

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
Regional Planning Services Department

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, November 19, 2003

SUBJECT:

Planning Advisory Committee Restructure Options

BACKGROUND:

- July 5, 1994: Regional Services Committee endorses terms of reference for the Inter-Municipal Planning Advisory Committee (IMPAC).
- August 14, 1996: The Board approves terms of reference for the formation of an Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) as required under section 867(1) of the *Local Government Act* when a regional growth strategy is initiated (Attachment A).
- March 21, 2001: Regional Planning Committee approved disbanding of the Advisory Regional Transportation Planning Committee and the re-formation of IMPAC with revised terms of reference and membership that incorporate transportation planning matters and representation (Attachment B).
- October 3, 2003: IMPAC discusses future of the committee and whether or not to combine with IAC to have only one committee advising the CRD on planning and development related issues, including the RGS. Although not unanimous, there was general agreement that the two committees should remain separate, with IAC meeting once per year for an annual general meeting on the RGS to which IMPAC would be invited.
- November 14, 2003: IAC discussed restructure options at their meeting, the results of which will be reported verbally to RPC by staff on November 19th.

DISCUSSION:

The CRD has two advisory committees on planning and development related matters:

- IMPAC, a non-statutory advisory committee, provides a forum for senior representatives of municipal planning departments and public agencies with an interest in regional development, to discuss and advise on planning issues of regional or inter-municipal significance; and,

- IAC, a statutory committee required for any regional district that initiates a RGS, was established to advise on the development and implementation of the regional growth strategy, and to facilitate the coordination of Provincial and local government actions, policies and programs as they relate to the development and implementation of the regional growth strategy.

In practice, IMPAC is a fairly informal committee and has served as a forum for primarily municipal planners to discuss the broad range of planning and development matters. In addition, IMPAC played a key role in the development of terms of reference for the RGS process prior to formal initiation in 1996, and has served as a sounding board on technical and process aspects of the RGS throughout the process.

IAC has served as a high level committee that has focused on the development of the substance and content of the RGS, rather than the more pragmatic details of its development. Its membership is more diverse and includes municipal administrators as well as planning directors and CRD department heads. It is a more formal committee, chaired by CRD Executive Director Bill Jordan, and its members are formally appointed by their respective councils and organizations. The second part of the IAC mandate, advising on joint actions and initiatives to meet common objectives that support RGS implementation, has not thus far been activated.

Several issues have brought the matter of the restructuring of the CRD's two planning advisory committees forward:

1. The adoption of the growth strategy on August 13, 2003 marked a turning point in the process from strategy development to implementation – this will change the nature and frequency of advisory committee meetings on RGS matters.
2. Provincial government restructuring has significantly restricted the ability of provincial ministries and agencies to resource regional district advisory committees. Correspondence with the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services staff indicates that while the province wants to remain involved in the IAC, participation is feasible only on an annual meeting basis, with informal working groups meeting as needed on topics directly related to individual ministry and agency mandates and interests.
3. Municipal participation in IMPAC has dropped off in recent years and there is a desire on the part of IMPAC members to revitalize the committee, with a greater focus on inter-municipal planning and development matters. As well, participation of municipal transportation staff has been limited since IMPAC was re-formed in March 2001.

For these reasons, it seems timely to consider restructuring the two committees. There seems to be general agreement among members that there is limited value in holding several general purpose formal meetings each year. As well, there is general agreement that greater use should be made of informal working groups and direct staff to staff discussion on specific topics and

issues as they arise. Nevertheless, municipalities, ministries, and agencies want to be kept informed and have the ability to monitor committee meeting agendas and to participate as the need arises.

The separation of the two committees is somewhat artificial. The IAC mandate is specifically focused on the RGS, whereas IMPAC has a broader mandate that covers any regional or inter-municipal planning and development matter. In practice there is a great deal of overlap and the role distinction with regard to the RGS (IMPAC deals with practical matters; IAC deals with high level policy matters) is not workable in practice as these discussions tend to flow together. IMPAC resists the suggestion that the RGS become the sole responsibility of IAC, due to the fundamental connection between the RGS and the interests of municipal planning directors and transportation managers.

The following options appear to be available:

1. **Keep the two committee structure.** IMPAC would maintain its current role and IAC would meet on an annual basis, for an annual general meeting to discuss past year progress and the workplan for the coming year for the RGS. IMPAC would be invited to attend the IAC annual meeting, and IAC members would be drawn into topic specific working groups as required.
2. **Merge and restructure the two committees.** The mandate of the new merged committee would cover the broad range of regional and inter-municipal planning and development matters, including the RGS. Membership would be primarily the directors of planning of member municipalities and key appointments by ministries, crown agencies and CRD departments, with participation from other groups such as the Airport and Harbour Authorities, BC Ferries and others. Members would participate in meetings depending upon whether agenda items connect with their organization's interests. While the committee's mandate would be broad, for the purposes of legislation it would function as the IAC for the CRD.
3. **Restructure as two tier committee similar to the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN).** The committee would include a core group (primarily municipal planning directors and planning staff from CRD departments) and a resource group (primarily ministry, crown agency and other relevant organizations). The core group would meet 4 – 6 times per year drawing in representatives from the resource group on an as needed basis. Once per year there would be an annual general meeting including both the core and resource group membership. Agendas and minutes of the core group meetings would be circulated to the resource group members for information purposes. Members of the resource group may attend meetings of the core group if there is an organizational interest affected. The terms of reference for the RDN IAC give an indication of how this structure would work in practice (Attachment C).

RPS staff will give a verbal report on the IAC November 14th discussion of these options.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Regional Planning Committee direct staff to develop draft terms of reference for a single two-tier planning advisory committee as outlined in option 3, for consideration at the next meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION:

Supporting a single planning advisory committee should provide some efficiencies in terms of RPS staff support.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

W.M. Jordan, Executive Director