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October 22, 2024

Mayor and Council
Municipality of North Cowichan
7030 Trans-Canada Highway
DUNCAN BC V9L 6A1

via email: council@northcowichan.ca

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: Regional Growth Strategy Development

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board renewed its Corporate Strategic Plan in 2023 which includes objective #2 “*To serve, strengthen, and connect Cowichan communities through collaborative governance.*” Actions nested within this objective include recommitting to Cowichan 2050, learning more about Regional Growth Strategies and exploring options for re-establishment of a Regional Planning Function. The Board subsequently sought input from municipal councils on the potential to establish a regional planning service and participated in a workshop focused on regional growth strategies. The Board has since updated its Strategic Plan to include, “*Work collaboratively with member municipalities and First Nations towards the development of a Regional Growth Strategy*” and directed staff to develop terms of reference for a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS).

On October 9, 2024, a staff report was provided to Committee of the Whole, which included draft terms of reference for an RGS and RGS Steering Committee. The Board subsequently resolved:

“That the Staff Report to Committee of the Whole of October 9, 2024, on the topic of Regional Growth Strategy be referred to the City of Duncan, Municipality of North Cowichan, Town of Ladysmith, Town of Lake Cowichan and Electoral Area Services Committee Directors and that the municipalities be asked to:

- a. Appoint a representative to the Regional Growth Strategy Steering Committee;*
- b. Consider potential additional matters in the development of a Regional Growth Strategy, including but not limited to:*
 - i. Potential municipal incorporation and boundary changes to accommodate future growth and servicing objectives;*
 - ii. The future of the Island Rail Corridor and its connectivity with adjacent regional districts; and*
 - iii. Cooperation with the Regional District of Nanaimo on future growth of lands in the vicinity of the Nanaimo Airport and Cassidy Aquifer.”*

The CVRD Board recognizes that development of an RGS will require meaningful engagement with municipalities, First Nations and members of the public, and seeks to undertake this process in the spirit of collaboration and with the intent to benefit all communities within the region.

\$500,000 funding has been allocated to support RGS development including \$250,000 from the CVRD Board (Growing Communities Fund) and \$250,000 from the Province of BC, and no tax requisition increase is anticipated in 2025.

At this time, the CVRD Board requests that each municipal council appoint a staff representative to the RGS Steering Committee and consider any potential additional matters that could be explored through the development of an RGS, including those matters identified in the foregoing resolution. The RGS Steering Committee should convene and consider RGS terms of reference (and any potential additional matters) to inform a further report to the CVRD Board, prior to the Board considering a formal resolution to initiate an RGS.

Further details about proposed RGS development are available in the Staff Report, attached for your reference. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to arrange a meeting, please do not hesitate to contact Ann Kjerulf, General Manager, Land Use Services via email ann.kjerulf@cvrd.bc.ca.

The CVRD respectfully requests responses before November 29, 2024.

Sincerely,



Kate Segall
Vice Chair

Attachments

KS/AK/sb

pc: CVRD Board of Directors
Danielle Myles Wilson, Chief Administrative Officer
Ann Kjerulf, General Manager, Land Use Services Department