



Governance and Priorities Committee Report

For the Meeting of March 23, 2015

To: Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** March 11, 2015

From: Robert Batallas, Senior Planner, Community Planning Division

Subject: Regional Sustainability Strategy Update

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council receive this report for information to coincide with the presentation of the draft Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) by representatives of the Capital Regional District (CRD) at a special meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee scheduled for March 23, 2015.
2. That staff report back to Council with comments on the proposed Regional Sustainability Strategy for Council's consideration to provide formal comments to the CRD as part of the formal referral process.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a brief overview of the draft Regional Sustainability Strategy (Attachment 1), highlight City of Victoria staff involvement to date, identify opportunities for Council to provide formal comments on the draft RSS, and to explain the legal requirements for municipalities to align and support the RSS once it is adopted. The draft RSS is intended to replace the current *Regional Growth Strategy* and will provide guidance for decision-making on regional matters. The draft RSS builds upon the 2003 *Regional Growth Strategy* and presents an expanded and renewed policy framework to address the impacts of climate change by providing objectives, targets and actions for the CRD and its member municipalities to attain a more sustainable, healthy, innovative, fair and thriving region by 2038. City of Victoria staff have been actively involved in this process and have ensured that the applicable policy directions of the draft RSS are consistent and compatible with the City of Victoria *Official Community Plan*. The review and approval process for the RSS includes several opportunities for Council to provide input and feedback to the CRD on the draft RSS including through a formal referral process that is required through the *Local Government Act*. The final adoption of the RSS is also contingent on full support and endorsement from all CRD local municipal Councils and other governments. This would require a resolution of Council to accept the proposed RSS. Once the RSS is adopted, the City of Victoria will have two years to develop and submit a new Regional Context Statement to the CRD Board that explains how the City of Victoria *Official Community Plan* aligns and supports the RSS. The OCP will then require an amendment to incorporate the new Regional Context Statement.

BACKGROUND

The *Local Government Act* requires all regional growth strategies to be reviewed every five years following their adoption; therefore, in 2008 the CRD Board directed CRD staff to commence a review and update of the *Regional Growth Strategy* (RGS). The current RGS has provided strategic direction since 2003 on key regional matters related to transportation, population growth and settlement patterns along with strategies to improve the region's overall livability, economic health and environmental performance. This review process has resulted in the development of the draft RSS, which is intended to replace the RGS following consideration and approval by the CRD Board of Directors later this year. This overall project has been managed and led by the CRD with input and collaboration with CRD municipalities and electoral areas along with provincial and federal government staff, the general public, and regional stakeholders.

The draft RSS builds upon the strategic direction and topic areas of the RGS while providing broader scope and policy direction on climate action, social well-being and food security. On January 15, 2015, the CRD released the draft RSS for public input and comments which occurred until February 15, 2015. The CRD is now seeking comments from all CRD municipalities and their Councils. Representatives from the CRD will be attending a special meeting of the City of Victoria Governance and Priorities Committee on March 23, 2015, to provide a brief overview of the CRD and to obtain Council input on some key projects including the RSS.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

City of Victoria Involvement

City of Victoria staff have been actively involved in the RSS project as municipal representatives on the CRD Development and Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC). The DPAC has had regular meetings and focused workshops with CRD staff to discuss key issues, seek consensus, share information and collaborate towards the development of the draft RSS. As part of this process, staff have provided background information, analysis and feedback to ensure that the objectives and policy directions of the draft RSS which apply to Victoria are compatible with the related policy directions of the City of Victoria *Official Community Plan*. Staff have also reviewed the RSS in conjunction with the draft City of Victoria Strategic Plan 2015-2018 and have identified that the draft RSS and its policies that apply to Victoria as the Regional Metropolitan Centre do support many of the objectives and outcomes described in the draft Strategic Plan.

Proposed Review and Approval Process

The following table provides a summary of recent and proposed steps for the CRD to finalize and consider approval of the RSS:

Date	Task/Purpose
January/February 2015	Engage the public and stakeholders to receive input and comments on draft RSS

February/April 2015	Highlight draft RSS to individual local governments as part of broader presentation on CRD projects and activities
March 2015	Obtain feedback from key stakeholders (Includes City of Victoria staff as representatives on the Development and Planning Advisory Committee) on how to respond to the public input on the Draft RSS
March/April 2015	Prepare a staff report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summarizing the input received from the public, municipal councils and other key stakeholders since the previous CRD Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting in October 2014 • presenting alternatives for COW direction on how to best finalize the document
May 2015	Prepare an adoption-ready RSS based on direction from the CRD Committee of the Whole
June 2015	Present draft RSS and Bylaw to CRD Board for First and Second Readings
August 2015	Hold Public Hearing on draft RSS and approving Bylaw
September/October 2015	Seek direction from the CRD Committee of the Whole to refer the proposed Bylaw to local municipalities and other governments for formal comments as required through the <i>Local Government Act</i> . Final comments must be received by the CRD within 60 days of a municipality receiving the proposed RSS Bylaw <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acceptance OR • a detailed list of items that are not accepted and reasons why
November/December 2015	Once all municipal councils accept the RSS, seek Third Reading and adoption of RSS Bylaw by the CRD Board

Consultation with Council

The final approval of the RSS requires full support and endorsement from all CRD local municipal Councils and other governments. While the development of the draft RSS has included extensive collaboration with municipal staff, there has been limited engagement with municipal Councils. However, the key tasks described above identify several opportunities for Council to provide input and feedback over the next several months, including at the presentation by CRD staff to Council on March 23, 2015, through the submission of comments to the CRD prior to the CRD staff presentation to the CRD Board in mid-April as well as through the Public Hearing which is tentatively scheduled for August 2015. Following the Public Hearing, City of Victoria staff will also compile formal comments for Council's consideration in

response to the formal referral process that may occur as early as October 2015. In accordance with the *Local Government Act*, local governments are required to review the *Regional Growth Strategy* (RSS) in the context of any official community plans and regional growth strategies for its jurisdiction, both those that are current and those that are in preparation, and in the context of any other matters that affect its jurisdiction. Local governments must then respond to the CRD within 60 days of receiving the proposed RSS, by indicating their acceptance or refusal of the RSS through a resolution of Council.

Implementation

In accordance with Section 866 of the *Local Government Act*, City of Victoria Council must submit a proposed Regional Context Statement to the CRD Board within two years after the Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) is adopted. The Regional Context Statement sets out the relationship between the RSS and the *Official Community Plan* (OCP) and how they will be made consistent over time. The Regional Context Statement is subject to acceptance by the CRD, to ensure the municipality and the CRD Board agree that the two documents are compatible and consistent. As reference, Chapter 5 of the current OCP explains the rationale for the Regional Context Statement and describes the specific alignments with the current RGS strategic directions. Therefore, once the RSS is adopted, staff will develop a proposed Regional Context Statement, including related amendments to the OCP, for Council's consideration prior to being submitted to the CRD.

OPTIONS AND IMPACTS

Provide Comments directly to CRD Staff

Following the presentation of the draft RSS by CRD staff at the Special Meeting of the Governance and Priorities Committee on March 23, 2015, Council has the option to provide direct feedback to CRD staff. This direct engagement with Council provides the opportunity for Council's comments to be included in the summary of public engagement comments that will be presented to the CRD Committee of the Whole meeting in April 2015. In addition to this presentation, Council also has other opportunities to provide subsequent comments as outlined in this report.

Provide Comments through a Formal Referral Process

As described in this report, the CRD is required to refer the proposed RSS to all member municipalities for formal comments and to seek endorsement. This process is tentatively expected to be initiated in September/October 2015. Once the City of Victoria receives the proposed RSS, staff and Council will have 60 days to submit their final comments to the CRD Board indicating acceptance or refusal of the proposed RSS. To facilitate this process, staff are currently reviewing the draft RSS across departments and will report back to Council with recommendations that Council can consider in providing formal comments to the CRD, with the opportunity to consider accepting or refusing the proposed RSS. Acceptance of the proposed RSS requires a resolution of Council; however, if Council chooses to refuse the proposed RSS, the formal comments must indicate a detailed list of items that are not accepted and the reasons why.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN CONSISTENCY STATEMENT

The current *Official Community Plan* contains a Regional Context Statement that describes the OCP's relationship to the existing RGS and identifies how it aligns or supports the RGS. As

described in this report, once the RSS is adopted by the CRD Board, the City of Victoria will have two years to develop and submit a revised Regional Context Statement to the CRD Board for approval. Once accepted by the CRD Board, the City will need to amend the OCP to include the revised Regional Context Statement.

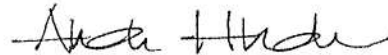
CONCLUSIONS

The draft Regional Sustainability Strategy is a key document to guide decision-making to 2038 on key regional matters such as climate change, population growth, natural resources, community and economic vitality, housing and transportation. The draft RSS has been developed in collaboration with City of Victoria staff resulting in overall policy alignment and consistency with the related policy direction from the City of Victoria *Official Community Plan*. This consistency will help to facilitate a more seamless process for the City of Victoria to align and support the objectives and targets of the RSS once adopted.

Respectfully submitted,




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Andrea Hudson
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Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Jason Johnson

Date:

Mar. 17/15

RB/ljm/lw

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List of Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Draft Regional Sustainability Strategy.