RGS Revision Consultation Strategy

Consultation Strategy for Initial Phase of RGS 5-Year Review

Capital Regional District

Regional Growth Strategy Revision

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Prepared by CRD Regional Planning

Purpose

The purpose of this consultation strategy is to guide the work of the Capital Regional District (CRD) undertakes during the first two phases of the 5-year review of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS).

The RGS review is structured over four distinct phases. This strategy applies to the first two phases: the Preliminary Phase and Phase One. As outlined in the RGS Review Workplan (approved by the CRD Committee of the Whole April 2008), the consultation strategy and workplan will be reviewed and updated at the conclusion of Phase One in order to reflect the project direction and scope required to undertake the subsequent project phases. That decision will be informed by the work undertaken through the initial project phases.

Background & Rationale

The growth strategy serves as a tool for managing growth related challenges and opportunities and influencing land use decision-making in order to contribute to improved liveability, quality of life and sustainability.

The 5-year review of the RGS is intended to provide a focused revision to the existing RGS. The intent is *not* to develop a new regional vision or *significantly* alter the land use framework and centre designations. Rather the intent of the review is to do the following:

1. Update the population and growth projections, mapping, and land use designations
2. Address relevant provincial policy and legislative changes
3. Develop the existing RGS provisions to better address sustainability, smart growth, climate change and resource management
4. Clarify existing RGS policy direction on coastal zone management, integrated watershed management, unprotected green spaces, regional resource needs, servicing policy, and regional resource needs
5. Develop the Master Implementation Agreement, as proposed in the existing RGS, to address updates, modifications, implementation mechanisms and dispute resolution
6. Provide clear direction on the Regional Context Statements
7. Update the sections on housing affordability, transportation and economic development to reflect work already done through the relevant sub-strategies, as well as emerging trends and provincial directions
8. Review and update the targets and suggest indicators that reflect the collective commitment to a more sustainable region

The RGS legislation supports and facilitates a collective commitment to regional growth management that balances municipal autonomy with cooperative actions to sustain high quality of life and livability, efficient infrastructure, land and resource protection, affordability, accessibility, and responsible resource management. The enabling legislation does not provide the regional district with regional planning authority over the member municipalities. Instead, it provides a mechanism to develop a shared agreement toward regional growth management and sustainability. As such, the communication strategy focuses on the member municipalities and key stakeholders to identify shared interests, commitments, aspirations, and solutions.

The RGS review is being undertaken in a phased approach, with the first phase being the data updating phase. Decision points for the Regional Board are built into the work-plan at the conclusion of each phase. The purposes of the decision points are to confirm project scope, project issues, costs & benefits of proceeding to the next phase, and recommended modifications to the work-plan and this consultation strategy.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS:
The RGS Revision Consultation Plan is guided by the provisions of the *Local Government Act* that pertain to regional growth strategies. Section 855(2) of the *Local Government Act* states that:
[A]s soon as possible after the initiation of [an amendment to] a regional growth strategy, the board must adopt a consultation plan that, in the opinion of the board, provides opportunities for early and ongoing consultation with, at a minimum;
(a) Its citizens
(b) Affected local governments
(c) First Nations
(d) School district boards, greater boards and improvement district boards
(e) Provincial and federal governments and their agencies

This plan is intended to fulfill those stated responsibilities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CONSULTATION:
This particular Consultation plan will be guided by a number of principles.
These include:

Relevant: Consultation will be purposeful, and undertaken to improve the relevancy, acceptability and quality of the RGS.

Targeted: The significant proportion of the RGS consultation efforts will be directed to the jurisdictions, agencies and authorities responsible for approving and implementing the provisions of the RGS.

Easily Accessible: The consultation strategy recognizes that many people are interested in the RGS issues – but their participation and input may be limited due to the time commitment required of conventional consultation processes. This strategy will include options for local governments, key stakeholders, and interested publics to participate meaningfully in a manner that is respectful of time commitments and interest levels.

Responsive: The process will be responsive and adaptable to allow the level of public involvement to be reflective of the magnitude of the issues and the needs of the participants. As outlined in the RGS workplan, this consultation strategy will be updated as the project proceeds through the five phases. It will be modified to reflect the identified issues, scope changes, and associated consultation requirements.

Feedback: The process will provide participants with feedback as to how their input influenced the decisions made.

CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

All communication efforts, including stakeholder involvement, information sharing, publications and events are designed to meet the following objectives:

1. To gather information from decision-makers, municipal staff, government agencies and organizations, stakeholder groups and interested publics about their concerns, issues, preferences and needs with respect to the RGS
2. To seek input, advice and expertise on regional growth management and sustainability issues
3. To improve the relevance, responsiveness, quality, and value-added of the regional growth strategy
4. To provide the opportunity for people to make their views known on the RGS and proposed changes
5. To maximize the amount and quality of input within the budget allocated for this project;
6. To create support for the RGS, and create a RGS worth supporting

CONSULTATION STAKEHOLDERS

For the purpose of this consultation strategy, a stakeholder refers to anyone who can affect, and is affected by, the project. Stakeholders include:

- Those who are or could be directly or indirectly affected
- Those who could affect implementation (include regulators, donors, formal and informal decision makers)
- Those who could block implementation of potential solutions (could include community members, interest groups, government agencies, etc.)

Stakeholder groups will be identified in consultation with municipal and provincial staff, advisory committee members and others, as appropriate. Stakeholder identification often continues past the pre-plan stage. Additional people, groups, and organizations may be suggested by other stakeholders, or may contact the CRD directly.

Affected Local Governments
Section 857 of the *Local Government Act* states that a regional growth strategy must be accepted by all "affected local governments" before it can be adopted. In the context of the CRD, the affected local governments are:
- The Councils of all 13 member municipalities
- The Board of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD)
- The Minister of Community Services (or a designated facilitator).

Other Levels of Government and Agencies
There are a number of organizations whose formal acceptance of the bylaw is *not* required under Section 857 of the *Local Government Act*, but who nevertheless have a stake in the Regional Growth Strategy. These organizations include:
- First Nations
- Electoral Areas (excluding the Gulf Islands)
- School District Boards
- Provincial and Federal governments and their agencies.

Other Stakeholders
Other stakeholders may include interested publics, particularly people who were involved in the development of the initial Regional Growth Strategy and/or the relevant municipal and electoral area OCPs. Involvement of the CRD residents is particularly important in the subsequent phases of the RGS Review when the scenarios and alternatives for growth management are considered.

CONSULTATION & TARGET AUDIENCES
The following outlines who will be consulted and why, as well as opportunities for their participation.

BOARD DIRECTORS & ELECTED OFFICIALS

The Board directors and local elected officials play the primary role in the development of the Regional Growth Strategy. As elected officials they are ultimately responsible for approving the RGS and any related implementation measures. Prior to the conclusion of Phase One, members of the Regional Board will be provided with a "briefing book" on the RGS and the review which will provide an overview of the key facts and planning assumptions, chronology of the RGS, key points of the legislation, and an overview of regional issues.

ELECTED OFFICIALS	
The communication objectives for the elected officials are: ▪ Inform on project rationale, anticipated benefits and outcomes, project approach, timing and budget ▪ Inform on project status ▪ Inform on issues raised from constituents during the course of the project ▪ Provide elected officials with the information and planning advice to assist them in their decision-making role	Opportunities for involvement include: ▪ Board & Committee meetings & report approvals ▪ Survey & focus groups ▪ Provision of background material, technical analysis and survey results ▪ Periodic project updates, issue reports and staff presentations ▪ Attendance at scheduled events (dialogues, charrettes, open houses and/or public meetings) ▪ Council of Council forums

MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF

The Regional Growth Strategy can function as a tool to assist local government staff to make, defend, negotiate, and enforce planning decisions more effectively. The RGS can outline the regional planning framework and the recommended land use response to support more sustainable, resilient communities.

Local government staff will play a significant part in revising the RGS. Municipal staff will be asked to contribute to the review in the following ways:
▪ To provide municipal information to develop the inventories and land use model
▪ To provide professional advise on the regional growth projections, issue identification, and scenario development
▪ To advise on areas needing cooperative approaches and cross-boundary consideration
▪ To identify areas where the regional district can add value to local planning process.

Opportunities for input will be sensitive to the time commitments faced by municipal staff and will keep out-of-office meetings and events to a minimum.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF	
The communication objectives for local government staff include: ▪ Inform on project purpose, rationale, approach, scope, timelines and anticipated deliverables ▪ Obtain timely feedback on issues, concerns, frustrations, inconsistencies and suggestions for improvements ▪ Provide opportunities to suggest and review options, alternatives and solutions ▪ Build support for the proposed changes	Opportunities for involvement include: ▪ Participation in CRD Development and Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC) ▪ Access to information through online availability and target email distribution ▪ Surveys and focus groups ▪ Periodic peer-review sessions ▪ Involvement in charrettes and workshops ▪ Attendance at events, meetings, etc.

FIRST NATIONS

Level of interaction between First Nations and local governments varies considerably across the province, ranging from informal voluntary arrangements to contractual arrangements, protocol agreements and memorandums of understanding. The RGS legislation identifies the need to address the consultation needs of First Nations, but does not prescribe the form of involvement.

The opportunities for involvement in the RGS will vary across the 10 First Nation communities within the Capital Region. The initial stages of the RGS review process will involve information dissemination and awareness-raising of the CRD and the RGS. Subsequent involvement will be tailored to reflect the community's identified interests and capacities for involvement in the RGS

FIRST NATION COMMUNITIES	
The communication objectives for First Nations are to: ▪ Inform on project purpose, rationale for the review, scope, legislation opportunities and limitations and anticipated deliverables ▪ Seek input on growth-related issues and concerns ▪ Inform on opportunities to provide input and influence decision-making.	Opportunities for involvement include: ▪ Access to web-based information and online survey(s) ▪ Presentations and distribution of information ▪ Information Workshops with elected officials/representatives ▪ Attendance at public meetings and open houses.

PROVINCIAL MINISTRIES & AGENCIES

Development of a RGS provides a unique opportunity to engage with the relevant Provincial ministries and agencies through an Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC). The IAC is a requirement of the provincial legislation which provides a forum for senior policy staff representatives of the CRD, member municipalities, the province and other agencies to advise on the development and revision of the RGS. Provincial representation is determined by the Minister after consultation with the Board.

The IAC established for the RGS development process was reconstituted as the resource group to the Development & Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC). The core group of DPAC is comprised of municipal planning directors or their alternates. This committee continues to meet quarterly, but attendance has decreased over time. Consideration will be given to restructuring the RGS advisory committees.

PROVINCIAL MINISTRIES & AGENCIES	
The communication objectives for the Province include: ▪ Inform on project purpose, scope, legislation opportunities and limitations and anticipated deliverables ▪ Seek input on emerging trends, issues, legislation changes. ▪ Seek suggestions on policy directions & targets ▪ Seek support for implementation funding, shared projects, & development and enforcement of relevant legislation.	Opportunities for involvement include: ▪ Access to web-based information ▪ Key informant interviews ▪ Presentations and distribution of information ▪ Committee meetings

ROUND TABLE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Round Table on the Environment (RTE) is a community-based, multi-stakeholder body within the Capital Region which serves as an advisory body to the CRD on issues related to environmental health, ecosystem and watershed protection, climate change, food & agriculture. The Round Table serves three primary roles within the Capital Region: it provides advice; helps to engage stakeholders and convene consultation events; and contributes to the monitoring of trends and progress. The RTE is committed to assisting the RGS revision process through these roles, and will thereby play an important role in providing input throughout the life of the project.

Round Table on the Environment	
The communication objectives for the RTE include: - Inform on project purpose, scope, legislation opportunities and limitations and anticipated deliverables - Seek input of RGS issues and emerging trends - Seek suggestions on policy directions, targets and RGS indicators. - Inform on opportunities to provide input and influence decision-making.	Opportunities for involvement include: - Access to web-based information - Presentations and distribution of information - Sub-committee meetings on specific issues - Involvement in information sessions and dialogues - Attendance at public meetings and open houses.

ADVOCACY GROUPS, COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND CRD RESIDENTS

Within the Capital Region there are many groups with interests in sustainability, growth management, transportation, climate change, housing development & affordability and the like. These groups can provide meaningful input to the RGS on a range of issues. Many groups have had a history of involvement with the Regional Growth Strategy and can provide well-informed comments on proposed changes.

ADVOCACY GROUPS, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS & CRD RESIDENTS	
The communication objectives for the Groups and Organizations are to: - Inform on project purpose, rationale for the review, scope, legislation opportunities and limitations and anticipated deliverables - Seek input on RGS issues and emerging trends - Inform on opportunities to provide input and influence decision-making.	Opportunities for involvement include: - Access to web-based information and online survey(s) & comment forms - Requests for input - Attendance at public meetings, events, information sessions and open houses.

CONSULTATION METHODS AND TOOLS:

To ensure that the RGS review process provides for adequate consultation among all key stakeholders, the consultation process provides for a range of active and passive information and input methods, including:

- Online Strategy
- Media Strategy
- Outreach Strategy
- Regional Planning Information Counter
- Targeted E-Mailing List
- Public Information Sessions & Dialogues

RGS Online Strategy

The web strategy for this consultation plan includes development of a specific web page to act as an online repository of information related to the RGS review. This web page will provide links to project information including, discussion papers, reports, work plan, consultation plan, draft policies, press releases, and advertisements for public events. The web page will also provide contact information and instructions for submitting comments and suggestions. Throughout the course of the review, online surveys and feedback forms will be included.

A section for the media will be provided and will include: key facts, contact information, press releases, and event information.

To ensure that the public can easily locate the new RGS Review web page, a link will be added to the main CRD web page (http://www.crd.bc.ca), the Regional Growth Management web page (http://www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning/growth/), and other Regional Planning web pages as necessary. The web site will also be referenced in any letters to stakeholders or newspaper advertisements.

Media Strategy

Paid media will be utilized primarily to advertise public events. Advertisements will also be used to let the public know about the RGS review and opportunities for input following the conclusion of the phase one background work. The copy will direct people to the web site, inform people of online surveys and provide additional contact information.

Earned media may be obtained through Board and committee reports, press releases, and public event coverage. Corporate Communications will assist with media relations, connection with spokespersons and development of press releases.

Outreach Strategy

A number of approaches will be utilized to connect with the community, business and interest groups. To the extent that time and resource allow, efforts will be made to take the message to the groups, rather than rely on attendance at public events. A generic PowerPoint presentation will be developed for use by CRD staff and Directors to present to community associations, Chambers of Commerce, business associations, development institute, and community-based agencies and organisations. Feedback forms will be developed to hand out to these audiences. The forms will contain a brief explanation of the review, the web address, contact information, and feedback opportunities.

To maximize communications reach, while minimizing expenditures, the CRD will look for opportunities to take advantage of existing communication vehicles, such as community newsletters to inform people of the RGS review. Regional Planning, with assistance from Corporate Communications, will develop a set of short articles and event notices for inclusion in organisation's newsletters and web-sites.

Regional Planning Information Counter

For members of the public who do not have internet access, or who prefer to obtain information from other media, an information counter will be maintained during the consultation process. All reports available on the RGS Review web page will be provided in print form, free of charge, at the CRD Regional Planning office, 625 Fisgard Street. Furthermore, the Senior Manager and Planning Analyst will be available during office hours, either in person at 625 Fisgard Street, or over the phone at 360-3160, to answer questions about the project.

Targeted E-Mailing List

A targeted e-mailing list will be established in order to transmit information to key stakeholders and interested publics. CRD staff will include any members of the public or organizations on the mailing list at their request, and will seek input from the member municipalities on recommended contacts.

By default, information will be sent to list members by email. Upon their request, list members may opt to receive the information by regular mail instead. Information sent to the targeted email list will include: event notices, reminders of new web-based information and surveys, and project status reports (prepared at conclusion of each project phase).

Information Sessions/Dialogues

Iinformation sessions or dialogues will be conducted in subsequent project phases provide an additional opportunity for the public to obtain information about the Regional Growth Strategy in general, sustainability issues and possible growth strategy options. The information sessions are intended to be informal dialogues between regional planning staff, external experts, and the public. The CRD is working with the Round Table on the Environment to co-sponsor a series of dialogues on sustainability issues and climate change. The CRD will also continue to work with other organizations and agencies to co-sponsor speakers on sustainable transportation. This approach enables the regional district to attract a more diverse audience to events and obtain feedback from a greater number of residents.

RGS REVIEW CONSULTATION ACTION PLAN: PRELIMINARY PHASE AND PHASE ONE

The proposed project phasing for the RGS Review was presented to the April 2008 Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting. The project phasing approach includes a number of decision points to be taken by the Planning & Protective Services Committee and/or the Board. The RGS workplan and consultation strategy will be modified as decisions are made on the issues to be addressed through the review; the additional level of analysis required to address the issues; and the appropriate type of consultation required to improve decision-making on the RGS.

The chart below outlines the consultation tasks and timelines for the Preliminary Phase and Phase One of the RGS review.

PHASE	CONSULTATION ACTIVITY	PURPOSE/ OUTPUTS	TARGET AUDIENCE(S)	TIMING
Preliminary	News release	Launch RGS review project. Inform elected officials, agencies, and stakeholders.	Media/public	August 2008 (launch with release of State of the Region Report)
	DPAC meetings	Discuss RGS review approach, review land use inventories & demographic information	Municipal staff Ministry of Community Services	July 31 & Sept 11 /08
	Stakeholder Database update	Contact list for key stakeholder communications	Key stakeholders, community & govt contacts	July 08 – project completion
Phase One	IAC Meetings (Incorporate with DPAC or change TOR)	Advisory input on issues , legislation & policy, growth projections	Regional, Provincial & Federal agencies	
	P&PS and COW meetings	Review of Projections and gap analysis	CRD Directors	Nov.08
	Web survey	Obtain input on RGS issues	Stakeholders, interested publics.	Oct.08
	Focus Group	Business, real Estate and Development industry on growth projections	Business	Oct.08
	First Nations-CRD workshop(s)	Overview of CRD & RGS	First Nations Directors	Throughout phase one
	Presentations & Online Documentation	Phase One reports: ▪ Legislation & Policy Review ▪ RGS Issues & Trends Report	Municipalities Stakeholders Interested Publics	Dec 08
	COW Reporting	Overview of Phase One and Recommendations for Phase Two	Board	Jan 09

The consultation plan will be revised and re-submitted to P&PS and COW meeting prior to Phase Two. Phase two includes the development and assessment of growth management scenarios and the integration with transportation planning. The consultation plan will be modified to reflect the desired scope and budget for broader consultation.

APPENDIX

CONSULTATION TOOL KIT

There are a number of tools, techniques and models for consultation.

TECHNIQUE	BENEFITS	LIMITATIONS
Printed Information material Fact sheets Newsletters Brochures Issue papers	▪ Can reach large target audience ▪ Encourages written responses if comment forms are attached ▪ Facilities documentation of consultation process	▪ Only as good as the distribution/mailing list ▪ Limited capacity to communicate complicated concepts ▪ No guarantee materials will be read
Technical Reports Technical documents reporting research or policy findings May include demographic report, Inventory information, indicators and survey methodology.	▪ Provides for thorough explanation of project decisions ▪ May need to distribute technical assessments where planning and growth assumptions may be questioned or solutions depend largely on the detailed survey results	▪ May be more detailed than desired by many participants ▪ Often not presented in clear, accessible language
Advertisements Paid advertisements in newspapers and magazines	▪ Can potentially reach a large target audience ▪ Useful for directing CRD residents to the web site for more information and to alert people of events and on-line surveys	▪ Can be expensive ▪ Allows for relatively limited amount of information
Newspaper Inserts	▪ Provides region-wide distribution of information ▪ Can incorporate a large amount of data, graphics, maps, and photos ▪ Tends to be read, providing it looks like an extension of the paper and not a retail flyer	▪ Can be expensive, particularly if using an urban/regional newspaper

	▪ Provides opportunity to include public comment form	
Feature Stories Focused stories on project-related issues	▪ Can raise profile of an initiative ▪ Can heighten perceived importance of the project ▪ More likely to be read and taken seriously by the public	▪ No control over what information is presented & what angle the story may take.
Press releases	▪ Informs media of key project milestones ▪ Useful for issues & events of community-wide interest	▪ Low media response rate ▪ Frequent poor placement of press release within newspaper. ▪ Message may get buried
Expert panels Public meeting designed in "meet the press" format. Media panel interviews experts offering different perspectives	▪ Provides opportunity for balanced discussion of key issues ▪ Provides opportunity to dispel technical and scientific misinformation	▪ Requires substantial preparation & organization ▪ May enhance public concerns by increasing visibility of issues
Web sites A project web site provides information and links to relevant information and sites	▪ Makes information accessible anywhere at any time ▪ Saves printing and mailing costs ▪ Fast turnaround time for posting information	▪ Requires access to internet ▪ Large files and graphics can take a while to download ▪ Assumes people know how to access the site and are motivated to read through the information & links.
Key Informant interviews One-on-one meetings with key stakeholders to gain information for developing or refining public involvement and consensus building programs	▪ Provides opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening forum ▪ Provides opportunity to obtain feedback from all stakeholders ▪ Can be used to evaluate potential committee members	▪ Scheduling multiple interviews can be time consuming ▪ Must be balanced with other tools to ensure balanced representation.
Response Sheets Mail in or hand in forms often included in fact sheets or distributed at open houses & workshops to gain information	▪ Provides a written record of responses ▪ Provides an opportunity for people to make their views know, even if unable to	▪ Do not generate statistically valid results ▪ Results can be skewed: people will often take time to respond opposed to or

on stakeholder concerns & preferences	attend meetings/workshops	feel strongly about an issues
Mailed Surveys & Questionnaires Inquiries mailed randomly to sample population to gain specific information for statistical validation	▪ Provides input from a cross-section of people ▪ Statistically tested results are more persuasive with decision-makers & the public ▪ Most suitable for general attitudinal surveys	▪ Response rate is generally low ▪ Requires time & money to produce statistically significant results ▪ Level of detail may be limited
Design Charrette: A design charrette is an intensive and interactive meeting of project stakeholders and architects geared toward developing design solutions for specific sites or areas. As ideas are generated, the designers/architects sketch them to enable people to see the three-dimensional implications of the proposed concepts	▪ They can be very effective in addressing sensitive issues such as increased building heights and density, changes to road patterns (especially traffic calming measures), inclusion of mixed uses in a single use zone, as well as conservation subdivision approaches and cluster development.	▪ Require skilled leaders to run charrette. ▪ Can be time intensive for organizers and participants.

The methods of *receiving* information from people/participants may include:

- Printed comment forms
- Email submissions
- Online feedback/comment forms
- Flip chart notes
- Record of comments at public forums
- Key informant interviews
- Delegations and submissions to committee and board meetings
- Questionnaires and survey results.