forum and through the survey reinforced findings from the discussion with local governments; notably confirmation that transportation was a key issue in the region. The online survey also showed interest in the greater integration and standardization of emergency dispatch (9-1-1) and emergency planning services. In general, survey respondents were most satisfied with how water, library, and park services were being provided.

Barriers

There are a number of factors that inhibit the timely, effective, and efficient delivery of services in the region. Notably, the time and effort required to reach agreements that work for all parties is a challenge. The report looks at several of these factors in closer detail, including:

- ▶ The geography and settlement patterns of the region emphasize community uniqueness over regional cohesion.
- ▶ There are large variations in service delivery models (i.e. one size does not fit all).
- ▶ Transaction costs can be a real challenge given the differences in the size and resources of municipalities.
- ▶ Accountability and jurisdictional tensions regarding the delivery of shared services.

Opportunities

In the body of the report several observations were made with respect to opportunities. At a high-level, these included the following:

- ▶ Service delivery in a number of key service areas is already substantially integrated at the regional or sub-regional level.
- ▶ There are many key initiatives in progress, including:
 - » construction of the Mackenzie Interchange, a dedicated/semi-dedicated Douglas bus lane and other transit improvements called for in the Victoria Region Transit Future Plan;
 - » CRD Regional Transportation Service;
 - » Core/Westshore Sewage Treatment;
 - » Integrated Resource Management (IRM) and bio-solids treatment facility;
 - » integrated police dispatch through the CRD;
 - » integrated fire response; and
 - » creation of a regional economic development organization (South Island Prosperity Project).
- ▶ There are many additional potential opportunities to integrate services and enhance governance, including:
 - » establishing a framework for leadership to discuss service integration and governance issues in the Capital region;
 - » making greater use of community charter authority for inter-municipal regulatory and service arrangements
 - » using existing legislative authorities to more effectively focus the Regional Board on matters of regional importance and make greater use of commissions and regional corporations;
 - » harmonizing key areas of business regulation; and
 - » integrating recreation services.
- ▶ All these opportunities will require further development to determine the nature of changes that best meet the needs of citizens in the Capital region and it is up to the local governments of the Region to determine what opportunities they want to explore further.

Approach to Identifying New Opportunities

All regions, regardless of their governance structure need to find a way to balance regional and local community interests. If they are organized as one large local government, they will need to find legitimate ways of understanding and responding to the interest of individual neighbourhoods within the wider community. If there are multiple local governments of varying sizes, such as in the Capital region, the challenge is to work together on regional matters in a context where decision making power tends to be weighed towards the more populous communities.

This report provides an overview of local governments within the study area and provides tools for local governments to assess opportunities for service and governance integration. In order to facilitate this discussion a workbook has been developed to help guide each local government through a framework to evaluate new opportunities for enhancing service integration and governance. This workbook begins by asking several prompting questions about the delivery of any particular service:

- ▶ How integrated is the service now?
- ▶ How would further integration of the service support the identified values of each community (i.e., cost savings, level of service, risk management etc.)?
- ▶ How could further integration best be achieved?

Key Recommendations

The report concludes with three key recommendations based on the feedback received and analysis of potential opportunities. These recommendations focus on actions required to build the capacity of the region to make key decisions related to service integration and governance. These include:

1. Build on In-Progress Regional Service Initiatives

Keep moving forward on efforts to streamline service delivery with a clear focus on service structures that can address the future needs of the Capital region. The region is currently making progress on integrating and improving service delivery for protective services (centralized emergency 9-1-1 dispatch and Direct Fire Aid), solid waste service (resource recovery), economic development (South Island Prosperity Project), housing (Regional Housing First) and regional transportation planning efforts. These efforts should be continued and enhanced where possible.

2. Create a Regional Framework for Discussing Service Integration and Governance

It was identified that there is a need to establish a regional framework for discussing service integration and governance. The suggested framework consists of three components as follows:

- ▶ establishing a consistent municipal reporting system to allow for an accurate comparison of services;
- ▶ creating a leaders forum to discuss service integration and governance; and
- ▶ developing a regional dashboard for monitoring progress.

This framework would allow the Capital region to have open and informed discussions about service delivery and governance in the region.

3. Evaluate New Opportunities for Improving Service Integration and Governance

The role of this initiative is not to ultimately determine what opportunities for integration could best be achieved, but to provide an overview of the current situation and develop tools for local governments to assess opportunities to improve service delivery and governance. The workbook provided in this report is designed to help guide local governments in the Region through a framework to evaluate new opportunities for enhancing service integration and governance. Therefore, a key recommendation is that local governments use the information provided in this report and the workbook to assess where opportunities for enhancing service integration and governance exist.

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