
TO: Regional District of Nanaimo Board **MEETING:** July 23, 2019
FROM: Kim Fowler
Manager of Long Range Planning,
Sustainability and Energy **FILE:** 6750-20
SUBJECT: Update on Regional Economic Development Review

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report Update on Regional Economic Development Review be received for information.
2. That the Board direct staff to proceed with hosting a regional workshop following the completion of the City of Nanaimo workshop.

SUMMARY

A report on options for the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) to support economic development at the regional level has been prepared by the VannStruth Consulting Group Inc. (see Attachment 1). On June 26, 2018, the Board directed preparation of a report on the current state of economic development incorporating input from the other organizations that are involved in economic development and related activities.

BACKGROUND

An economic development summary was presented to the Board on June 26, 2018 that included basic service models, general services provided by organizations, initiatives currently underway in the region, models being used by local governments on Vancouver Island, and a proposal to further the discussion on a regional service. The Board passed the following resolution:

That a meeting be organized with the organizations listed in Attachment 2 as amended to include: The Lighthouse Country Business Association, Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce Economic Development and Tourism, Snaw-Naw-As First Nation, Snuneymuxw First Nation, Qualicum First Nation, Nanaimo Port Authority and Nanaimo Airport Authority, to consider the creation of a region-wide economic development service; and further

That to assist with the meeting, a background report that incorporates input from the other organizations be prepared addressing the current state of economic development in the Regional District of Nanaimo.

The organizations listed in Attachment 2 of the resolution were: City of Nanaimo, District of Lantzville, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach, Regional District of Nanaimo, Northern Communities Economic Development, Southern Communities Economic Development, Mid Island Business Initiative, Oceanside Initiatives, Community Futures Central Island, Island Coastal Economic Trust, Vancouver Island Economic Alliance, Island North Film Commission, Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce, Parksville and District Chamber of Commerce, Qualicum Beach Chamber of Commerce, Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association, Tourism Nanaimo and Tourism Vancouver Island.

An economic development consultant was hired through a request for proposal process to assess the current state of economic development in the RDN. The report addresses the following areas:

- Overall there are quite divergent views on the best way to proceed with regional economic development in the RDN, but there was strong support among those who were consulted to have a full discussion and openness to hearing alternative viewpoints through a regional workshop.
- An internal consultation summary of twenty-four individuals, who are active in the RDN, regarding their comments on geographic coverage, structure, funding, governance, primary roles and responsibilities and any other comments.
- An external consultation summary of seven individuals representing other economic development organizations in BC regarding the same areas of geographic coverage, structure, funding, governance, primary roles and responsibilities and any other comments.
- From the consultation, six strategic options are provided for a regional economic development service along two dimensions of internal or arms-length or region-wide or sub-regional. It was assumed that tourism marketing and economic development will continue to be separated. Analysis of each option was given but no recommended option pending the next step.

In consultation with the City of Nanaimo staff, a regional workshop has been delayed pending the City's economic development review. The City hired a consultant to conduct interviews and facilitate a partner workshop on June 26, 2019. A summary report from the June 26th session is anticipated within the next month and will be reviewed prior to the RDN proceeding with its workshop in the fall.

ALTERNATIVES

That the Board:

1. Direct staff to host a regional workshop in coordination with the City of Nanaimo workshop.
2. Not proceed with any further work on an economic development strategy.
3. Provide alternative direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the review was contained in the 2019 budget.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This request is in accordance and reflects the Regional District of Nanaimo 2019-2022 Board Strategic in the Key Strategic Area:

Economic Coordination - Develop a Regional Economic Development Strategy that addresses both overall regional goals as well as those of the municipal partners and electoral areas.



Kim Fowler, RPP, MCIP

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July 18, 2019

Reviewed by:

- G. Garbutt, General Manager, Strategic and Community Development
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment:

- RDN Regional Economic Development Options – July 2019