



**REPORT TO THE
PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2012**

SUBJECT REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING INITIATIVES

PURPOSE

To update the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee on the status of current Capital Regional District (CRD) transportation initiatives.

BACKGROUND

Increasing transportation choice is one of the five key principles of the CRD *Regional Growth Strategy* (RGS). In 2005, the CRD Board approved *TravelChoices* the region's transportation strategy to advance this principle. The current transportation plans and initiatives which follow directly from *TravelChoices*, and which the CRD is either leading or a major partner are as follows:

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP continues the work done for the CRD *Transportation Corridor Plan* (TCP) which was received by committee in November 2010 with direction to implement the next stage of the plan beginning with consultation with municipalities. The TCP provided a preliminary definition of the region's principle transportation corridors, with recommended corridor functional standards and priorities. The TCP also assessed options for the governance and maintenance of the corridor network. Following committee direction staff presented the TCP to municipal councils for review, comment and direction in the first half of 2011.

Cognizant of the concerns regarding narrowness of scope of the TCP, staff strongly considered the advice of committee and municipalities in developing the scope for the RTP. The RTP terms of reference also borrowed from successful transportation plans from other jurisdictions.

Staff carried out an extensive proposal request and evaluation process through January 2012 and selected the IBI Group as the preferred consultant to prepare *the* RTP. The RTP process will go from February 2012 to May 2013. One of its main purposes will be to review, revise if necessary, and finalize the TCP recommendations through an extensive engagement process with municipalities, the public and key stakeholder groups. The desired outcome of the RTP will be the definition of the practical steps needed to advance the identification, funding support and implementation of regional transportation priorities.

The RTP will be based on and integrate the results of recent and current transportation studies being carried out by the CRD, BC Transit and the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI). This will be done through the definition and development of policies for the five RTP function areas:

1. Regional multimodal network consisting of the roads, railways and multi-use trails which perform primary regional transportation functions. These functions include access to jobs, housing and activity centres (commercial, social and recreational), and the movement of people, goods and services throughout the region.
2. Mobility hubs consisting of mixed use centres at key junctions of the regional multimodal network, with facilities supporting the use of walking and cycling, and connected to each other with frequent and rapid transit services.

3. Public transit consisting of rapid and frequent transit routes and services, and integration with the regional multi-modal network and mobility hubs.
4. Active transportation (walking and cycling) consisting of the definition and design guidelines for principle cycling and pedestrian facilities, along with region wide educational and encouragement programs supporting the greater use of walking and cycling.
5. Transportation demand management (TDM) consisting of a range of recommended measures and programs to encourage the greater use of public transit, walking and cycling.

Examples from regional transportation plans from other jurisdictions have shown that two of the key reasons for their success were participation of local governments in determining plan direction and outcomes, and a priority for streets as places of social interaction over the movement of vehicles. The development of policies and recommendations for the RTP five function areas will rely on the close involvement of committee and councils, and be informed by the principle of 'complete streets'.

The RTP will directly inform the Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) transportation policies, and influence other RSS policy areas such as the built environment, climate action and economic development. Part of the RSS engagement process will include material and input from the ongoing RTP work.

The project work plan has provisions for extensive engagement with the committee as well as staff from municipalities and relevant provincial agencies. The engagement process with committee and municipalities that began just after approval of the TCP will be continued. This process provided important direction to staff in developing the scope for the TCP. Committee will be involved at the key project milestones of the RTP for review, comment and direction.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategy. This was identified as a *TravelChoices* action item with the purpose of providing direction for implementing a regional approach to TDM. The contract to do the CRD *TDM Strategy* was awarded to Halcrow Consulting. The final report and TDM toolkit will be completed this year and consist of:

- an extensive analysis of the CRD's travel characteristics in the context of which TDM measures can be expected to garner the greatest effect,
- a long-term recommended regional approach for delivering an effective suite of measures, and
- recommended measures that may be applied by municipalities at their discretion in the short-term while the *CRD Regional Transportation Plan* is underway.

The final report will inform the *Regional Transportation Plan* TDM function area, and the RSS transportation policy area. The long-term recommendations for establishing a regional approach to TDM will be reviewed by committee as these are integrated into the broader framework of the multi-modal and multi-functional approach to transportation the RTP will provide. As well, committee will have an opportunity to consider the regional policy implications of the TDM Strategy when reviewing relevant sections of the draft RSS.

The short-term approach to TDM will consist primarily of recommended measures that municipalities can undertake within their daily business. The TDM toolkit will be presented to committee in the spring of this year, and following this, shared with municipalities.

Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP). The PCMP was identified as a key action item in *TravelChoices* with the purpose of providing direction for the ways in which active transportation could be supported at the regional level.

The team consisting of Alta Planning+Design and Urban Systems was awarded the contract to undertake the PCMP work. The final report was completed and presented to committee in March, 2011. Since then, on committee's direction, staff has presented a PCMP summary to municipal councils. The briefing to councils summarized the five PCMP components which are considered critical programming elements for any sustainable transportation approach:

1. engineering which covers the plan's primary inter-community cycling network (PIC) as well as a comprehensive set of design guidelines
2. education
3. encouragement
4. enforcement
5. evaluation

PCMP recommendations, and comments from the public and councils regarding the PCMP final report, will be integrated into the development and articulation of the RTP active transportation functional area. Committee will have an opportunity to review the PCMP recommendations again, as they are imbedded into the broader context that the RTP's multi-modal, multi-functional approach. The PCMP will also be used to inform the RSS transportation policies.

In the short-term, there may be an opportunity to undertake some of the action items identified as priorities in the PCMP, if the Gas Tax funds currently reserved for the Johnson Street Bridge are released pending the outcome of the City of Victoria's application to the Gas Tax General Strategic Priorities Fund (GSPF). Should the Regionally Significant Projects (RSP) working group be reconvened to reallocate these funds, staff will prepare a PCMP Interim Priority Implementation plan for committee's approval to submit to the RSP working group for consideration.

Transit Future. BC Transit has prepared a long term plan for the development of public transit in the region which follows from directions in *TravelChoices*. The ongoing development of rapid, frequent and local transit services and facilities will be integrated into the definition of the public transit function area of the RTP. A business case for light rail transit (LRT) between downtown and west shore has been submitted to the Province. The Victoria Regional Rapid Transit Project (VRRTP) is the first major component of the regional public transit network envisioned in the *Transit Future* plan. The CRD has contributed significant resources to both *Transit Future* and the VRRTP, and staff will keep committee informed on the continuing commitment to the development of a sustainable regional transit system.

Local Funding Options Task Force. This group consists of senior staff from the CRD and BC Transit. Its initial tasks have been to investigate, evaluate and recommend feasible local sources of funding in anticipation that VRRTP implementation and operation will be shared between local and senior governments. The Victoria Transport Policy Institute was awarded the contract for the technical work in November 2011.

The study has an extensive program for engaging stakeholders and the public, components include:

- an on-line survey hosted on the LRT Local Funding website for public input on preferred local funding options
- interviews of senior staff from designated resource organizations such as the MoTI and Transport Canada
- focus group sessions to be held in mid-March
- pending direction from committee, public hearings will be held later in the spring of 2012.

An interim technical report will be prepared in April 2012 for committee consideration. A final report, summarizing the technical analysis and results of the engagement processes and with recommendations regarding a preferred 'package' of local funding options will be presented to committee in June 2012 and the Board in July 2012.

After submission of the final report, the task force findings and recommendations will become input into a key RTP component which is to develop a comprehensive strategy to integrate funding from various local and senior governments sources, and provide a steady and reliable stream of funding to implement regional priorities from all RTP function areas – multimodal network, mobility hubs, public transit, active transportation and TDM. Recommendations from the RTP funding strategy will be presented to committee as part of the RTP engagement process.

CRD Transportation and Transit Governance Select Committee. The CRD Board chair announced the formation of a special committee as part of the annual formation and appointment of CRD Board members to committees and commissions. It is anticipated that the terms of reference will be presented to the Board at the regular March meeting. Once approved, the terms of reference will set out the role and purpose of the committee in providing recommendations to the Board on Transportation and Transit Governance and related issues.

Regional Transportation Governance Feasibility Study. Staff is currently preparing terms of reference, as directed by the Board, for a feasibility report on a broad based regional transportation service. A Request for Proposals for the work will be issued following the formation of a CRD Transportation and Transit Governance Select Committee and confirmation of direction from its members.

The *Feasibility Study* final report will define the required changes to provincial legislation, and new regional bylaws, needed to bring about a CRD service that will have specific authorities for regional transportation. The recommendations from the *Feasibility Study* will provide input into the RTP component on governance to outline a regional structure that will have responsibilities to define, fund and implement regional transportation priorities.

Gas Tax Regional Significant Projects Working Group. As part of the Federal Gas Tax Agreement for BC, a portion of funds allocated to the CRD are dedicated to Regional Significant Projects (RSPs). Currently \$8 million of RSP funds are being reserved pending a decision by the Gas Tax Management Committee on the City of Victoria's application to the General Strategic Priorities Fund (GSPF). If the Johnson Street Bridge GSPF application is successful, the reserved RSP funds will then be available, and staff will reconvene the Regional Significant Projects working group to determine how these are to be re-allocated.

Staff will keep committee informed if the RSP working group is to reconvene, and will bring working group recommendations forward for consideration.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Highway Corridor Study Updates. Currently MoTI is updating corridor studies done in 2007 for the Trans Canada and Pat Bay Highways. Staff are part of the inter-agency engagement for a study now just underway to assess options for the Trans Canada Highway/McKenzie intersection, and it is anticipated that staff will be requested for support during the Pat Bay Highway corridor update study which has just begun.

Municipal Projects. Staff is providing transportation modeling support to the District of Saanich's Shelbourne Corridor Study to assist in the evaluation of future design options and provides

other municipalities, MoTI and BC Transit with other transportation data and modeling information on request.

CONCLUSION

Staff are involved either in a leading role or as a major partner in various important and significant transportation initiatives in the CRD. Most follow from directions established by *TravelChoices*. The *Regional Transportation Plan* will establish a framework to integrate them into a comprehensive strategy, and recommend actions to plan, fund, manage and implement regional transportation priorities. Staff will keep committee updated and involved on the ongoing progress of all of these initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee receive the report No. PPS/RP-2012-03, regarding the current regional transportation initiatives for information.

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