

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
Regional Planning Services Department

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, July 16, 2003

SUBJECT:

Proposed Communication Plan for the RGS Implementation Strategies

BACKGROUND:

The RGS implementation projects include the Regional Transportation Strategy (Travel Choices), the Economic Development Strategy (the Opportunities Blueprint), and the Housing Affordability Strategy. The consultant reports for these strategies are nearing completion and are expected to be presented to the Regional Planning Committee within the month.

The strategies differ from one another in content, type of project management, nature and extent of public and stakeholder input. However, they share certain characteristics: they are detailed, future-oriented, and propose recommendations that require commitments of money, time, policy, regulations and other resources. As such, the member municipalities and the region's residents need an opportunity to consider and discuss the potential benefits and implications of the proposed strategies, including the costs/benefits of the status quo, or "do nothing" alternative. For this reason, a communication plan has been developed to guide the next stage of discussion on the three RGS implementation strategies.

DISCUSSION:

The communications strategy is organized in two phases. The first phase is focused on the review of the consultant's reports for each of the three strategies. Main steps include:

Receipt of the consultant reports: Regional Planning Committee and the Regional Board are requested to accept the reports for the purpose of review only. At this initial stage, the regional district is not asked to adopt any of the recommendations, but only to receive the reports and initiate the consultation process.

Municipal Review: CRD staff will be presenting the three implementation strategies to each of the member municipalities. Where possible, municipal meetings will be combined as this would allow us to include the consultants in the presentation and discussions in a cost-effective manner.

Public/Stakeholder Review: At this stage, the reports are made available for review through the web, various media, and information dissemination channels. The report recommendations are put forward as suggestions – but not as the proposed directions of the regional district.

Feedback Reporting: Following the review by the member municipalities, stakeholders and the public, CRD staff will produce a report for the RPC and Board on "what we heard". A companion report will be developed which makes recommendations for moving forward on the implementation strategies based on the information received.

Transitioning the Strategies. At this stage, the reports need to make the transition from external consultant reports to policies and strategic direction of the CRD and its member municipalities. To be effective, the “ownership” of the strategies needs to move from the consultants and the project teams to the elected officials. CRD staff will “redraft” the strategies to reflect this need. The extent of work needed will differ for each of the strategies.

For example: each of the strategies address potential roles, responsibilities, and actions for a number of partners and jurisdictions. The “transitioned” reports need to clarify what the CRD and the member municipalities are committing to, in the short and long term. In the case of the Economic opportunities Blueprint, the report was produced by a private sector partnership with recommendations directed at industry, business advocacy groups, and government agencies. The report was not developed as a CRD strategy. Rather, the CRD and member municipalities will need to consider the range of recommendations, and determine how they want to respond to it; what elements they want to support and how they want to do that.

The second phase of the consultation strategy deals with the strategies and recommendations that the CRD and member municipalities have determined to be worth adopting, or at least worthy of serious consideration and perhaps further analysis. The consultation focus moves from consideration of the general directions and recommendations, to consideration of the specific details on implementation, funding, distribution of costs and benefits, and so on. The public consultation process in this stage is more direct, involving open houses and focus groups.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Regional Planning Committee recommend to the Board that the proposed consultation approach for the RGS implementation strategies be accepted, and staff be directed to initiate the process as outlined in the attached Communications Plan (attachment A).

FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

Tracy Corbett, Senior Planner
Regional Planning Services

Mark Hornell, Director
Regional Planning Services

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS:

W.M. Jordan, Executive Director
Attachments
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