
TO: Board Meeting **MEETING:** September 18, 2018
FROM: Randy Alexander **FILE:** 1855-04
GM, Regional and Community
Utilities
SUBJECT: Valuing Natural Assets Demonstration Pilot Partnership Project

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board endorse Regional District of Nanaimo participation in the proposed joint initiative with the Town of Gibson's, Capital Regional District, District of North Vancouver, with the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC, seeking grant funding under asset management grant programs from both the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Union of BC Municipalities to undertake demonstration projects to apply the Ecological Accounting Protocol approach to natural asset valuation.

SUMMARY

The Town of Gibson's proposes to act as the lead applicant to apply for grant funding for a proposed joint initiative between four regional/local governments (Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN), Town of Gibson's, Capital Regional District, District of North Vancouver) and the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC. The proposed project would pilot application of an Ecological Accounting Protocol to value natural assets in one water/creek shed from each participating local government. Funding is being sought under the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' "Municipal Asset Management Program" and the Union of BC Municipalities' "Asset Management Planning Program. It is anticipated that grants from the two agencies would provide 100% of the cost of the project, with in-kind participation of RDN staff to provide input into project scoping, provide data and information, and review and approve findings and report contents.

BACKGROUND

Ecological systems such as water/creek sheds are natural infrastructure assets that provide a range of valuable services including drinking water, recreation, ecosystems, fisheries, forestry, jobs and economic opportunities. Asset Management BC is currently in the process of integrating "natural (i.e. ecological assets)" into the BC Framework for "Asset Management For Sustainable Service Delivery. The concept of natural capital and natural assets is a challenge to integrate effectively into asset management practices, and local governments need "real numbers" to support effective decision making.

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Sustainability in BC. The Regional District of Nanaimo participates in the Partnership for Water Sustainability, in particular through membership in the Inter-Regional Education Initiative” which involves five regional Districts, representing 75% of BC’s population.

The proposed project is intended to assist in developing effective methods of assessing the worth and value of a natural asset (such as a water/creek shed) to the community. The project would test, validate and refine methodology through pilot demonstration applications in the jurisdictions of the four participating local governments (Town of Gibson’s, RDN, Capital Regional District, and District of North Vancouver).

Funding is being sought under the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ (FCM) “Municipal Asset Management Program” and the Union of BC Municipalities’ (UBCM) “Asset Management Planning Program. Draft applications, to be submitted by the Town of Gibson’s, are provided in Attachment 1.

Deliverable: The project would provide analysis of one demonstration water/creek shed in each of the four participating local governments. The four sets of analysis would be consolidated summary report titled “What We Learned, and How to Apply the Findings. Stand-alone chapters would provide a concise synthesis of the process and the outcomes.

ALTERNATIVES

1. The Board endorse participation in the proposed grant application partnership.
2. The Board provide alternate direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The grant funds being applied for are expected to cover 100% of the project costs, through stacking of the FCM and UBCM grants. The project budget is \$50,000 from FCM and \$15,000 from UBCM. The grant application identifies “in-kind” contributions from the participants, which in the case of the RDN would be participation of RDN staff to provide input into project scoping, provide data and information, and review and approve findings and report contents.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

RDN rebates supports several priorities of the Board’s 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan, including the focus on key service areas of: Service and Organizational Excellence; Partnerships; Economic Health, and; Environment.

Randy Alexander
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September 13, 2018

Reviewed by:

- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

1. Draft Grant Applications