



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: ADM-BRD-549

From: Administration / IT

Date: November 21, 2024

Subject: 2025 Function 100 - Administration Information Technology Supplemental Requests

RECOMMENDATION #1: [Corporate Weighted]

That the Regional Board include the 2025 Supplemental Request for a high-capacity, enterprise-grade network access storage device to enhance disaster recovery and data security totalling \$60,000 (excluding taxes) for Function 100 Administration in the 2025 Financial Plan.

RECOMMENDATION #2: [Corporate Weighted]

That the Regional Board include the 2025 Supplemental Request to enlist a Business Continuity Consultant to identify potential risks or disruptions, develop a response framework, and build an action plan to mitigate risk totalling \$105,000 (excluding taxes) for Function 100 Administration in the 2025 Financial Plan.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

Recommendation #1 (Network Access Storage):

The Peace River Regional District (PRRD) is seeking to acquire a high-capacity, secure Network Access Storage (NAS) solution as part of an enhanced disaster recovery strategy. With the critical role that data storage plays in modern continuity planning, securing a reliable NAS device that meets stringent requirements for redundancy, capacity, and security is vital. The key specifications and considerations in selecting a NAS device will serve as a secure and centralized storage solution for the PRRD's data assets.

To align with the PRRD's objectives for disaster recovery and secure data management, the NAS device will fulfill the following criteria:

- **Capacity Requirements:**

The NAS device must offer a minimum storage capacity of 200+ TB to support the PRRD's growing data demands. This volume ensures sufficient room for both existing data and future data growth while allowing for redundancy and backup files.

- **Disaster Recovery and Data Redundancy:**

This NAS purchase is a crucial capital investment aimed at strengthening the PRRD's disaster recovery capabilities. The device will serve as a redundant, secure storage solution that allows rapid recovery of data and continuity of operations in the event of a disaster or system failure. With offsite replication capabilities, the NAS will be instrumental in maintaining data integrity across multiple office locations, particularly between Fort St. John and Dawson Creek.

- **Secure Housing and Data Encryption:**
The NAS device will serve as a secure repository for PRRD's critical data. The device will include encrypted data transmission features to protect information during transfers, safeguarding sensitive information from unauthorized access.
- **Offsite Replication and Redundancy:**
To ensure data redundancy, the NAS will support offsite replication, allowing for synchronized backups from Dawson Creek to Fort St. John. Off-hour replication will minimize operational impact and ensure data remains current across locations.
- **Long-term Data Storage and Security:**
The NAS will provide a secure, long-term data storage solution. By ensuring robust access controls and encryption, the NAS will meet PRRD's security standards, protecting data confidentiality and integrity. The solution will also accommodate long-term retention requirements, preserving PRRD's data in a secure and structured manner for archival or retrieval purposes.
- **Scalability and Disaster-Preparedness:**
A NAS device that can support the PRRD's disaster preparedness strategy includes the ability to spin up virtual servers at alternate locations in case of a critical failure. This feature enhances the continuity of operations, as it allows PRRD to promptly recover essential services and infrastructure in a new location, if necessary.

Recommendation #2 (Business Continuity Consulting Services):

In pursuit of an enhanced and robust approach to regional preparedness, the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) is seeking to bring in a specialized Business Continuity Consultant as part of an overarching disaster recovery and resilience plan. This initiative is aimed at designing a new, comprehensive business continuity plan to ensure effective responses to potential disruptions, thereby safeguarding the Regional District's services and operations.

The PRRD's objective in hiring a Business Continuity Consultant is to leverage specialized expertise in building a resilient and adaptable framework that can effectively manage unexpected disruptions across the region's critical services and operations. This new continuity plan will be in place for 2025, complementing the existing Disaster Recovery efforts by providing a structured, proactive response plan.

Project Scope:

The new business continuity plan will include the following aspects:

- Risk assessment and analysis for potential disruptions, ensuring the district is prepared for a range of scenarios.
- Development of a response framework to address disruptions while maintaining essential services.
- A clear and concise action plan to mitigate risk and expedite recovery.
- Guidelines for communications and stakeholder engagement during continuity operations.
- An implementation strategy that is adaptable for various departments across PRRD.

The last business continuity plan for the PRRD was developed in 2020 (updated in 2021), led internally by the Emergency Services branch. While this internally developed plan provided valuable insights and

initial strategies, PRRD recognizes the need for a more comprehensive and updated approach to meet evolving risks and requirements.

The consultant is expected to bring in-depth experience with other municipalities and regional districts in business continuity planning and disaster recovery, with a specific focus on public sector resilience. They will work closely with PRRD's internal departments to create a plan that meets the unique needs of the Peace River Regional District, including considerations for the district's geographic and demographic factors.

This initiative reflects PRRD's commitment to proactive risk management and continuity planning. By enlisting the expertise of a Business Continuity Consultant, PRRD aims to establish a thorough and effective continuity plan that will enhance the region's ability to respond swiftly to disruptions and ensure the continued delivery of critical services across the district. The updated plan will play a crucial role in safeguarding PRRD's operations, infrastructure, and communities in 2025 and beyond.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- Asset and Infrastructure Management
- Emergency Management

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

The Network Access Storage (NAS) device, budgeted at \$60,000 (excluding taxes), is classified as a one-time Capital expense under GL code 01-2-8500-8508-100 (IT Capital) and will be included in the 2025 Financial Plan, if accepted.

The Business Continuity Consultant Services, budgeted at \$105,000 (excluding taxes), is classified as a one-time Operational expense. \$85,000 will be allocated to GL code 01-2-1400-5020-100 (IT Consulting Services) and \$20,000 will be allocated to 01-2-2510-5060-300 (Studies Plans and Assessments) and will be included in the 2025 Financial Plan, if accepted.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

A Business Continuity Plan (BCP) must be prepared according to specific requirements. Updating the BCP fulfills legislative requirements and contributes to the broader Emergency Management Plan. It's recommended to note that this aligns with the Emergency and Disaster Management Act's mandate for an updated BCP.

Attachments:

1. Supplemental Request – Network Access Storage.pdf
2. Supplemental Request – Business Continuity Consulting.pdf