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REPORT TO TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

SUBJECT **Transportation Governance Update**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide an update on planned engagement activities required to advance the regional transportation governance initiative.

BACKGROUND

Transportation is a priority for residents and the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board. The region has three transportation goals: reduce carbon pollution, support higher rates of walking, cycling and transit use, and address congestion. A 2023-2026 CRD Board strategic priority is to present options for transportation governance change. This priority shifts focus from goal setting to implementation through a new CRD transportation service.

The purpose of the transportation governance initiative is to create more tools to advance regional connectivity and integrated mobility. The short-term goal is to establish a regional transportation service. This new transportation service would consolidate existing CRD transportation functions, with additional scope to develop new programs in approved service categories that can be delivered by the CRD without requiring legislative change. The long-term goal is to integrate, where applicable, transportation functions that are best delivered at a regional scale through a new regional entity. This requires ongoing cooperation between the CRD, local governments and other transportation agencies, such as BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI).

This approach is designed to signal to the Province of British Columbia that a regional body is ready to take on the additional responsibilities necessary to achieve the long-term regional vision for transportation. Phased this way, the CRD, local governments and affected agencies can evaluate and refine strategy, ensure that decisions are evidence-based and confirm viability of a new transportation service before scaling up more functions and moving on to the long-term goal.

In the summer and fall of 2023, the CRD engaged with member local governments, electoral areas and partner agencies to solicit feedback on regional transportation governance. The feedback provided the CRD with a baseline understanding of the aspects of transportation governance that local governments are interested in exploring further.

On December 13, 2023, the CRD Board directed staff to initiate concept development and analysis work on an inclusive list of potential transportation service categories. The Board also directed staff to plan for engagement activities and schedule a workshop for Q2 2024.

Transportation Service Design

A service design and feasibility study is currently underway to provide a governance recommendation on how best to deliver the CRD's current services and suite of expanded functions. Based on feedback from the 2023 engagement, CRD staff have evolved the service categories and are preparing additional information for local government, electoral area and agency consideration.

2024 Engagement Plan

The next phase of engagement is divided into two streams. One stream is ongoing consultation with local government staff, BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI). The other stream is a regional workshop in May 2024, bringing together political and staff representatives from local governments, electoral areas and First Nations.

The May 2024 workshop will seek input on potential service categories, including what new programs are possible to add to consolidated CRD functions if the category is included in the establishment bylaw. Participants will have an opportunity to ask questions, hear from regional peers and provide input that will be considered in developing a draft bylaw.

This phase of engagement will focus on all the potential service categories to be included in the service establishment bylaw. Costing and implementation details from the feasibility study continue to be a work in progress. While it remains critical to continue collaborating on the long-term vision, and the region's transportation are of great interest to many, the more appropriate place for mobility visioning discussions would be in updates to existing transportation plans, such as the Transit Future Plan and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Those documents are the foundational expression of our regional goals, and through these policy processes there will be opportunity to envision, discuss and reach agreement on a new long-term vision.

While it remains important to inform the public on potential new functions with any recommended service categories, an agreement by the CRD Board on the scope of the bylaw is needed. As such, the most appropriate time to consider the level of public information or engagement required in presenting the draft bylaw to the public would be after developing a draft bylaw.

Next Steps

Once input is gathered, CRD staff will seek CRD Board approval for the scope of a new transportation service establishment bylaw and direction to draft the bylaw. Pending the timing of this direction and what approach the CRD Board recommends for its approval process, CRD staff anticipate bringing a draft bylaw to the CRD Board in Q4 2024.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

A CRD Board priority for the 2023–2026 term is to present options for changes in governance for transportation in the region, including the Electoral Areas. Initiative 4a-1 in the CRD Corporate Plan is to scope and develop governance options, including consideration of a new transportation authority. The proposed workshop, along with concept development and analysis, is the next step to advance this initiative.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

CRD plans and strategies will inform concept development and analysis. Relevant plans are the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), the RTP, the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan, the Regional Trails Management Plan, the Climate Action Strategy and the intergovernmental relations policy.

Environmental and Climate Action

The CRD Board has declared a climate emergency. In 2022, on-road transportation accounted for 42% of all carbon pollution in the region. New travel behaviours are one solution to get more people taking transit, walking and cycling. In turn, this will reduce carbon pollution and improve mobility. CRD staff would have more tools to advance this solution with an expanded regional role in behaviour change.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The needs of equity seeking groups will be considered through the concept development and analysis work of specific programs.

Financial Implications

The 2024 provisional budget includes a one-time budget adjustment of \$422,000 to complete concept development and analysis, host a workshop and undertake a bylaw approval process. Costs to implement governance change will be identified through concept development and analysis. Decisions about funding would be made through the annual service and financial planning processes.

Intergovernmental Implications

By bringing together both political and staff leadership, engagement is intended to support discussion and provide an opportunity for input from all 13 local governments, participating electoral areas and First Nations. The workshop will provide additional input that will inform a Board decision on what is included or not in the scope of the bylaw. Having all local governments in the CRD on the same page about the scope of a new transportation service is an essential step that will support feasibility and service impact analysis that are key steps in bylaw development.

Both MOTI and BC Transit have expressed interest in participating in the workshop as their interests may be impacted by governance changes. Individual engagement will also occur to hear directly about potential concerns and for CRD staff to receive guidance on service establishment.

First Nations Relations Implications

First Nations Chiefs and council members will be invited to participate in the workshop. Staff will also continue to engage First Nations on a parallel track through government-to-government meetings.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The RGS (and the RTP) are the key expressions of the long-term vision for the region. It will be made clear to workshop participants that discussing this vision is not the focus of this engagement workshop. While those conversations will be essential in the future, the current process is focused on defining the scope of a new transportation service. Discussion of vision and long-term goals are best addressed in their own process in future updates to the RGS and RTP.

Service Delivery Implications

The project timelines assume that 2025 is the first year to implement a new transportation service. Concept development and analysis must conclude by Q2 2024 to meet this timeline. Schedule delays will affect the CRD Board's ability to advance governance change this term.

CRD staff will continue to defer incremental improvements to the transportation data program to free up capacity to progress concept development and analysis in 2024. The data program may need to be expanded to deliver new functions. Any updates to the Regional Trail Management Plan will occur once a decision is made about service consolidation.

The CRD's Legislative Services, Legal, Finance and Regional Parks divisions also support this initiative.

CONCLUSION

Transportation is a priority for residents and the CRD Board. The purpose of the transportation governance initiative is to create more tools to advance regional connectivity and mobility by establishing a new regional transportation service. To support the development of a service establishment bylaw, targeted engagement is needed to seek input from mayors, councillors, electoral area directors, First Nations, senior local government staff and senior staff from MOTI

and BC Transit. This report summarizes the engagement activities planned for 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

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

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