



## **Council Member Motion**

For the Governance and Priorities Committee meeting of Nov 19 2015

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**Date: November 13 2015**

**From: Mayor Helps and Councillor Lucas**

**Subject: New Regional Economic Development Organization**

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### **Summary**

In January of 2015, the 13 mayors of the region gathered informally for lunch to discuss regional priorities. The initial gathering was a success and the mayors decided to gather again. At the second meeting, in April, the mayors identified regional economic development – building on the work each municipality is doing locally – as a priority. In the summer of 2015 the mayors gathered again, this time with Chambers of Commerce from across the region as well as the Greater Victoria Development Agency. At that time the mayors agreed that the Greater Victoria Development Agency would undertake a brief study to develop a new framework for regional economic development.

In September, the mayors gathered again, with representatives from Chambers of Commerce across the region. At that gathering, the Greater Victoria Development Agency presented the attached report. Many of the mayors in attendance expressed interest in presenting the findings and proposal to members of our councils, our First Nations partners, post secondary institutions, and interested potential private sector funders. To this end, the Mayor's Summit on the Economy was held, with leadership from the Greater Victoria Development Agency, on Saturday November 7<sup>th</sup> at Camosun College. Present at that event were many mayors and councillors from across the region, Chief Andy Thomas of the Esquimalt Nation, all three post secondary institutions, represented by their presidents, and representatives from a number of sector organizations as well as the private sector.

The next critical step identified at the November 7<sup>th</sup> meeting was for mayors and councils across the region to consider the attached report and accompanying motion. The new entity will be formed if a majority of municipal councils come to the table in a spirit of partnership. At the time of writing this report View Royal and Langford have both signed on.

In summary, the City of Victoria's strategic plan identifies Create Prosperity Through Economic Development as a strategic objective. As part of this objective, the City of Victoria is focusing on local economic development through the initiatives identified in *Making Victoria: Unleashing Potential*, which are meant to make it easier, quicker, and more fulfilling to open, expand, or invest in a business in the City of Victoria. At the same time, the objective, Create Prosperity Through Economic Development, identifies regional economic development as an important element of local economic development.

The City of Victoria has an opportunity to join its partners across the region to take a historical step together to create a new regional entity for economic development to grow sustainable prosperity and well-being in the region, for the long term.

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## Recommendations

That Council:

1. Support in principle the proposed Regional Strategy and Model for Economic Development in South Vancouver Island provided that a majority of municipalities (7/13 at a minimum) participate in the new Regional Strategy and Model for Economic Development in South Vancouver Island; and
2. Allocate \$129,545 from the unspent portion of the 2015 budget approved allocation for economic development for the purposes of creating a new regional economic development organization, subject to municipal inclusion on the Funding Partner's Council as laid out in the attached Report and subject to the creation of the new entity;
3. Appoint Mayor Helps as a designate to sit as a voluntary member of the Funding Partner's Council to represent the City of Victoria for an initial term of three years and appoint Councillor Lucas as alternate.

**Respectfully Submitted,**



Mayor Helps



Councillor Lucas

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