



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of February 15, 2018

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** January 29, 2018
From: Jonathan Tinney, Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development
Subject: **Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 4017 - Referral for Municipal Acceptance**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council advise the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board that the City of Victoria accepts CRD Bylaw No. 4017 to enact the 2018 *Regional Growth Strategy* for the Capital Region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to refer CRD Bylaw No. 4017: *2018 Capital Regional District - Regional Growth Strategy* (RGS) to Council for acceptance or rejection, as part of a 60-day formal referral process. The RGS was recently subject to a non-binding mediation process that was directed by the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and which concluded in December 2017, resulting in a variety of revisions which were agreed upon by all mediation participants, including the City of Victoria representative, and subsequently endorsed by the CRD Board on January 10, 2018.

The 2018 RGS is a strategic planning document that sets out a renewed vision for the future of the region until the year 2038 through policies and objectives including updated population projections, renewed climate action policies, a new section on food systems, new water servicing policies and refined land use designations. New principles reinforce the importance of compact growth in urban communities and further protecting the rural character in rural communities. The 2018 RGS also includes objectives and policies on environment and infrastructure, safe and complete communities, transportation and economic development.

All CRD municipalities must accept the RGS bylaw before it can be adopted. The referral process is being undertaken in accordance with the *Local Government Act* (section 436) which requires all affected municipalities to either accept or reject the proposed bylaw by a resolution of Council within 60 days of receiving formal notice. In addition, section 439(8)(b) of the *Local Government Act* identifies that a local government may not reject an unchanged provision of the RGS that it has previously accepted and any matters that are not accepted through the referral must be resolved through a subsequent binding dispute-resolution process.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to refer CRD Bylaw No. 4017: 2018 *Regional Growth Strategy* to Council for acceptance or rejection, as part of a 60-day formal referral process as requested by the CRD and in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

BACKGROUND

The RGS was referred to all CRD municipal governments and electoral areas in early 2017 as part of a formal referral process, at which time the City of Victoria passed a motion to accept the RGS; however, the CRD received notification from seven municipalities that they would not accept the RGS. As a result, the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development directed the RGS disputed issues to be resolved through a facilitated non-binding mediation process as required by the *Local Government Act* which occurred between June and December 2017. Council appointed Councillor Loveday to participate and represent the City of Victoria throughout the mediation process. The cost for mediation was shared by all participating municipalities (proportional to municipal land values), which resulted in a charge of approximately \$18,800 for the City of Victoria's participation.

Participants in the mediation process included the CRD Board, the seven municipalities who did not to accept the RGS (Central Saanich, Colwood, Esquimalt, Highlands, North Saanich, Saanich and View Royal), the three municipalities who accepted the RGS and voluntarily chose to participate (Metchosin, Sooke and Victoria), and at the request of the CRD Board, the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. In-person mediation sessions were held December 6-7, 2017 with all participants resulting in mutual agreement on all RGS disputed issues (Attachment A).

Subsequently, on January 15, 2018, the City of Victoria received a letter from the CRD (Attachment B) requesting that Council consider the revised version of the 2018 RGS (Attachment C) for acceptance of the changed provisions as part of a 60-day formal referral process, which is required in accordance with section 436 of the *Local Government Act*.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

1. Mediation Process Results

The non-binding mediation process resulted in complete agreement by all participants on solutions to all disputed provisions and the RGS was updated accordingly. Content changes relate to growth management, including population projections, terminology and mapping, water servicing, climate action, food systems, and transportation. A summary of the mediation outcomes is included in this report for reference (Attachment A).

2. Consistency with City of Victoria Official Community Plan

The 2018 RGS provides a range of policy objectives and targets related to seven key areas including: managing and balancing growth, environment and infrastructure, housing and community, transportation, economic development, food systems, and climate change. In general, the topic areas and related policy objectives contained in the revised RGS continue to align with the objectives and policy direction contained in the City of Victoria OCP. These generally include:

- directing focused growth and compact development within strategic areas such as the Urban Core, Town Centres, Urban Villages and Corridors;
- encouraging environmental sustainability within the built and natural environment;

- building complete communities that provide a range of housing options and improve overall affordability;
- continuing to achieve a multi-modal transportation system throughout the region that encourages and supports walking, cycling and transit;
- diversifying and strengthening the local and regional economies;
- planning and integrating comprehensive food systems at various scales; and
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

OPTIONS AND IMPACTS

Option 1:

Accept the proposed CRD Bylaw No. 4017: *2018 Regional Growth Strategy* through a resolution of Council. **(Recommended)**

The Local Government Act requires that all CRD municipalities must accept the RGS bylaw before it can be adopted. This option allows the CRD to receive formal acceptance from the City of Victoria prior to the March 15, 2018 deadline. Acceptance of the revised 2018 RGS would be consistent with previous acceptance of the RGS on January 26, 2017. If all municipalities accept the proposed bylaw, the CRD Board would repeal the 2003 RGS and give third reading to adopt the 2018 RGS.

Option 2:

Reject the proposed CRD Bylaw No. 4017: *2018 Regional Growth Strategy* through a resolution of Council.

If Council rejects the proposed bylaw, Council must specify which provision(s) they reject and the reason(s) for the rejection. Since Council did previously accept the RGS, Council is restricted to only considering those provisions that were the subject of the dispute resolution process and which have been revised. In the event that a municipality rejects the bylaw, the Province will initiate a binding dispute-resolution process to reach acceptance in accordance with requirements of the *Local Government Act*. The CRD has estimated that the overall cost for a potential binding dispute-resolution process could be approximately \$100,000. Participation in this process would result in additional costs for the City which have not been identified in the current *2018 Financial Plan*.

2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan

The review and acceptance of the proposed 2018 RGS bylaw is not specifically identified within the *Strategic Plan*.

Impacts to Financial Plan

The review and acceptance of the proposed 2018 RGS bylaw does not require financial resources and does not impact the *Financial Plan*. The subsequent adoption of the RGS does not have any direct impacts on the *Financial Plan* as the RGS does not commit the City to any specific capital projects; however, if Council rejects the RGS and participates in the subsequent binding dispute-resolution process, the City would incur additional costs which are not identified in the *2018 Financial Plan*.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

In accordance with section 446(2) 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 RGS is adopted. The Regional Context Statement sets out the relationship between the RGS 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 Board, 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 2018 RGS 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.

CONCLUSIONS


The 2018 RGS includes revisions which have been mutually agreed upon by all participants in the recent non-binding dispute resolution process. The RGS has also been recently endorsed by the CRD Board for the purpose of a formal referral process. The revised 2018 RGS continues to align with the strategic objectives of the City of Victoria OCP as they relate to managing growth and development. Staff have also confirmed that there are no issues that would preclude the City from updating the OCP Regional Context Statement if the 2018 RGS is adopted in its current form.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Batallas
Senior Planner
Community Planning Division

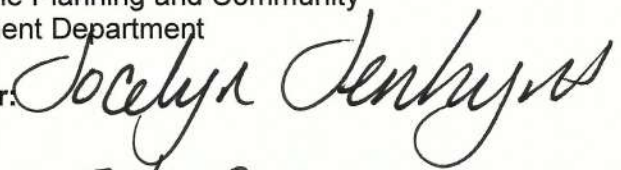
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Jonathan Tinney, Director
Sustainable Planning and Community
Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:



Feb 8, 2018

List of Attachments:

- Attachment A: Summary of RGS Mediation Outcomes
- Attachment B: CRD Letter - Referral of 2018 RGS for Municipal Acceptance
- Attachment C: 2018 Regional Growth Strategy (Revised).