
TO: Paul Thompson
Manager, Long Range Planning

DATE: October 30, 2015

FROM: Courtney Simpson
Senior Planner

MEETING: COW - November 10, 2015

FILE: 6480 00 EAH

SUBJECT: Electoral Area H Official Community Plan Review

RECOMMENDATION

That the Electoral Area H Official Community Plan Review Project be initiated through endorsement of the Terms of Reference and Engagement Plan as attached.

PURPOSE

To present the Terms of Reference (Attachment 1) and Engagement Plan (Attachment 2) for the Electoral Area H Official Community Plan Review for endorsement.

BACKGROUND

An Official Community Plan (OCP) describes a long-term vision for the future of a community and a course of action to achieve it. The course of action is described in objectives and policies to guide land use, servicing, and physical, social and economic changes in the community over the long term. An OCP has legal status which requires that all development and use of land be consistent with the policies of the Plan. Implementing the vision of the OCP occurs through zoning and other detailed development-related tools.

The current Electoral Area H OCP (Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area H Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1335, 2003) was adopted in 2004, and in 2010 the Bowser Village Plan was adopted as part of this bylaw. These two plans were created through extensive public engagement, with many community members volunteering their time to provide input and to help achieve a unified community vision.

In the 11 years since the OCP was adopted, the pace of development has been slower than anticipated and notable changes have occurred in the area including: establishment of the VIU Centre of Shellfish Research in Deep Bay, expansion of Deep Bay Harbour, changes to provincial legislation such as the *Riparian Areas Regulation*, allowance for secondary suites, and introduction of building inspection.

At the request of the Area Director, and in consideration of changes in the community over the past decade, the 2015 RDN Work Plan identifies a scoping and background exercise for an Electoral Area H OCP Review. The scoping has been completed, and the resulting Terms of Reference and Engagement Plan are attached to this staff report for endorsement. Background work is underway and a full

Background Report is on track for completion by the end of 2015. Funding is allocated in 2016 for professional studies and public engagement for the project. The OCP review will be structured around a list of topic areas and will recognize that many of the objectives and policies are still relevant, rather than build a new OCP from a blank slate. The project is designed to be completed over a period of 18 months.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Initiate the Electoral Area H Official Community Plan Review project by endorsing the Terms of Reference and Engagement Plan as attached.
2. Provide alternate direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget for this project is \$127,000 with the majority of expenditures occurring in the 2016 calendar year. The Long Range Planning budget is contributing \$67,000, and an additional \$60,000 has been allocated from the Community Works Fund for background studies. One full-time staff equivalent and mapping resources will be assigned to the project through to completion.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Development of OCPs is one of the ways in which the RDN fulfills its mission, as stated in the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan. The objectives and policies in an OCP address the “self-sufficiency” and “economic viability” priorities of the Strategic Plan, and the process of reviewing an OCP addresses the “regional collaboration” and “monitoring and communication” priorities. Many of the Strategic Plan’s goals and actions can be advanced through OCP policies such as in the areas of sustainability and community resilience, increasing affordable, adaptable housing, improving community self-sufficiency, and recognizing agriculture and aquaculture as important contributors to the region.

The Terms of Reference for this project will be reviewed against the new strategic plan currently under development, and any necessary adjustments will be made. Specific goals and actions from the new strategic plan can be advanced through revised OCP objectives and policies.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

The attached Engagement Plan was developed pursuant to the RDN “Coordinated Public Consultation/Community Framework” which states the RDN’s commitment to on-going and meaningful public consultation. The Engagement Plan includes a series of general community meetings and smaller community working group meetings, and a variety of other print, online and live communication and engagement strategies.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

First Nations will be engaged on an early and ongoing basis, as outlined in the Engagement Plan. Adjacent regional districts, the Town of Qualicum Beach, and a number of federal and provincial ministries and agencies will be consulted during the project.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

Pursuant to the 2015 Work Plan, scoping and background work for a review of the Electoral Area H OCP is underway, and a Terms of Reference and Engagement Plan for the project are presented to the Board through this staff report. The OCP review will respond to changes in the community that have occurred in the decade since the current OCP was adopted, and will review the community's vision for the future and course of action to achieve it. Once the project is initiated by the Board, a full Background Report will be completed, and community engagement will begin in early 2016. The majority of the project will be undertaken in 2016, with the public hearing and bylaw adoption process completing in 2017.

Report Writer

General Manager Concurrence

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