



**REPORT TO PLANNING AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019**

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**SUBJECT**      **Central Saanich Regional Context Statement**

**ISSUE**

To review the District of Central Saanich's regional context statement in relation to the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) bylaw (Bylaw No. 4017).

**BACKGROUND**

On March 14, 2018 the Board adopted the RGS, Bylaw No. 4017.

A regional context statement, adopted within a municipality's Official Community Plan (OCP), relates OCP provisions to the RGS. As per section 446 of the *Local Government Act* (the *Act*), an OCP in a municipality to which an RGS applies must include an accepted regional context statement. The *Act* requires that all municipalities must submit to the Board, for acceptance, a revised regional context statement within two years of RGS adoption. The *Act* stipulates that the CRD Board must, by resolution, either accept or not accept a regional context statement within 120 days of receiving a referral. The Board is deemed to have accepted the regional context statement 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 May 31, 2019 the District of Central Saanich submitted a regional context statement for Board acceptance (see Appendix A). The regional context statement was prepared to reflect the content of the 2014 Central Saanich OCP in relation to the 2018 RGS. The CRD Board has until September 30, 2019 to review the District of Central Saanich's regional context statement.

To date, Colwood and Esquimalt's regional context statements have been accepted. Once Central Saanich's regional context statement has been accepted, 10 regional context statements will remain to be processed. Given that the Board has 120 days to review a regional context statement, and given the deadline for Board acceptance of March 14, 2020, all municipalities must submit revised context statements by November 15, 2019. Planning staff at each municipality have been advised of this deadline.

**ALTERNATIVES**

*Alternative 1*

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

That the District of Central Saanich regional context statement be considered in relation to the 2018 RGS (Bylaw No. 4017) and be accepted in accordance with the requirements of section 448 of the *Local Government Act*.

*Alternative 2*

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

That the District of Central Saanich regional context statement be considered in relation to the 2018 RGS (Bylaw No. 4017) and not be accepted in accordance with the requirements of section 448 of the *Local Government Act*.

**DISCUSSION**

Regional and Strategic Planning staff have evaluated Central Saanich's regional context statement in accordance with the Board-approved "Regional Context Statement Framework". See Appendix B for a summary of the evaluation.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**Alignment Implications**

The purpose of a regional context statement is to foster alignment between a new RGS and municipal OCPs. Practically speaking, it can take time to achieve alignment, especially in cases where RGS content changes. This is because OCPs are time-consuming and expensive to update and the municipal update cycle may not align perfectly with adoption of a new RGS. While Provincial legislation requires that regional context statements be updated within two years of a new RGS, it also acknowledges that, in some cases, there will not be perfect alignment within those two years. Section 447 of the *Local Government Act* provides an opportunity for an OCP that is not consistent with the RGS to indicate how the municipality intends to ensure consistency over time. Central Saanich has submitted a revised regional context statement to fulfill its statutory obligation to do so within two years of RGS adoption. Central Saanich has not recently fully updated its OCP, so the content does not yet perfectly align with new RGS requirements, specifically the need for OCPs to include municipal targets for land in food crop production. The submitted regional context statement appropriately acknowledges that Central Saanich has not yet included this target and notes that the target will be considered in the next OCP review.

**Regional Growth Strategy Implications**

Board acceptance of the regional context statement is a key RGS implementation tool as the context statement relates the RGS to a municipality's OCP. 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 regional context statement fully captures all relevant OCP content and clearly identifies how the OCP relates to the RGS vision, population projections and objectives for growth management, environment and infrastructure, housing and community, transportation, economic development, food systems and climate action. The regional context statement demonstrates a strong relationship to the RGS that will work toward achieving the RGS vision and objectives. Alternative 1 allows for OCP adoption and RGS implementation.

### **Intergovernmental Implications**

Central Saanich staff have worked closely with CRD staff to prepare a regional context statement that demonstrates a strong relationship to the RGS. Alternative 1 allows Central Saanich to amend their OCP to include the updated Regional Context Statement. Alternative 2 would cause delays.

### **Timing Implications**

The referral period for Board acceptance of a regional context statement is 120 days (September 30, 2019). Both alternatives allow for a Board response within the prescribed time period.

### **CONCLUSION**

Provincial legislation requires that a municipal OCP contain an accepted regional context statement. Board acceptance of the regional context statement is a key tool for RGS implementation. Staff have reviewed Central Saanich's regional context statement in accordance with the Board-approved evaluation framework. Central Saanich's regional context statement demonstrates a strong relationship to the RGS and will work toward achieving RGS vision and objectives.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

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

That the District of Central Saanich regional context statement be considered in relation to the 2018 RGS (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 – Central Saanich Regional Context Statement Referral  
Appendix B – Regional Context Statement Evaluation