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REPORT TO TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2022

SUBJECT Update on Transportation Priorities

ISSUE SUMMARY

To report back on progress made towards advancing the regional transportation priorities.

BACKGROUND

On May 12, 2021, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board confirmed regional transportation priorities and directed staff to develop implementation strategies for each. These priorities seek to advance regional objectives to reduce congestion, improve mode share and take action on climate change. The approved priorities are as follows:

Advocacy:

- Bus mass transit (RapidBus)
- Multi-modal and safe highways
- Salt Spring Island (SSI)/Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) connectivity
- General Transit
- E&N corridor (protection, maintenance and upgrades)
- Westshore passenger ferry feasibility

Action:

- Active Transportation
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- Safety policy
- Strengthening land use
- Parking and access upgrades

Pivot:

- Governance (long-term authorities)
- Non-bus mass transit (light rail, passenger ferry)

On July 14, 2021, the CRD Board directed staff to advance advocacy and implementation actions developed for each of the priorities, including the creation of a Regional Transportation Working Group. In doing so, the Board provided a clear mandate to develop a region-wide approach to TDM and safety policy, as well as to take regional action on the creation of a connected and consistent regional trail network.

On November 20, 2021, the CRD Board approved the terms of reference for the Regional Transportation Working Group.

Progress and Priority Work Streams

Appendix A provides a snapshot of progress towards each of the regional transportation priorities. The work streams described below explain how staff are advancing the priorities.

1. Transportation Working Group

Reporting through the Transportation Committee, the Transportation Working Group is composed of senior staff from the CRD, municipalities, electoral areas and agency partners to advise on regional transportation matters requiring coordination. The group had its first meeting in December 2021 and met again in January and March 2022. The group is scheduled to meet every two months. The initial work program has focused on preparing a baseline of existing

targets, planning, program and infrastructure projects underway in the areas of TDM, safety policy and active travel. Working from these baselines, the group has scoped project deliverables to advance regional approaches to TDM, safety policy and creation of a connected and consistent regional trail network. See below and in Appendix A for more detail.

2. Baseline Targets, Planning, Program and Infrastructure Projects

Transportation working group partners provided baseline information related to targets, priorities, planning, program and infrastructure for each of the three work program areas.

Overall, the baseline confirms that all partners are working towards regional objectives. Additionally, the baseline confirms that partners have incorporated the regional multi-modal transportation network into their respective local planning documents, a priority action in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Key findings from the baseline include:

- a. Partners are advancing transportation projects and policies as both transportation and climate change initiatives, demonstrating a strong interrelationship between climate change and transportation across the region.
- b. While partners have put in place oversight frameworks to monitor progress, there is no consistent approach to how partners set, monitor and report on targets. Some partners focus on mode share, others focus on specific climate targets such as Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reductions and some remain silent.
- c. Partners continue to advance infrastructure delivery priorities, with significant level of effort focused on engineering projects. Partners reported that depending on the item, resources are not always available to develop and deliver monitoring programs, education, engagement and approaches to advance policy, guidelines or behaviour change programs.

The baseline suggests that regional effort would be best spent to support monitoring, education and engagement. In addition, there is an opportunity to work in partnership with municipalities who are developing policy frameworks and testing implementation actions. By playing a convening role, the CRD can respond through information sharing and capacity building so that a common approach can be applied in local contexts around the region. The work streams described below provide more information.

3. Active Transportation – CRD Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan

Since the CRD Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP) was completed in 2011, the vast majority of partners have drafted local active transportation plans and/or comprehensive transportation plans. These plans now align to, or supersede, many sections of the PCMP by identifying preferred alignments for active transportation routes, setting out facility types and in many cases surpassing PCMP aspirations. For example, the Victoria Regional Transit Commission has moved from a 12% mode share target to a 15% mode share target. This change effectively moves the regional mode share target to 45% up from 42%. Another example are the PCMP design guidelines, which are now surpassed by the 2019 BC Active Transportation (BCAT) Design Guide and supplemental BC Active Transportation and Transit Oriented Development Design Guide.

The working group discussed the need to update the PCMP's planned cycling network based on the new plans. Once the network has been updated, the working group will prepare a key project list, implementation sequence and supportive actions to advance network completion. Supportive actions could include matters such as a shared approach for trail closures, detours and trail crossings.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, in partnership with the CRD, applied to the Federal Active Travel Fund for the Selkirk Trestle upgrade and Galloping Goose Widening project. If successful, this project will undertake needed refurbishment of the Selkirk Trestle and leverage the provincial contribution for the refurbishment to advance Phase 1 of the Galloping Goose widening, from Selkirk to the Switch Bridge. Considerable investment to maintain critical regional trail infrastructure is needed from the Province in order to continue to operate the regional trail network. The CRD provided letters of support to four other municipal applications to the fund, including expansion of AAA bike lanes in Victoria along Fort Street, extension and enhancements of bike lanes in Saanich on Shelbourne Street, implementation of Esquimalt's active transportation corridor on Tillicum Road and pedestrian and transit improvements in Colwood.

4. Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

The CRD currently provides active travel planning to partner municipalities and schools across the four school districts (SD) through its Ready Step Roll initiative. This planning initiative provides education and engagement to support active travel choices to/from school – a key trip generator for families across the region. SD62 has partnered closely with the initiative and are applying lessons learned on a district-wide basis at existing and new schools. Working at the SD level helps expand the reach of the initiative from a TDM perspective.

The working group has indicated there is value in the consistent regional approach to active school travel planning. The group expressed interest in how a scaled-up application to institutional and commercial trip generators could support TDM efforts. CRD staff have initiated discussions with Canadian Forces Base-Esquimalt to develop and implement a pilot Workplace Travel Planning initiative to encourage more staff to choose sustainable transportation. This will be done in partnership with municipalities, agencies and First Nations. Staff will report back to the working group with findings for further discussion on coordination and next steps.

5. Safety Policy, Education and Engagement

The CRD Traffic Safety Commission (TSC) is working with its many partners to focus on distracted and impaired driving this quarter. This includes the development of a youth focused new social media and television campaign targeted at recognizing and mitigating distraction from passengers. This campaign has been designed by youth/for youth as part of a collaborative partnership between the TSC and the University of Victoria.

The TSC's education and engagement efforts are complemented by a Let's Get Visible safety campaign, originally developed for Ready Step Roll schools and scaled to a regional application. Working in collaboration with CRD staff, the TSC, local police, Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) and the University of Victoria, the campaign aims to provide people with safety tools and educate vulnerable users about the importance of being visible when moving throughout the region. Staff have undertaken two very successful engagement campaigns at the University of Victoria and on the Galloping Goose by the Selkirk Trestle. Each campaign saw interaction with approximately 500 to 600 individual users.

From a policy perspective, municipalities with vision zero policies are preparing action plans to test implementation approaches. Pending outcomes, these municipalities will report back to the working group with findings for further discussion on coordination and next steps.

6. Advocacy

When developing implementation strategies, staff identified that advocacy would be most effective if the region speaks with one voice to secure senior government investment in regional priorities and accelerate delivery of high quality transit service. Staff noted that such advocacy needs to happen through multiple channels, including at the elected official, executive and senior staff levels.

To date, the Board Chair and Vice-Chair have met twice with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to discuss general transit investments, accelerate the implementation of RapidBus, increase funding for the regional trail network, enhance transit and active travel facilities in highway projects, provide funding for a West Shore passenger ferry feasibility study, plan for the long term use of the E&N rail corridor and investigate values-based governance models based on CRD context. CRD staff have raised these items, as well as connectivity with Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands, with ministry and agency colleagues at both the executive and staff levels.

The Minister has signalled support for improvements to transit and active travel, with projects to be funded and implemented as recommended in the South Island Transportation Strategy. The Minister has identified that transit recovery and RapidBus expansion is the current provincial priority over investments in long-term transportation alternatives. The Minister is open to joint advocacy to the federal government about long-term plans for the E&N rail corridor. Staff will continue the current advocacy approach, providing support to the Chair and Vice-Chair in meetings with the Minister and working with executive and senior staff as appropriate.

7. Equity in Transportation

On March 9, 2022 the CRD Board directed staff to draft an equity lens that could be applied to transportation priority implementation, advocacy and future planning. The Board also directed staff to undertake a pilot study to test the application of an equity lens by reviewing gender imbalance in active transportation. Staff are undertaking this work in partnership with the Community Social Planning Council (CSPC).

To date, staff have shared quantitative data on ridership and Capital Bike's equity strategy with the CSPC, and are preparing the project charter. The CSPC has proposed research methodology to gather input and develop possible solutions based on the lived experiences of women using CRD regional trails. This work will inform two key components in the development of the equity lens: 1) applicability of qualitative data gathering methodology; and, 2) preliminary frameworks for policy and options development. Once the project charter is finalized, the CSPC will begin gathering data. The working group will be kept informed of progress and is interested in project outcomes for future discussion and potential coordination.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Implications

Quantifying GHG emissions savings from transportation projects continues to be an important work stream for climate action staff across the region. Staff are working with the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich to develop a methodology to use Vehicle Kilometers Travelled (VKT) for reporting and monitoring GHG emissions. The CRD Origin and Destination Household Travel Survey (O&D) will be administered in fall 2022, with findings about mode share prepared for early 2024. In addition to the above, staff continue to explore options for additional climate and transportation performance reporting.

Intergovernmental Implications

The regional transportation priorities and municipal transportation plans reflect the diverse needs of the region's partners; be it rural, semi-rural, urban, suburban or remote. As the CRD explores options for regional approaches to TDM, safety policy and a connected and consistent regional trail network, a guiding principle to the work is ensuring such approaches are robust enough to achieve common goals while being applicable to different local contexts around the region.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

Regional, municipal, electoral area and partner agency action on regional transportation priorities supports Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) implementation. As noted in the 2021 RGS Indicator Report, ongoing effort is needed from municipalities and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area to direct new dwelling unit development to locations that are well served by active travel and transit to most quickly and efficiently reduce GHG emissions.

Service Delivery Implications

The CRD is responsible for regional transportation planning, regional trails and transit and transportation on Salt Spring Island. Through the TSC the CRD also takes a leading role in transportation safety education. The priority work streams described above advance service delivery at pace, and will be ongoing into the next Board term.

Financial Implications

The identified work to advance the transportation priorities is being done within the existing core budget.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

Board Priority Initiative 1(a) identifies working in partnership to deliver an effective multi-modal transportation system as a priority for the 2019-2022 Board term. Implementation of the regional transportation priorities through the Regional Transportation Working Group and the above work streams operationalizes this priority into core service delivery. As noted above, this work will be ongoing into the next Board term.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

Advancing the regional transportation priorities aligns to the RGS, Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Trails Management Plan.

CONCLUSION

Transportation is a key priority for the CRD Board and residents of the region. Transportation's impact on affordability, climate change and general livability is well documented. The CRD is working with municipal, electoral area and agency partners to collaboratively advance its regional transportation priorities through a variety of work streams. This partnership approach enables the CRD to focus attention on areas where it can efficiently make the most impact within its existing service mandate. Staff have developed work plans to ensure these priority actions continue to advance, with progress reported in Appendix A Regional Transportation Priorities Tracking Table. The priority work streams advance service delivery at pace, and will carry forward into the next Board term.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Regional Transportation Priority Tracking Table