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## REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023

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**SUBJECT**     **City of Victoria Regional Context Statement**

### **ISSUE SUMMARY**

To review the City of Victoria' amended regional context statement (RCS) in relation to the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Bylaw (Bylaw No. 4017).

### **BACKGROUND**

On March 14, 2018, the CRD Board adopted the RGS (Bylaw No. 4017). On April 14, 2021, the CRD Board amended the RGS with updated population projections (Bylaw No. 4328).

An RCS, adopted within a local government's Official Community Plan (OCP), relates OCP provisions to the RGS. Per section 446 of the *Local Government Act* (the *Act*), an OCP in a local government to which an RGS applies must include an accepted RCS. The *Act* stipulates that upon receipt of a proposed RCS, the CRD Board must respond by resolution within 120 days to the municipal council to indicate whether or not it accepts the RCS. The Board is deemed to have accepted the RCS if it does not respond within the 120-day period.

On April 11, 2018, the CRD Board approved a framework to guide the evaluation of regional context statements.

On June 15, 2023, the City of Victoria submitted an amended RCS for Board acceptance (see Appendix A). The RCS was prepared to reflect the content of amendments to the City of Victoria OCP in relation to the 2018 RGS. The CRD Board has until October 13, 2023, to review and respond to the City of Victoria RCS. The CRD approved the City of Victoria's previous RCS on March 11, 2020.

Regional and Strategic Planning staff have evaluated the City of Victoria's amended RCS in accordance with the Board-approved "Regional Context Statement Framework". This framework identifies three criteria against which staff should evaluate an RCS:

- 1) **All relevant content is included:** The RCS addresses all RGS content relevant to the OCP. Content that is not applicable in the context of the OCP should be identified as "not applicable".
- 2) **Clearly articulates relevant content:** The RCS provides a sufficient level of detail to convey how the specific OCP content relates to the RGS.
- 3) **Plan to be consistent over time:** The RCS identifies how the OCP will become consistent with the RGS over time, if content is not immediately consistent.

Appendix B presents a summary of the evaluation.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

#### *Alternative 1*

That the City of Victoria's amended regional context statement be considered in relation to the 2018 Regional Growth Strategy (Bylaw No. 4017) and be accepted in accordance with the requirements of section 448 of the *Local Government Act*.

*Alternative 2*

That the City of Victoria's amended regional context statement be considered in relation to the 2018 Regional Growth Strategy (Bylaw No. 4017) and not be accepted in accordance with the requirements of section 448 of the *Local Government Act*.

*Alternative 3*

That the City of Victoria Regional Context Statement Report be referred back to staff for additional information based on CRD Board direction.

**IMPLICATIONS**

*Intergovernmental Implications*

Board acceptance of the RCS is a key RGS implementation tool as the context statement relates a local government's OCP to the RGS. The OCP provides policies that guide decisions related to land use, infrastructure, mobility, housing, parks and other content under the authority of a local government. The City of Victoria has submitted an amended RCS to fulfill its statutory obligation to have an accepted RCS that demonstrates the relationship of its amended OCP to the RGS. An accepted RCS is necessary in order for the City of Victoria to adopt its OCP amendments.

*Regional Growth Strategy Implications*

The City of Victoria's amended RCS demonstrates a strong relationship to the RGS that will work toward achieving the RGS vision and objectives, based on staff's analysis against the RCS evaluation criteria. The RCS fully captures all relevant OCP content (*criteria #1*) and generally identifies how the OCP relates to the RGS (*criteria #2*). The RCS notes policy areas where the OCP will become consistent with the RGS over time as additional planning work is undertaken (*criteria #3*).

As outlined in Appendix B, the RCS addresses population projections and the vision and objectives for growth management, environment and infrastructure, housing and community, transportation, economic development, food systems and climate action. The City of Victoria has defined three urban typologies and identified where future growth will be directed: urban core (50% of growth), town centres and large urban villages (40% of growth), and the remainder of the city (10% of growth). The neighbourhood typologies provide direction for built form, resulting in a clear expression of the community's vision for the future. In doing so, the RCS and OCP connect policy with outcomes for liveable, complete communities that will accommodate future growth. This approach is a strong example for RCS and OCP updates across the region. These areas are aligned with the RGS growth management plan described in RGS Maps 3a and 3b.

*Environmental & Climate Implications*

The CRD Climate Action Strategy identifies sustainable land use, planning and preparedness as an important goal area to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. As shown in Appendix B, the City of Victoria RCS demonstrates a strong relationship to RGS environmental and climate objectives by referencing OCP policies that prioritize compact development, adopt energy efficiency standards for building performance and municipal infrastructure, transportation policies that support transit and active transportation options, policies focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% before 2050, the goal of reaching 100% renewable energy by 2050, and integrating climate action and adaptation into local government decision-making.

*Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities*

Reviewing RCSs for consistency addresses the Community Need for planning in the 2023-2026 CRD Corporate Plan, specifically goal 8a: Manage Growth. RCS review is the primary means through which the CRD ensures alignment of plans throughout the region, a core activity for managing growth.

*Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The City of Victoria's RCS is aligned with existing CRD plans and strategies that detail and enact the seven primary objectives of the RGS.

**CONCLUSION**

Provincial legislation requires that an OCP contain an accepted RCS. Board acceptance of the RCS is a key tool for RGS implementation. Staff have reviewed the City of Victoria's amended RCS in accordance with the Board-approved evaluation framework. This RCS demonstrates a strong relationship to the RGS and will work toward achieving the RGS vision and objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the City of Victoria's amended regional context statement be considered in relation to the 2018 Regional Growth Strategy (Bylaw No. 4017) and be accepted in accordance with the requirements of section 448 of the *Local Government Act*.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

- Appendix A: City of Victoria Regional Context Statement (2023)
- Appendix B: Regional Context Statement Evaluation Table