

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, April 17, 2002

SUBJECT:

Regional Growth Strategy Status Update & Next Steps

BACKGROUND:

Feb. 27, 2002: The Board gives Bylaw No. 2952 first and second reading and resolves to hold a public hearing on the bylaw, ask the Minister to appoint a provincial facilitator, and to submit the bylaw to member municipalities, the Cowichan Valley Regional District, and the Minister for acceptance following the public hearing and before third reading.

March 27, 2002: The Board sets four priorities for the Regional Growth Strategy project for 2002:

1. The adoption of the RGS;
2. To get the affordable housing strategy underway;
3. To get the regional transportation strategy underway; and,
4. If money is available for the economic development strategy, to get it underway.

April 3, 2002: The public hearing on Bylaw No. 2952 is held by Chairman Causton as a delegation of the board at the Ambrosia Catering and Event Centre, 638 Fisgard Street, Victoria.

April 5, 2002: Bylaw No. 2952 is formally submitted by letter signed by Chairman Causton to member municipalities, the CVRD and the Minister for acceptance. The bylaw is also distributed for information to the Islands Trust, School Districts, First Nations and the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

DISCUSSION:

Public Hearing:

The public hearing was preceded by an informal drop-in information session, where copies of the bylaw were available, a display was mounted and staff were on-hand to answer questions. The public hearing ran from 7:15 PM to approximately 9:30 PM. Approximately 25 residents addressed the hearing orally, and a similar number of written presentations were received. Attendance was estimated at approximately 100, with a number of municipal councillors and directors in attendance.

The report of the public hearing is scheduled for presentation to the Board at the April 24, 2002 regular meeting. Copies of the report will be distributed to member councils and other affected governments in the Capital Region for information.

Statutory Referral:

Chairman Causton's letter initiating the statutory referral of Bylaw No. 2952 was distributed to member councils, the Minister and the Cowichan Valley Regional District on April 5th. RPS staff telephoned the municipal clerks to let them know the letter and attached bylaw was on its way so that it could be placed on the agenda of the upcoming council meetings. Under the Act, the 120-day period of referral begins when councils receive the letter submitting the bylaw for acceptance.

Appointment of Facilitator:

Further to the Board's request, Minister Abbott has appointed Mr. Dale Wall as the provincial facilitator for the CRD Regional Growth Strategy. Mr. Wall is the Inspector of Municipalities and the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Local Government Department of the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. Mr. Wall and his staff will be in contact with municipal administrators shortly to notify municipalities of his appointment and the role of the facilitator.

Staffing and Priorities:

RPS had been seeking to fill staff vacancies for a Senior Planner and a Planning Analyst. These competitions were suspended while the Board considered implementation priorities and options for the RGS. RPS has resumed the process to fill the Senior Planner position following the Board's March 27, 2002 decision on priorities for the RGS project for 2002, which resulted in a 22% reduction in the RGS core budget for 2002 and the elimination of the Planning Analyst position.

Four experienced short-listed candidates were interviewed on April 10th. Staff will provide a verbal update on the Senior Planner hiring process at the meeting.

First Quarter Achievements:

After more than six years, the RGS process has reached the final critical stage of acceptance and adoption (Attachment A). In late 2001 the Board gave direction to RPS to prepare a RGS bylaw for 1st and 2nd reading early in 2002. This objective was met and was followed quickly by the achievement of two other significant milestones in the process – the public hearing and statutory referral of the RGS to member councils for acceptance. Reaching these objectives sets the groundwork to achieve the Board's stated goal of adopting the RGS before the Fall. RPS will work with the provincial facilitator to put in place an in-stream issue resolution process that can run concurrent with the 120 referral period, in an effort to meet the Board's timeline for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Regional Planning Committee receive this report for information.

Mark Hornell, MCIP
Director - Regional Planning Services

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

W.M. Jordan, Executive Director
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