

## CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee  
Meeting of Wednesday, January 17, 2001

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### **SUBJECT:**

Management Options for the Preparation of a Regional Economic Development Strategy

### **BACKGROUND:**

Oct 11, 2000: Committee-of-the-Whole reviews the findings of Capital Summit 2 and recommends to the Board that staff be authorized to prepare a draft Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) on the basis of the findings.

Oct 18, 2000: Regional Planning Committee reviews preliminary project descriptions and implementation options for regional strategies for transportation, economic development and housing affordability (Agenda Item #5). The Committee directs staff to initiate discussions with prospective partners in the three strategic initiatives and report back to the Committee beginning in January 2001.

Nov 8, 2000: The Board authorizes Regional Planning Services (RPS) to prepare a draft RGS.

### **DISCUSSION:**

*Attachment A – A Discussion Paper on Preparing an Economic Development Strategy for the Capital Region* – provides an overview to some of the issues related to regional economic development, and high-lights some of the potential implications of different approaches to addressing those issues. As well, the paper discusses the partnership opportunity afforded by the proposed Capital Enterprise Partnership (CEP). Representatives of the Mayor’s Economic Summit Steering Committee will attend the meeting to give a brief overview to the CEP proposal and respond to the committee’s questions.

In a complex area like regional economic development, a partnership approach between public, private and non-profit sectors is the most effective way to develop a strategy that can result in actual improvement in the region’s economy. This holds equally true if the regional district is the lead partner or a participant in a more subordinate or supportive role.

Currently the CEP proposal is in development as an outcome of the Mayor’s Economic Summits

that have been held in 2000. This proposal for a cross-sector, public-private partnership would focus on specific economic development projects and on the creation and implementation of a regional economic development strategy. The concept recognizes that specific projects require the context and direction provided by an overall regional vision and strategy. Initial tasks identified include establishing the Capital Enterprise Partnership and a “Virtual” Enterprise Centre.

At the present time, initial funding is being sought (in the order of \$50,000) to develop a blueprint for the partnership (tailored from elements drawn from models developed in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Calgary and Ottawa-Carlton) and agree on an organizational structure and form for the partnership. These tasks would have to be completed before CEP can effectively work on the development of a regional economic development strategy or specific implementation projects.

As proposed, the CEP concept clearly sets out to establish a mechanism that has the capacity to undertake not only development of a cross-sectoral regional economic development strategy, but also development of an investment strategy and specific projects in its implementation, in an opportunity-seeking, entrepreneurial way. If effectively established, CEP has the potential to take on a leadership role in economic development planning in the Capital Region.

Apart from funding to research, design and launch the partnership (noted above), work to prepare a regional economic development strategy would likely entail consulting costs in the order of \$150,000, exclusive of staffing costs (perhaps assumed by CEP partners through cash or in kind contributions) for secretariat and project management functions.

The CRD has the opportunity to participate as a partner in CEP and to share in the financial costs of establishing the partnership, undertaking the strategy, and working to implement it. As well, the CRD has the ability, through an implementation agreement under Section 868 (1) of *the Local Government Act*, to link formally the strategy prepared by CEP to the regional growth strategy. This seems a more productive way to advance the regional economic development strategy proposal than assuming leadership of the initiative, including taking on staff and full funding responsibility.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Regional Planning Committee receive this report for information and direct staff to:

1. Continue to participate in discussions with the cross-sectoral steering committee regarding the development of the Capital Enterprise Partnership proposal; and,
2. To participate in the preparation of detailed terms of reference for undertaking a Regional

Economic Development Strategy once the Capital Enterprise Partnership is established.

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:**

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W.M. Jordan, Executive Director  
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