



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO PLANNING AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023

SUBJECT **Union of BC Municipalities Complete Communities Program – Growth and Mobility Study**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To seek a Capital Regional District (CRD) Board resolution for a grant application to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Complete Communities program.

BACKGROUND

The BC Ministry of Housing and UBCM has announced a \$10 million Complete Communities Program to support communities to undertake studies that will inform land use decision-making. The Complete Communities Program Guide identifies four lenses by which to assess community completeness: housing, transportation, daily needs, and infrastructure. To be eligible for funding, applicants must select a minimum of three of the four lenses. Regional Districts are eligible for a \$150,000 grant. Applications must include a Board resolution indicating support for the proposed project and willingness to provide grant management.

The proposed CRD project is a growth and mobility study. The project will consist of a geographic information system (GIS) focused study of the opportunities and impacts for increasing levels of development in proximity to transit, active transportation and walkable communities. The study will be based on existing data sources such as municipal Official Community Plans (OCPs), local area plans, transit routes, biking infrastructure, and walkable communities. CRD Regional and Strategic Planning will lead the study, with technical input from the Regional Housing and Climate Action Program divisions.

The project deliverable is a regional-scale GIS map that synthesizes land use and transportation information. The study will help identify optimal locations for density increases adjacent to transit, active transportation, and walkable neighbourhoods. The study will also help to better understand the regional impacts of policy decisions and provide a network perspective of growth in neighbouring communities. The CRD and all local governments will benefit greatly from improved mapping as the region does not currently have such a resource.

Regional and Strategic Planning would manage the application on behalf of other CRD departments. The grant program has two intake deadlines: June 16, 2023 and January 12, 2024. The earlier intake deadline is preferred. UBCM allows resolutions to follow the grant submission deadline, in recognition of timing constraints.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Planning and Protective Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the CRD Board support a grant application to the Union of BC Municipalities Complete Communities Program to prepare a CRD regional growth and mobility study, and direct staff to provide for overall grant management, including apply for, receive, and manage the grant funding.

Alternative 2

That staff be directed to not apply to the Union of BC Municipalities Complete Communities Program.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Implications

This project will support the Climate Action Program to explore future opportunities to analyze the greenhouse gas (GHG) impacts of potential growth scenarios.

As well, local government partners could use data from the study to inform decisions about zoning densification in areas that are well supported by transit and active transportation infrastructure. Directing growth to areas with a diversity of existing transportation options will help improve mode share and minimize GHG produced from travel.

Intergovernmental Implications

All information collected and the mapping produced will be shared with First Nations in the CRD to support their community planning and development initiatives.

The Development and Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC) was consulted on the project concept, and there was a strong indication of support. Most indicated they would provide letters of support for the grant application.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The study will directly address six Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) objectives, including:

- 1.1 Keep Urban Settlement Compact
- 2.2 Manage Regional Infrastructure Services Sustainably
- 3.1 Create Safe and Complete Communities
- 3.2 Improve Housing Affordability
- 4.1 Improve Multi-Modal Connectivity and Mobility
- 7.1 Significantly Reduce Community-Based Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The proposed GIS mapping supports planning analysis for RGS monitoring and implementation. The mapping will refine the detail associated with existing growth nodes and corridor maps and allow for property level analysis. This will support better land use analysis and assist in identifying preferred areas for density increase, region-wide. Local governments and partner agencies such as BC Transit will also benefit by being able to examine cross municipal impacts of policy decisions and better understand the cumulative impacts of growth planning on surrounding communities.

Social Implications

This project will provide information and mapping tools that will contribute to regional and planning analysis. Better information leads to better decisions. The decisions made as a result of the information collected in this study may benefit livability, public health and improved community connections to people and places, but the study itself will not have direct social implications.

Financial Implications

The estimated cost for the study is \$150,000. As the Complete Communities Program provides up to \$150,000 for regional governments in base funding, this grant will entirely cover the costs for the proposed project. If successful, additional CRD resources are not anticipated.

Service Delivery Implications

Regional Strategic Planning will be responsible for overall grant management, with subject matter expertise contributions from Regional Housing and the Climate Action Program. The work forms part of core service delivery.

The proposed project has a potential for multiple benefits for the CRD from a service delivery perspective. For Regional and Strategic Planning and local government partner planning departments, the comprehensive GIS study and map development advances RGS monitoring and implementation. For Regional Housing, the mapping will support property assessments and prioritization for land acquisition in the development of new affordable housing. For the Climate Action Program, it will support better understanding of efficient infrastructure development and potential GHG impacts of growing communities.

Staff will consider a phased delivery approach should the CRD not be a successful applicant to the Complete Communities Program.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The CRD Board has identified transportation, housing and climate action as priorities for its 2023-2026 term. Initiative 8a-1 in the Corporate Plan is to explore changes to growth management approaches and identify implementation actions. The proposed study supports delivery of this initiative, with consideration of the Board’s priorities.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The proposed study will help implement the RGS, the Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy, and the Climate Action Strategy.

CONCLUSION

CRD staff are seeking approval to pursue a UBCM Complete Communities grant to conduct a growth and mobility study. This GIS focused study will provide the CRD, local governments and agency partners with a new tool to support regional planning analysis. The study advances CRD Board priorities and supports implementation of CRD plans and strategies.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Protective Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the CRD Board support a grant application to the Union of BC Municipalities Complete Communities Program to prepare a CRD regional growth and mobility study, and direct staff to provide for overall grant management, including apply for, receive, and manage the grant funding.

Submitted by:	Emily Sinclair, MCIP, RPP, Senior Manager, Regional & Strategic Planning
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA, General Manager, Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer