

**REPORT TO PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2013**

SUBJECT REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT FOR THE DISTRICT OF HIGHLANDS

ISSUE

The District of Highlands has submitted “District of Highlands Regional Context Statement – Official Community Plan (OCP), 2013”, for acceptance by the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board as required by Section 866 of the *Local Government Act*.

BACKGROUND

The District of Highlands has completed an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) process which began in 2012, and has triggered an OCP amendment. The OCP amendment will align the OCP policies with Highlands’ ICSP. The amended OCP was reviewed by Highlands’ Sustainability Strategy Advisory Committee over the summer and received public input in early September. It will be presented to Highlands’ District Council for first reading on September 23, 2013.

The District of Highlands OCP includes the Regional Context Statement (RCS), and as required by Section 866 of the *Local Government Act*, an amended RCS must be referred for acceptance by the CRD Board.

A draft of the RCS referral was received from staff on August 14, 2013, and circulated internally to the appropriate CRD departments. The draft RCS was accompanied by a request for the referral to be completed quickly so that Highlands’ could remain eligible for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) grant funding needed to complete the ICSP and OCP update. The OCP must be adopted no later than November 15, 2013 in order to remain eligible for the FCM grant. To meet this deadline, the OCP will be considered for first reading on September 23, 2013, after which the Council resolution will be provided to the CRD and circulated at the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee meeting on September 25, 2013. It is anticipated that Committee’s recommendation regarding acceptance of the RCS will be considered by the CRD Board in October, in time to permit the District to meet its funding timelines in November. The draft RCS can be found in Attachment 1 and the letter of referral found in Attachment 2.

Regional Context Statement Requirements

Section 866 of the *Local Government Act* requires that each CRD member municipality prepare a RCS which identifies the policy linkages and consistencies between the municipality’s OCP and the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). The RCS addresses how local planning and land use policy will work towards the goals and objectives of the RGS to achieve consistency. A RCS is binding on a municipality and, as such, acts as a key implementation mechanism of the RGS.

The RCS must demonstrate:

1. The relationship between the OCP and the RGS, with a view to be consistent with the RGS,
2. If it is not consistent, how the municipality intends to bring itself into consistency, and
3. Consistency of the RCS with the rest of the OCP.

Under the *Act*, a municipality refers its context statement to the Board for review and acceptance. The Board must respond by resolution within 120 days after receipt indicating whether or not it accepts the RCS. If the Board does not accept the RCS, it must indicate:

- a. Each provision to which it objects, and
- b. The reasons for its objections.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the CRD Board accept the amended Regional Context Statement for the District of Highlands.
2. That the CRD Board refuse to accept the amended Regional Context Statement for the District of Highlands, and notify the District of Highlands to this effect indicating:
 - (a) each provision to which it objects, and
 - (b) the reasons for its objection.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

REGIONAL GROWTH IMPLICATIONS

The RCS review determines the degree to which the OCP responds to the strategic direction of the RGS's five applicable land use designations and eight strategic initiatives. The District of Highlands provided their amended RCS highlighting sections that have been updated to coincide with the ICSP. The changes are not viewed as major; some of the existing policies of the original RCS have been updated and strengthened in the areas of food security, groundwater management, greenhouse gas emissions targets, solid waste reduction, improved affordable housing policy, and land use policy that would reduce reliance on car travel.

Overall, Highlands has effectively updated the RCS to align with the existing RGS. The amended RCS summarizes how the OCP demonstrates consistency through cross referencing the strategic direction of the RGS with the applicable sections and specific policies of the OCP (see Attachment 1). No RGS conflicts were noted. The amended RCS is also generally in keeping with the anticipated policy directions of the RSS.

SUMMARY

The District of Highlands RCS as amended, reflects the intent of the RGS and its policies. The relatively minor additions to the context statement build on the foundation of the original RCS to align the OCP with the ICSP. Cross referenced policies demonstrate consistency between the OCP and RGS goals and objectives.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee recommends that the CRD Board accept the amended Regional Context Statement for the District of Highlands.

****ORIGINAL SIGNED****

Jeff Weightman,
Planning Analyst
Regional and Strategic Planning

Marg Misek-Evans, MCIP, RPP
General Manager
Planning and Protective Services
Concurrence

Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer
Concurrence



September 11, 2013

Chair Alastair Bryson and Board
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street, PO Box 1000
Victoria BC V8W 2S6

Dear Chair Alastair Bryson and Board,

RE: District of Highlands Proposed Official Community Plan Amendment for Alignment with Highlands' Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

In 2012, the District completed an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). This process sought to describe and plan for a sustainable future for the Highlands. For this plan to be brought to the highest possible policy level – and have the strongest influence – within the District, the Official Community Plan (OCP) needs to be aligned with it, meaning an OCP amendment is in order. Thus, the District is proposing to amend its OCP in order to bring it in alignment with the Highlands' Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP).

All OCP changes are internal to the Highlands community; the changes essentially relate to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and conserving energy and water. Attached is a table summarizing the key changes and showing how they could affect the average Highland resident.

A copy of the proposed draft OCP (along with a staff report) can be found at web site: http://www.highlands.ca/agendas/council/2013/documents/OCP_ICSPReportAug13_13.pdf . Other supporting information can be found at: <http://www.highlands.ca/sustainability/OCP-ICSP-Amendment.asp>.

All feedback, comments, questions, and discussion are welcome, and can be directed to Laura Beckett, Municipal Planner, at 250-474-1773 or by email at LBeckett@highlands.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Mendum".

Jane Mendum
Mayor

Attachment



Key OCP Changes:	What it Means to the Average Highland Resident...
New Development Permit Area to Promote Energy and Water Conservation	If you are constructing a building or addition 540 square feet or larger in size, this will apply. No fee. You must include energy/water conservation in your project. It's your choice how you do it!
Expanded Chapter on Energy and Greenhouse Gases	<p>The District is committing to meet Provincial targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Goals are <i>long</i> term (2050), so really the point is to set a sincere intention, and do our best. A big part of this action will be public education and information sharing.</p> <p>The simplest way to describe what meeting the targets mean: Imagine, by 2050, only using 20% of the energy that you were using in 2007...Very, very simplified - that's the goal.</p>
Other Changes:	
Development Approval Information Area Established for Entire District	No change over current expectations for development applications: OCP Amendments, Rezoning, Temporary Use Permits and Subdivisions. Gives the District the power to require professional reports. This is current business practice now.
Restyled Maps	Subtle style changes.
Local Food Section	Objective is to support local food production and consumption. New policy offering guidance to review what "agriculture" means in the Highlands.
Updated Heritage Section	Updated to include results of Heritage Task Force work