



Agenda Item #

**REPORT TO PLANNING & PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2007**

SUBJECT **INTEGRATING THE REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY AND THE
COMMUNITY ENERGY PLAN**

PURPOSE

To seek approval to proceed with a gas tax agreement funding application under the Integrated Community Sustainability Planning funding allocation.

BACKGROUND

CRD Regional Planning has prepared a proposal for funding under the Integrated Community Sustainability Planning funding allocation to support a project designed to transition the existing Regional Growth Strategy to a broad integrated sustainability strategy that incorporates elements of the Community Energy Plan, TravelChoices, along with Smart Growth and sustainability policy directions.

The Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP) is a provincial initiative which originated from the Canada-British Columbia-UBCM Agreement on the Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Revenues. It ties in very closely with provincial interests to address climate change and encourage the development of healthier, less costly and more sustainable communities. The purpose of integrated community sustainability planning is to advance the environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability of British Columbia's communities.

Through the GTA, five percent (about \$5 million) of the potential pooled funds have been reserved for local governments outside the GVRD. Pooled funds include the Strategic Priorities Funds (SPF) and Innovation Funds (IF)

Under the Gas Tax Agreement (GTA), all local governments receiving Gas Tax funding have committed to undertaking Integrated Community Sustainability Planning, either individually or as part of a regional strategy. This project would serve to meet that requirement for the region.

The Province is seeking project submissions which best reflect the following criteria:

- Long term thinking (future orientation)
- Scope, in relation to environmental, economic, social and cultural sustainability
- Integration with other plans, planning and sustainability activities
- Collaboration elements including engaging community members and other partners
- Implementation program
- Monitoring and evaluation component
- Linkage to capital investment plans
- Contribution to sustainable community outcomes
- Contribution to efficient use of infrastructure and other resources

- Contribution to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, cleaner air or cleaner water
- Contribution to innovation and/or best practices
- Size or scale in relation to the size or capacity of the community and/or scope in relation to the desirability for inter-jurisdictional cooperation in planning.

Transitioning the RGS to a Sustainability Strategy

While the existing RGS provides a good planning framework for addressing the land use and transportation-related initiatives, it could contribute more to the regional and municipal climate change initiatives by clarifying and documenting the linkages between regional development patterns and climate change vulnerability. To assist the CRD in moving forward on the RGS revision, an application for funding through the Integrated Community Sustainability Planning is proposed.

The intent of the project is to transition the RGS to a broader regional sustainability document which integrates Board-approved policy pertaining to growth management, climate change, greenhouse gas reduction, emergency prevention (i.e. creating more resilient communities) and transportation into a comprehensive document. The CRD is required by provincial legislation to undertake a review of the RGS in 2008. This requirement provides an opportunity to re-examine the scope and focus of the RGS to better enable it to:

- More effectively align the RGS with regional strategic priorities and triple bottom line decision-making
- Better focus the RGS on sustainability issues
- Provide the planning framework and justification for subsequent senior government funding requests and partnership projects
- Provide the implementation mechanism for moving forward on Community Energy Plan recommendations
- Effectively engage the Province, member municipalities, University and key stakeholders in the planning process
- More effectively identify the environmental and socio-economic implications associated with climate change and carbon-constrained futures.
- Effectively incorporate Board-approved policy pertaining to regional transportation, housing affordability, parks and regional trails, and greenhouse gas reduction.

The proposed project would produce the analytical and policy framework for the *Integrated Regional Sustainability Strategy* (IRSS) which would incorporate elements of the existing RGS, the Community Energy Plan and the climate adaptation framework modeled on the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNCCC) process.

The project would provide the opportunity to combine two different modeling and analytical approaches: scenario modeling (for growth management and climate change mitigation strategies) and vulnerability mapping (to inform climate change adaptation strategies) which would provide a more rigorous information base to update the RGS and better reflect the implications of climate change on future development and infrastructure decisions.

The proposed project has five major components:

1. Development of a regional growth model, indicating development areas, trends, densities and growth projections, as well as servicing capacities and constraints.
2. Development of a regional resource inventory showing water resources, servicing areas, agricultural areas and renewable resource lands.
3. Development of climate change vulnerability mapping, indicating areas likely impacted by extreme weather events, tsunamis, flooding, erosion, drought and wildfire. This

- component would require partnerships with UVIC, emergency planning and Provincial agencies.
4. Overlay of mapping and integration of the models (including transportation) to indicate areas of concern and vulnerability.

 5. Development of sustainability and climate change response policies for incorporation into a revised Regional Growth/ Integrated Regional Sustainability Strategy.

By integrating the growth model, transportation model and climate change mapping, with the existing land use and environmental mapping, the project should reveal the most effective land use and infrastructure strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and create more sustainable and resilient communities. The value-added of this project is to bring together a number of planning initiatives to more accurately reveal the GHG and climate change implications of various growth scenarios.

The project would continue to follow the legislative requirements associated with Regional Growth Strategies.

Anticipated deliverables include:

- Calibrated urban growth and capacity model
- Series of overlay maps on GIS platform
- Revised regional growth/ integrated sustainability strategy which addresses climate change
- RGS implementation plan which integrates land use, transportation, housing affordability, regional parks and trails, GHG reduction strategies, emergency prevention and mitigation strategies and adaptation strategies.

ALTERNATIVES

1. To receive the staff report and direct staff to submit an application for ICSP funding.
2. To receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The total cost to update the RGS will depend on the availability of the external grants and partnerships. A business plan or project charter will be prepared for Board approval identifying the proposed scope of the undertaking and associated costs. Should the grant not be available, or is significantly reduced, the scope of the RGS revision would be modified accordingly.

All GTA grant approvals are subject to the execution of a funding agreement between the recipient and UBCM. The agreement sets out the roles and responsibilities of the parties, including deadline for completion of the project and other recipient obligations, and a payment schedule. Payments for ICSP projects are typically made at the completion of the project. The funding agreement will set out GTA requirements applicable to all recipients for all projects (e.g. reporting outcomes achieved; requirement to award all contracts in a manner that is transparent, competitive and consistent with value for money principles; adherence to a communications protocol).

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

The availability of funding under the Integrated Community Sustainability Planning fund provides a timely opportunity to move forward in a new direction with the RGS and develop a climate-change responsive sustainability strategy. In addition to the detailed analytical work, the project would enable the CRD to engage in collaborative partnerships with community, provincial, agency and academic representatives.

The funding submission must be accompanied by a resolution from the Board indicating support for the application.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning and Protective Services Committee recommend to the Board:

That staff be directed to proceed with a gas tax agreement funding application under the Integrated Community Sustainability Planning funding allocation to prepare an *Integrated Regional Sustainability Strategy* (IRSS).

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Concurrence

COMMENTS