



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

SUBJECT: REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

ISSUE:

To apprise the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee on the status and next steps of the Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS).

BACKGROUND:

The background work, undertaken to prepare for the launch of the RSS, was completed in early spring last year, and culminated in a report to committee and subsequently the Board in June. The report summarized the working policy directions arrived at after community, stakeholder, municipal and Board engagement as well as an outline of a proposed four stage work plan and preliminary budget to undertake the development of the RSS over the course of a 24 month period. Also presented to the Board at that time was a report on allocation of the Regionally Significant Projects (RSP) Gas Tax fund that included an allocation of \$550K to the RSS.

Committee and Board directed staff to move forward on garnering funds via the RSP Gas Tax fund as well as to investigate other funding sources and to further develop the work plan, with special emphasis on *“collaborating and communicating with municipal planning staff, councils, and other stakeholders to build consensus on critical policy areas”*. Appendix A contains the full Board resolutions for reports PPS/RP2011-05 and PPS/RP2011-06.

A subsequent staff report was considered by committee and Board in October and November of 2011 regarding reconstitution of the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) for the RSS. Staff was directed to seek clarification of the provincial requirements with regard to the Capital Regional District's (CRD) responsibility *“to recognize and resolve First Nations interests in the process”* (see Appendix A). Correspondence to this effect was sent to the minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and staff is awaiting a formal response. Clarification regarding the region's requirements to consult with First Nations under the *Local Government Act* is forthcoming in a separate report to committee anticipated in March.

Status of the Work

Since these reports were considered by committee, the following actions have been taken or are currently underway on the RSS and related work:

Ministry Notifications and Requests: Letters were dispatched to the minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development regarding the notification of the RSS process, the consultation strategy and the work plan as well as requesting appointments of provincial representatives to the IAC and clarification on First Nations engagement. Correspondence to and from the minister's office is attached as Appendix B.

Gas Tax and Other Funding: RSP Gas Tax funds in the amount of \$550K have been secured for the RSS project, subject to the condition that the CRD provide additional information on what specific measures will be taken to engage the business community in the strategy, both early and ongoing as the process unfolds. Correspondence containing this conditional approval and the CRD's response is attached as Appendix C. In the event that there are additional funds available under the RSP Fund, staff may seek Board endorsement to increase the allocation to the RSS to cover costs associated with communications and engagement (see also Report PPS/RP2012-03 for an update on the Gas Tax Funds).

Funding for the RSS has also been investigated with the Federation of Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund and the Investment Agriculture Foundation. The FCM fund has changed scope considerably for this round of funding such that only projects with a focus on energy and emissions reduction would be eligible for consideration. In addition, because the CRD received funding through FCM for climate action (emissions & energy) work in 2004, the region is ineligible for additional grant consideration.

With respect to the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF), the funds available through this program are oriented to the type of implementation activities that may arise from a food security sub-strategy than to conducting same. The IAF will fund the preparation of agriculture area plans, however, there are several in existence at the local level in the CRD and the sub-strategy process would more likely rely on those for policy insights rather than re-inventing one at the regional level.

Work Scope and Communications: Development of a detailed, multi-stage work plan is complete and a central communications and engagement programme is underway; a comprehensive list of stakeholder groups and agencies for use during consultation is being compiled and will be vetted through the Development Planners Advisory Committee (DPAC). Cross-departmental collaboration with several CRD divisions as well as consultation with Corporate Communications is informing this work.

A protocol for First Nations engagement is underway, with the Board chair and staff visiting each of the 10 First Nations with lands in the region. The purpose of the visit is to initiate the development of an appropriate strategy for early and ongoing engagement in the RSS process, if the First Nation expresses interest. A follow-up report will be prepared for committee following this exercise. The resulting First Nations engagement protocols will inform the overall communications and engagement program.

Development of terms of reference (ToR) for the RSS and the sub-strategies is underway by staff to scope the work. Cross-departmental collaboration within the CRD as well as advice from municipal staff and staff from other BC regions is informing the ToR development process. The ToR will be reviewed and discussed with DPAC prior to bringing them to committee for consideration this spring.

As part of the ToR process, specific attention is given to mapping requirements for the RSS and sub-strategies, including updates to existing geographic data layers, modifications to data layers that will result from the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) review and new mapping that will be

developed to support the strategy like economic and industrial lands identifying areas of potential economic growth and disaster and resilience mapping for climactic events like flooding, earthquake and storm surges. Additional modeling tools are also being considered to demonstrate policy scenarios, particularly in the areas of transportation, land use and emissions reduction.

Development of project terms of reference for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) has been completed and consultants retained to commence the project in February (see also Report PPS/RP2012-03); the RTP will inform various policy areas of the RSS.

Next Steps

Immediate next steps in the RSS project to be undertaken into spring, 2012 include:

- continued pursuit of project funding through the Gas Tax or other programs that may arise;
- completion of the First Nations engagement protocol, followed by report to committee;
- completion of the RSS communications and engagement program, followed by report to committee;
- completion of scope of work through terms of reference for the RSS and sub-strategies, with the assistance of DPAC, followed by report to committee; and
- initiation of the Regional Transportation Plan.

CONCLUSION

Work continues on the RSS as resources permit and through the assistance of inter-departmental collaboration. Several preliminary deliverables are anticipated this spring. Once the terms of reference have been completed and vetted through DPAC and committee, staff will be in a position to tender work and commence with the RGS review and drafting of the RSS. Committee involvement and direction during the review and drafting period is anticipated and provision for this involvement will be evident in the upcoming communications and engagement program. Staff is working toward a timeline of having an acceptable draft RSS ready for consultation over winter 2012/13.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee receive Report PPS/RP2012-04 titled Regional Sustainability Strategy for information.

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Concurrence

Committee & Board Resolutions

The committee and the Board considered reports PPS/RP2011-05 and PPS/RP2011-06 in June of 2011, with the Board adopting the following resolutions:

- “1) That the policy directions in Appendix 2 of the staff report be used as the policy basis to consult with municipal staff and to draft the Regional Sustainability Strategy;*
- 2) That, on the understanding of CRD staff that the proposed policy directions set out in the transmittal report of May 25 are a work-in-progress, CRD staff is further instructed to continue collaborating and communicating with municipal planning staff, councils, and other stakeholders to build consensus on critical policy areas;*
- 3) That the work plan of the Regional Sustainability Strategy contained in Appendix 3 of the staff report be adopted and that this work plan be submitted to the Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development;*
- 4) That the consultation strategy for the Regional Sustainability Strategy in Appendix 4 of the staff report be adopted and that this work plan be submitted to the Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development;*
- 5) That Regional Planning staff be authorized to proceed with other grant funding applications to supplement the budget for the Regional Sustainability Strategy project.”*

And

- “1) That the Regionally Significant Projects working group’s recommendation to allocate the 2011-15 Regionally Significant Projects fund for the Capital Regional District to the following projects be endorsed:*
 - a) \$10 M to the Craigflower Bridge (Saanich and View Royal);*
 - b) \$8 M to the commuter bike lanes and multi-use trail on the Johnson Street Bridge (Victoria);*
 - c) \$0.55 M to the Regional Sustainability Strategy (Capital Regional District).*
- 2) Further, that the City of Victoria application be held in abeyance until it is determined whether the City’s application to the General Strategic Priorities fund is successful. Should the General Strategic Priorities application be awarded to the City in full (\$16.5 M), the working group will reconvene to reconsider allocation of the remaining Regionally Significant Projects fund (up to \$8 M) and bring forward a recommendation to the Board accordingly.”*

The committee and the Board considered report PPS/RP2011-19 in October and November of 2011, with the Board adopting the following resolution:

- “1) That the revised Development and Planning Advisory Committee Terms of Reference attached to Report No. PPS/RP 2011-19 be approved and that a copy be forwarded to the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development with a request to appoint provincial staff to the Committee, and further, that staff be authorized to re-affirm all membership of the Committee; and*
- 2) That the Province make clear, the responsibility of the Board in the planning for the Regional Sustainability Strategy, the provincial requirements to recognize and resolve First Nations interests in the process.”*