

**REPORT TO PARKS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2019**

SUBJECT **Climate Emergency Declaration – Capital Regional District Response**

ISSUE

To provide an update on the immediate actions and recommended next steps in response to the Capital Regional District's (CRD) climate emergency declaration.

BACKGROUND

At its February 13, 2019 meeting, the CRD Board declared a climate emergency and assumed a leadership role working towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. The Board Chair will be encouraging all local governments in the region to do the same, and will write to the federal and provincial governments asserting the CRD's support for accelerated climate action and to provide additional support for the region and its local governments. The Board also directed CRD staff to:

- submit a letter of intent for the \$1 million Pacific Institute Climate Solutions (PICS) Theme Partnership Program grant to research opportunities related to this commitment; and
- report back to the Parks & Environment Committee on specific actions and policies that can be added in future correspondence to senior levels of government.

This staff report provides an update on the status of the above tasks and presents staff's recommendation to enhance the current CRD climate action program in 2019.

PICS Theme Partnership Program Update

The \$1 million PICS Theme Partnership Program aims to connect top provincial academic researchers with policy, industry and other community leaders to develop climate solutions and legacy partnerships for BC and beyond. Projects are meant to be co-designed, co-developed and co-delivered between research teams and solution seekers. Each award is capped at \$250,000 per year for a total program allocation of up to \$1 million over four years. PICS will make one award in 2019 and then every 12 to 18 months on an ongoing basis.

The CRD confirmed its support for a proposed project, in partnership with the Province of BC's Climate Action Secretariat, District of Saanich, City of Victoria, BC Hydro, Fortis BC, Pacific Climate Impact Consortium and other research partners. Led by academics at the University of Victoria, the project would first develop a systems-wide integrated model that would inform decarbonization actions at multiple scales and sectors. The second phase would be to develop a specific interface for the project partners to answer specific questions related to decarbonization options. The CRD's research question proposes to identify explicit actions and policies, including the cost benefits (and co-benefits), that can be taken by the CRD and its regional stakeholders through to 2030 to achieve carbon neutrality. The project would also examine carbon neutrality as a goal metric, in relation to other local and global climate targets. The CRD supported a letter

of intent for this opportunity on February 15, 2019. If the project partners are successful in passing the letter of intent phase, CRD staff would participate in the development of a formal proposal, led by the researchers, in early spring 2019. Final decisions are anticipated by late summer 2019.

Local Government Roles and Senior Level of Government Support Opportunities

Across Canada, local governments are estimated to control or influence more than 45% of greenhouse gas emissions through their decisions related to transportation, waste and buildings. Tools at their disposal include land management plans (such as Regional Growth Strategies and Official Community Plans), policy tools, such as zoning, development cost charges, development permit areas, density bonusing and parking requirements, community infrastructure development and corporate leadership investments, and continuous support to the broader community through education, capacity building and incentive programs.

However, to undertake the transformative change required to respond to the climate crisis in a greatly accelerated manner, regional and local governments still face significant barriers related to resourcing and jurisdictional limitations. The CRD and its local governments should continue to call upon senior levels of government to follow through with their climate commitments and actively support regional and local governments in their efforts to do the same. Appendix A provides an overview of initial requests that the Board could consider as it advocates to senior levels of government.

CRD Programming Response

Under Bylaw No. 3510, the CRD provides a climate action service that directly supports local governments and other stakeholders on the coordination of climate-related programs and projects related to both climate mitigation and adaptation. The program includes two full-time equivalent staff members, and approximately \$50,000 of annual operating funds. The Program administers inter-municipal climate action networks, manages regionally significant data procurement projects, leads community-focused planning, incentive, capacity building and educational programs and supports the execution of Board priorities and the corporate plan. Project delivery is heavily reliant on external partnerships and grant opportunities.

Should the Board choose to enhance the CRD's climate action service in response to the climate emergency declaration in the 2019 budget year, the service's maximum funding requisition room is limited to \$95,000. A requisition beyond this would trigger a bylaw amendment and associated approval process. Starting in the 2019 budget year, staff recommend an increase in requisition of \$95,000 to undertake the following activities:

- Pursue a BC Hydro staff support grant and, if successful, hire a Community Energy Manager for a two-year term. Should the CRD be successful in securing funds with BC Hydro, a specific work plan would be negotiated with BC Hydro. It is anticipated that this role would support regional energy and emissions planning, building energy retrofit and electric vehicle infrastructure programs, and associated municipal policy support; and
- In 2019, undertake a regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory and high-level modelling exercise to inform priority program focus areas for 2020 budget and work planning.

ALTERNATIVES

That the Parks & Environment Committee recommend to the CRD Board:

Alternative 1

1. That the Board Chair write to the Premier of BC and the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change requesting they actively support regional and local governments in their efforts to greatly accelerate climate action, as described in Appendix A; and
2. That a \$95,000 increase in requisition funding be considered as part of the 2019 final budget approval for the CRD Climate Action service, to undertake a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory and modelling exercise and pursue a BC Hydro grant for staff support and, if successful, amend the staff establishment chart to hire a Community Energy Manager for a two-year term.

Alternative 2

1. That the Board Chair write to the Premier of BC and the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change requesting they actively support regional and local governments in their efforts to greatly accelerate climate action, as described in Appendix A; and
2. That an increase in requisition funding (\$55,000 for 2019 and \$95,000 thereafter) be considered as part of the 2019 final budget approval for the CRD Climate Action service to pursue a BC Hydro grant for staff support and, if successful, amend the staff establishment chart to hire a Community Energy Manager for a two-year term.

Alternative 3

1. That the Board Chair write to the Premier of BC and the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change requesting they actively support regional and local governments in their efforts to greatly accelerate climate action, as described in Appendix A; and
2. That budget adjustments for the CRD Climate Action service be deferred until the 2020 budget deliberations.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The Capital Region does not have recent greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions data, or related regional-scale analysis, that would inform the detailed approaches requested to meet accelerated emissions reductions targets. Should the PICS grant be successful, project outputs would not be available for at least four years. Work could be undertaken in the immediate term to help track our current emissions portfolio and inform and prioritize focus areas of the CRD's community climate action efforts. Any output of this work would also feed into a more detailed PICS project output, the next phase of the Regional Climate Action Strategy and support local government planning efforts.

If the CRD is successful in securing a BC Hydro staff support grant for a Community Energy

Manager, this position would be dedicated to regional energy and emission reduction projects.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

The service's maximum funding requisition room is limited to \$95,000.

A full-time Community Energy Manager position would cost approximately \$150,000 per year for two years.

For Alternative 1, in 2019, the \$95,000 increase in requisition would fund the inventory and modelling (approximate cost of \$40,000), with the remainder (approximately \$55,000) going towards a Community Energy Manager. BC Hydro staff support grants offer \$50,000 per year for a two-year term. Existing residual climate action project funds of \$45,000 would cover the remainder of the position. In 2020, the full \$95,000 increase would be allocated to the Community Energy Manager position.

For Alternative 2, in 2019, the \$55,000 increase in requisition would go towards a Community Energy Manager. BC Hydro staff support grants of \$50,000 per year for a two-year term. Existing residual climate action project funds of \$45,000 cover the remainder of the position. In 2020, the full \$95,000 increase would be required and allocated to the Community Energy Manager position.

Alternative 3 has no impact on 2019 budgets. Any budget adjustments for the CRD Climate Action service would be deferred until the 2020 budget deliberations.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

All levels of government in Canada have identified climate change as a priority policy area and are developing plans, policies and strategies to address this issue. The CRD and local governments have identified emission reduction targets and actions to address GHG emission reduction and adaptation to climate change. The CRD will continue to work with local governments and other regional stakeholders to support regional climate action.

CONCLUSION

The CRD has declared a climate emergency. The Board can continue to advocate to senior levels of government for resources and jurisdiction towards accelerated climate action in the capital region. The CRD can continue to play a role in supporting regional climate action efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Parks & Environment Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That the Board Chair write to the Premier of BC and the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change requesting they actively support regional and local governments in their efforts to greatly accelerate climate action, as described in Appendix A; and

2. That a \$95,000 increase in requisition funding be considered as part of the 2019 final budget approval for the CRD Climate Action service, to undertake a regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory and modelling exercise and pursue a BC Hydro grant for staff support and, if successful, amend the staff establishment chart to hire a Community Energy Manager for a two-year term

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Attachment: Appendix A – CRD Board Advocacy Opportunities to Senior Levels of Government to Support Accelerated Climate Action