CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
Regional Planning Services Department

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, May 18, 2005

SUBJECT:
Regional Information Services program – Strategic direction

BACKGROUND:

Nov. 17/05   Regional Planning Committee approves Regional Planning Services' Statement
                    of Mission, Vision and Values (see Attachment A).

DISCUSSION:

In November of 2004, the CRD Regional Planning Committee approved Regional Planning
Services' *Statement of Mission, Vision & Values*. Within this framework a review of the
Department's programs is underway to:

- ensure the program service deliver is consistent with the Statement
- identify areas where the service delivery needs to be realigned to better reflect the
  Statement
- develop a strategy to move forward where required

Regional Information Services (RIS) is the first program (of three) that has undergone review. The
review indicated that RIS does a good job of collecting and providing information but does not
generally play an analytical role where identifying "trends, challenges, opportunities and choices"
are part of the service delivery function. In addition, the review found that the program's service
delivery is very paper-oriented which limits the distribution of information and analysis to our primary
clients (member municipalities) and secondary client groups (including other agencies, business
and the Public).

Trends in the type of contact our clients have with RIS suggest that the Internet is playing an
increasingly important role. Despite this, RIS workflows (how it gets the job done) have not
changed significantly in response to increased electronic service delivery demands. Data collection
is still largely a manual process (especially with respect to development reporting) and information
available on the department's website is limited to paper-oriented documents and fact sheets
available for download. The site takes little advantage of Internet technologies to add value (tools
and activities that tell regional stories) or disseminate information to a broader audience.

In response to the changing environment and to take advantage of existing technologies, RIS is
proposing to realign its method of service delivery and become less dependent on paper workflows
by undertaking the following strategies:

- Streamline data collection by providing online forms for input and verification by source
  agencies (particularly member municipalities) where possible
- Where agencies are already collecting data into information systems (permit tracking
  databases for example), RIS will work to streamline reporting to minimize impact of data
  collection on agency staff
- The existing web presence will be expanded to include interactive maps and tools so clients
  may conduct their own analysis

- Trends and the Development Review will have a re-designed web-version more suited to use on the Internet (rather than simply publishing an electronic version of the printed copy)
- Trends and the Development Review print versions will be re-designed to be more concise and point readers to expanded content and tools on the website
- Staff will focus more on using the data and tools it already has (GIS in particular) to provide analysis into trends, challenges, opportunities and choices for the Capital Region

In moving this strategy forward, RIS is expecting to partner with other CRD departments, member municipalities and other agencies to minimize cost and maximize return on investment. In addition, existing CRD corporate technologies will be leveraged where ever possible in an effort to keep cost low.

Although a work plan has yet to be established it is expected that the transition to electronic service deliver will be phased in over a period of three years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Regional Planning Committee approve, in principle, the new service delivery approach for the Regional Information Service program.

RGS CONSISTENCY:

This initiative will aid in disseminating and providing information about the RGS and its progress.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION:

This initiative will be undertaken within the existing RPS budget. Any significant projects will be separately budgeted and brought to the Committee for approval as supplementary items in the annual budget review process.

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Regional Information Services

ACTING CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

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