
TO: Committee of the Whole **MEETING:** July 10, 2018
FROM: Jamai Schile
 Senior Planner **FILE:** 6780 30 MA
SUBJECT: Consultation Plan – Focused Regional Growth Strategy Review

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board adopt the Consultation Plan for the Focused Regional Growth Strategy Review.

SUMMARY

In accordance with the *Local Government Act*, in order to proceed with a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) review process, a consultation plan needs to be considered for adoption that in the opinion of the Board provides opportunities for early and ongoing consultation. In response, a consultation plan is presented that outlines the scope of work, applicable stakeholders and an approach to public consultation that is consistent with the Regional District of Nanaimo's (RDN) established policies and best practices. If approved, the plan prescribes a course for implementation that is scheduled to be undertaken from 2018 to 2019.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Act* sets requirements for regional districts with adopted regional growth strategies to consider whether the strategy must be reviewed for possible amendments, at least every five years. Since the last RGS review was conducted more than six years ago, staff initiated a preliminary review that provided three possible options to help inform the Board's decision as to whether a review of the RGS should proceed at this time.

At the February 27, 2018 regularly scheduled meeting of the RDN Board the following motions were passed:

1. That the Board proceed with Option 3 - Focused Regional Growth Strategy Review
2. That the Board direct the preparation of a Consultation Plan for a focused Regional Growth Strategy Review.

The RGS review will be focused on three key areas involving policies, processes and changes in information since the RGS was last adopted in 2011. The three components of the review are: the criteria and process for minor amendments; land use and servicing policies that currently limit planning approaches to support more sustainable rural development patterns, specifically in Rural Village Centres (RVCs) and for Alternative Forms of Rural Development (AFRD); and, updates to the RGS indicators/targets. As a component of this targeted review the required demographic information updates and general housekeeping items to improve clarity will also be addressed.

As the review is focussed on specific policies, consultation is also focused on those stakeholders that will be affected by changes to the identified policies while still providing opportunities for all community members to provide input. The majority of consultation will be focused on engaging with stakeholders most likely to be affected by changes to the minor amendment and servicing policies. The rationale and process is outlined in the attached Consultation Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

1. To approve the Consultation Plan as presented and proceed with the 2018-2019 Focused RGS review.
2. Provide alternate direction.

INTERGOVERNMENT RELATIONS IMPLICATIONS

Changes to the two RGS policy areas of minor amendments and servicing have the greatest implications for the member municipalities and the electoral areas. As such, a large focus of the consultation is focused on these stakeholders. The member municipalities and electoral area directors are a key emphasis of a targeted engagement approach to support the review. Other service providers in the electoral areas such as the improvement districts will also be approached for their input on the servicing policies.

As outlined in the RGS review process (included in the Consultation Plan), provincial and federal agencies and First Nations will be advised of the RGS Review and requested to provide input.

Section 436 of the *Local Government Act* requires that before an RGS bylaw can be adopted by the Board, it must be accepted by each member municipal council and adjacent regional district Boards during an established referral period. If one or more local governments do not accept the amendment, then the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will establish a dispute resolution process between the affected parties.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

As noted in the previous section, the Consultation Plan outlines the legislative requirements to consult, and the region wide approach in which those interested and affected will be provided opportunities to comment on the proposed amendments. This is achieved by incorporating the Guiding Principles of the RDN Public Consultation/Communication Framework¹ into the implementation of the plan, whereby, “Anyone likely to be affected by a decision ... have opportunities for input into that decision”.

The RGS Review consultation, while placing a priority on stakeholder engagement, also provides numerous opportunities for the broader community to be involved. The will make use of the RDN web site and Get Involved, social media, media releases, newspaper ads, and newsletters. RDN staff will be available for meetings and anybody who wants to be involved will have an opportunity to provide input either electronically or directly through staff.

¹ Regional District of Nanaimo, June 2, 2008 Public Consultation/Communication Framework Policy No. A1.23

Given that the scope of the RGS review is focused and consultation is ongoing throughout the review process, the Board may decide to waive the public hearing, and continue to accept input during the notification period for waiving the public hearing. By adopting the Consultation Plan, the RDN acknowledges the option to waive the public hearing but can still hold a public hearing if deemed appropriate after consultation is completed.

LAND USE IMPLICATIONS

Changes to select land use and servicing policies will provide both property owners and developers certainty in terms of more supportive policies for local development and servicing. Similarly, changes to the criteria for what qualifies as a minor amendment to the RGS will provide certainty for the municipalities and the electoral areas when it comes to a change to an Official Community Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no expected implications to the Board 2018-2022 Financial Plan resulting from the amendments to RGS Bylaw No. 1615. Funding for the RGS implementation and review is included in the annual RGS program budget.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Undertaking a focused RGS review to address conflicting policies and to reflect changing conditions aligns with the 2016-2020 Board Strategic Plan priorities of Service and Organizational Excellence by updating policies to better deliver efficient, effective and economically viable services that meet the needs of the region, and Focus on Relations by continuing to develop relationships and seek input from member municipalities and First Nation communities regarding future planning.



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June 22, 2018

Reviewed by:

- P. Thompson, Manager, long Range Planning
- G. Garbutt, General Manager, Strategic & Community Development
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Office

Attachments:

- Consultation Plan - Focused Regional Growth Strategy Review