

Report to Council



Date: March 13, 2017
File: 0710-40
To: City Manager
From: Ross Soward, Planner Specialist
Subject: Regional Growth Strategy: Draft Priority Projects Plan

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives the report from the Planner Specialist, dated March 13, 2017 regarding the Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan.

Purpose:

To present the Draft Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Priority Projects Plan to Council for information purposes and to build understanding of the identified projects for the next five years.

Background:

The Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted by Council on May 12th 2014 as per Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*. The RGS is a long-range planning tool to help the Regional District and member municipalities plan a coordinated future. This joint-planning approach recognizes the need to address cross boundary issues that cannot be addressed by one local government (e.g. air quality, environmental management, growth management etc).

The regional vision from the RGS is to promote growth that is economically, environmentally, and socially healthy over a twenty-year time horizon. The RGS also identifies nine "issue areas" as the key policy themes: Climate, Economy, Governance, Ecosystems, Health, Food, Transportation, Housing, Water, and Land.

To advance the goals of the RGS, senior staff from the regional and municipal planning departments, first nation, and agencies with an interest in regional planning formed the RGS steering committee. In accordance with direction in the RGS, the committee began meeting in 2016 to work on a five-year action plan that would serve as the framework for RGS implementation.

In September 2016, the RDCO retained the services of *EcoPlan International Inc.* to work with the RDCO staff and the RGS steering committee to create the RGS Priority Projects Plan (5-year action plan) to

support the implementation of the RGS. The Priority Projects Plan will highlight regional projects and actions that fulfill policies of the RGS with a focus on areas that remain outstanding or warrant additional attention from a regional perspective.

The draft Priority Projects Plan (Attachment A) contains 9 projects supporting over 25 policies, across 8 issue areas of the RGS. The projects were selected based on four key criteria:

- Support regional collaboration for shared needs and goals, and with an eye to realizing efficiencies over conducting the work at the local level.
- Encourage actions that promote a regional cross-boundary approach.
- Prioritize projects that build on existing momentum and external funding opportunities.
- Prioritize projects that reflect RGS issue areas and RGS statutory requirements (monitoring and review)

Fiver-Year Action Plan Summary and Timeline (From Regional Priority Projects Plan)

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1	Regional Flood Management Plan: Phases 1,2 and 3						15
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The five-year action plan timeline present above is understood to be flexible. There may be external funding opportunities or community issues that will inform re-prioritization. Also, the individual actions from the Priority Projects Plan will require regional board endorsement to receive final budget approval. The descriptions below provide additional context as to the description and rationale of some of several key projects from the Plan.

Select Project Descriptions

- **Regional Floodplain Management Plan: Phase 1,2 and 3**
The RDCO has outlined a three-phase Regional Floodplain Management Framework (RFMP) with the objective of developing a better understanding of flood risk in order to reduce and mitigate damage and impacts from future floods. Completed in June of 2016, the first phase of the management plan identified and prioritized the criteria for further study of flood hazard areas. Continuing work on the RFMP has been identified as a high priority and is scheduled to proceed through to 2019.
- **Regional Planning Labs**
A Regional Planning Lab would be a forum for planners and other professionals from around the region to meet (once or several times over a series of meetings) to work through difficult technical challenges related to a specific planning topic, or the production of regionally significant projects. The lab would also improve the potential for collaboration and regional consistency. The topics of focus would be established by the RGS Steering Committee (with input from their respective staff).

- **Regional Housing Strategy**

The regional nature of the housing markets, requires taking a regional approach to addressing challenges around affordability. A collaborative approach would allow the allocation of resources to specific aspects of the housing spectrum in the areas of highest need in the regional context. Different activities in different communities may be appropriate to better satisfy regional needs. But a regional strategy can help ensure that individuals communities are not working at cross-purposes, or that local initiatives are not producing unintended consequences at the regional level.

- **Regional Growth Strategy Five-year Review**

2019 will mark five years since the RGS was adopted and therefore, as mandated under the *Local Government Act (section 452)*, the Regional Board will be asked whether or not a more comprehensive review, identifying possible amendments (minor or standard), of the RGS is warranted. This preliminary review will be a high-level review by staff with input from affected agencies, member municipalities, First Nations, and other groups listed in *LGA, Section 434(2)*.

Several of the actions have a strong connection to work being undertaken in the coming years by the City of Kelowna. For example, the City of Kelowna and the Regional District have both identified housing strategies, but the regional housing strategy will use a cross-boundary approach investigating how municipalities can coordinate and collaborate on actions to work toward collective goals. In contrast, the City's Healthy Housing Strategy will focus on local actions and local policy responses. City staff will work closely with the Regional District staff to share key outcomes of the Healthy Housing Strategy that may impact the Regional Housing Strategy. Moving forward, there will likely be instances where regional projects will impact the direction of City of Kelowna policies and plans. In such instances, collaborating at a regional level will ensure the actions from regional projects add value to municipal planning work.

Next Steps & Conclusion

Moving forward, the draft Priority Projects Plan will be shared with all municipal councils in March. After the council presentations are completed the RGS Steering Committee will review feedback received and provide final direction to *EcoPlan International* as to revisions required to finalize the Priority Projects Plan. The Plan will be presented to the Regional District Board for final approval in the early summer 2017.

Overall, the Priority Projects Plan is an important step in working toward the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy. More importantly, the Priority Projects Plan and associated projects also offer an opportunity to apply a joint-planning or regional planning approach to on the ground projects. These projects will provide an opportunity to strengthen the regional planning approach across all actors in the CORD in advance of the upcoming RGS review.

Internal Circulation:

Divisional Director, Community Planning and Real Estate
Manager, Long Range Policy and Planning
Department Manager, Community Planning

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Local Government Act, Section 428. (1), 429 (1), (2)

Existing Policy:

Official Community Plan, Objective 2.1 Deliver sustainable services.

Inter-municipal Co-operation: Investigate opportunities and implement actions to efficiently plan and deliver programs and services with the Regional District.

Submitted by:

Ross Soward, Planner Specialist

Approved for inclusion:



James Moore, Manager of Long Range Policy & Planning

cc:

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