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**TO:** Neil Connelly  
General Manager, Community Services

**DATE:** October 29, 2004

**FROM:** Christina Thomas  
Senior Planner, Community Services

**FILE:** 6780 30 50 GRBU

**SUBJECT: GREEN BUILDINGS PROJECT**

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to consider terms of reference for a project to promote green building in the region.

### BACKGROUND

Terms of Reference for a project to promote green building in the region are provided (*see Attachment 1*) as directed at the September 28, 2004 Board meeting.

The Board's request was precipitated by its consideration of the Workshop Report for the April 3, 2004 Sustainability Workshop<sup>1</sup>, and the Regional Growth Monitoring Advisory Committee recommendation that a green building program be implemented as one means of taking immediate action to help accelerate progress towards regional sustainability. Following the RGMAC recommendation, the Board requested a report about green buildings on July 13, 2004 and received the report on September 28, 2004.

The purpose of the Green Building Project is to promote green building practices in the Regional District of Nanaimo. The objectives of this project are for the RDN to become informed about green building theory and practice, and for it to make a decision regarding the advancement of future phases of the Project based on its greater understanding of the topic achieved through the Project deliverables.

The Green Building Project includes three deliverables, to be completed in the Spring and Summer of 2005, as described below:

**Identify Green Building Program Possibilities / Establish Green Building Program Foundation**

Regional District of Nanaimo staff will obtain information about other local government green building programs for the purpose of helping the Regional District make a more informed decision about its possible future role related to green buildings.

Regional District of Nanaimo staff will establish contacts and consult with other local government staff with recognized green building programs to:

- gain an understanding of local government involvement in green building programs (existing programs, future plans),

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<sup>1</sup> The Sustainability Workshop was conducted as a part of the State of Sustainability Project that the Regional District is currently undertaking in conjunction with the Regional Growth Monitoring Advisory Committee to assess the region's progress towards sustainability, to make residents aware of the region's progress towards sustainability and to provide more and better opportunities to involve residents of the region in that assessment.

- gain an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of local government green building programs;
- gain an understanding of local government's experience with green building programs;
- identify possible elements of a green building program for the RDN.

It is anticipated that staff from the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the City of Vancouver, the City of Richmond and the City of White Rock will be contacted. Where deemed appropriate, staff from the City of Seattle and City of Portland may also be contacted. Consulting resources may also be retained to provide advice regarding the most appropriate roles for local government in green building advancement.

A report will be produced to document the information gained.

**Green Building Educational Tour**

Regional District of Nanaimo staff will organize and lead a two to three day tour of nearby green buildings for 4 to 8 representatives of the Board to gain a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges of building green.

It is anticipated that the tour will include visits to LEED<sup>2</sup> certified buildings in Vancouver, White Rock, and Victoria, and other buildings in these municipalities that are widely recognized to be green.

It is anticipated that the tour will include meetings with key people involved in the design, construction and operation of the green buildings. Consulting resources may be retained to support staff in tour development and implementation.

**Terms of Reference for Future Phase of Green Building Project**

Using the information gained from the above two components, Regional District of Nanaimo staff will develop terms of reference for the Board's consideration regarding future phases of the Green Building Project.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. To approve the Green Building Project Terms of Reference.
2. To request the Green Building Project Terms of Reference be amended to address a specific identified issue, and be forwarded to the Board for reconsideration.
3. To not approve the Green Building Project Terms of Reference.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) would need to be added to the Regional Growth Management Services 2005 budget, at the Board's direction. There are a wide variety of potential funding sources for green building programs and initiatives that the Regional District could seek to supplement possible future phases of the Project, such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Municipal Funds Program and the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services Smart Development Partnerships Program.

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<sup>2</sup> Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

A green building program would help make the region more sustainable, the overall purpose of the Regional Growth Strategy. It would provide a direct contribution towards the achievement of the Regional Growth Strategy environmental protection goal, which is to protect the environment and minimize ecological damage related to growth and development.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

A green building program would help address environmental problems caused by poor building performance. It would result in the construction of buildings that are more environmentally compatible because they require less resources to construct, operate and maintain, and because they result in fewer harmful emissions to the environment. A green building program would result in less solid waste disposal at the regional landfill and contribute towards the achievement of the Regional District's Solid Waste Management Plan objective of 'zero waste' because green buildings typically involve the reuse of existing materials. A green building program would also result in reduced consumption of potable water and reduced generation of liquid waste because green buildings typically include more efficient appliances and infrastructure.

## **SUMMARY**

Terms of Reference for a Green Buildings Project are provided (*see Attachment 1*) as requested at the September 28, 2004 Board meeting. Activities proposed as a part of the Project include research and communications with other local governments to identify green building program possibilities and establish a foundation for a green building program, an educational green building tour for representatives of the Board, and the development of terms of reference for a future phase of the Project.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That Terms of Reference for a Green Buildings Project be approved, and forwarded for consideration as part of the 2005 annual budget process.

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Report Writer

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General Manager Concurrence

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