

**CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
Regional Planning Services Department**

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, July 21, 2004

SUBJECT:

Capital Region MetroQuest Proposal

BACKGROUND:

June 16/04: Dave Biggs of Envision Sustainability Tools presents the MetroQUEST scenario development and decision tool at a Noon hour presentation at Victoria City Hall, attended by staff and several members of Regional Planning Committee. Chair Habkirk asked members to access the model on line at www.envisiontools.com prior to the July meeting, and that staff put the item on the agenda for a brief discussion.

DISCUSSION:

Attachment A briefly describes the MetroQUEST model and explains how it uses real world data combined with state of the art gaming to enable decision makers and residents to consider the connections between choices and consequences in a long-term, metropolitan planning context. The MetroQUEST model is a new product that builds on the earlier work with the Fraser Basin Quest and Georgia Basin Quest models. The CRD contributed \$15,000 and in-kind contributions to help develop the Georgia Basin Quest model.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is providing matching funds to any Canadian metropolitan area that enters a contract with Envision to develop a metro-specific version of MetroQUEST. The cost of development is approximately \$150,000 of which FCM will cover half through grants. Development of a Capital Region version of MetroQUEST would take approximately 10 – 12 months. Informal discussions with representatives of Western Diversification Canada indicate that the federal government could provide approximately \$25,000 in funding towards the development of a Capital Region MetroQUEST model.

The advantage of MetroQUEST is that it appears to be a tool that can get people and decision-makers engaged in discussion about the region's future. It also forces people to consider the connections between choices and consequences, and (especially for people who are single-issue optimizers) to consider how an action in one area results in impacts elsewhere, raising awareness of the tradeoffs necessary to achieve a range of long term goals. This may have some application in monitoring the RGS and at major updates/renewals of the RGS.

If the CRD were to proceed with MetroQUEST, data would need to be maintained and updated on a five year basis to keep the model current. This would result in ongoing costs related to model maintenance that are currently unknown. As well, annual license fees would also be charged by Envision, also currently unknown. Staff will endeavour to get answers to these questions prior to the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Regional Planning Committee receive this report for information, and give staff direction regarding whether a project description should be brought forward for consideration with the proposed 2005 work plan in September.

RGS CONSISTENCY:

Consistent with RGS monitoring and implementation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION:

Financial details will be provided in September if directed by the Committee.

Mark Hornell, MCIP
Director of Regional Planning Services

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

W.M. Jordan, Executive Director