LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT PROVISIONS FOR ACCEPTANCE AND SETTLEMENT OF A REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

Facilitation of agreement during development of regional growth strategy

435 (1) The minister may appoint facilitators for the purposes of this Part, whose responsibilities are

(a) to monitor and assist local governments in reaching agreement on the acceptance of regional growth strategies during their development by

(i) facilitating negotiations between the local governments,

(ii) facilitating the resolution of anticipated objections,

(iii) assisting local governments in setting up and using non-binding resolution processes, and

(iv) facilitating the involvement of the Provincial and federal governments and their agencies, first nations, boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards, and

(b) to assist local governments in entering into implementation agreements under section 451.

(2) On being notified that a regional growth strategy has been initiated, the minister may designate a person appointed under subsection (1) as the facilitator responsible in relation to the regional growth strategy.

(3) At any time until the end of the period for acceptance or refusal of the proposed regional growth strategy under section 436 (4) (b), the facilitator is to provide assistance referred to in subsection (1) (a) of this section if requested to do so

(a) by the proposing board or an affected local government, or

(b) by an electoral area director of the proposing board, if the request is supported by at least 2 other directors.

(4) Once a facilitator becomes involved under subsection (3), the proposing board and affected local governments must provide information as requested by the facilitator and must otherwise cooperate with the facilitator in fulfilling his or her responsibilities.

Acceptance by affected local governments

436 (1) Before it is adopted, a regional growth strategy must be accepted by the affected local governments or, failing acceptance, become binding on the affected local governments under section 440 (6) *[settlement of regional growth strategy in acceptance not otherwise reached]*.

(2) Acceptance of a regional growth strategy by an affected local government must be done by resolution of the local government.

(3) For the purposes of this section, before third reading of the bylaw to adopt a regional growth strategy, the board must submit the regional growth strategy to the following:

(a) the council of each municipality all or part of which is covered by the regional growth strategy;

(b) the board of directors of the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority if the regional growth strategy is for the Greater Vancouver Regional District;

(c) the board of each regional district that is adjoining an area to which the regional growth strategy is to apply;

(d) the facilitator or, if no facilitator for the regional growth strategy has been designated, the minister.

(4) After receiving a proposed regional growth strategy under subsection (3), each affected local government must

(a) review the regional growth strategy in the context of any official community plans and regional growth strategies for its jurisdiction, both those that are current and those that are in preparation, and in the context of any other matters that affect its jurisdiction, and

(b) subject to an extension by the facilitator under section 438 (3), within 60 days of receipt either

(i) accept the regional growth strategy, or

(ii) respond, by resolution, to the proposing board indicating that the local government refuses to accept the regional growth strategy.

(5) An acceptance under subsection (4) (b) becomes effective

(a) when all affected local governments have accepted the regional growth strategy, or

(b) at the end of the period for acceptance or refusal under that subsection if, at the end of that period, all affected local governments have not accepted the regional growth strategy.

(6) If an affected local government fails to act under subsection (4) (b) within the period for acceptance or refusal, the local government is deemed to have accepted the regional growth strategy.

(7) In the resolution under subsection (4) (b) (ii), the affected local government must indicate

(a) each provision to which it objects,

(b) the reasons for its objection, and

(c) whether it is willing that a provision to which it objects be included in the regional growth strategy on the basis that the provision will not apply to its jurisdiction, as referred to in section 432 (2).

(8) An affected local government is deemed to have accepted any provision of the regional growth strategy to which it does not indicate an objection under subsection (7).

(9) All affected local governments are entitled to participate in any non-binding resolution processes used to resolve an objection or anticipated objection by an affected local government.

(10) If an area in a regional district is incorporated as a new municipality and the regional district has adopted a regional growth strategy for all or part of the area of the new municipality, the regional growth strategy is binding on that new municipality.

Resolution of anticipated objections

438 (1) Before the end of the 60 days referred to in section 436 (4) (b) *[time for acceptance or refusal]*, the facilitator may require the proposing board and the affected local governments to identify any issues on which they anticipate that acceptance may not be reached.

(2) If an issue is identified under subsection (1),

(a) the facilitator may require the proposing board and the affected local governments to send representatives to a meeting convened by the facilitator for the purpose of clarifying the issues involved and encouraging their resolution, and

(b) the proposing board and the affected local governments must provide information as requested by the facilitator and must otherwise cooperate with the facilitator in fulfilling his or her responsibilities.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the facilitator may extend the period for acceptance or refusal under section 436 (4) (b) before or after the end of that period.

Resolution of refusal to accept

439 (1) The proposing board must notify the minister in writing if an affected local government refuses to accept a proposed regional growth strategy.

(2) After being notified under subsection (1), the minister must

(a) require a non-binding resolution process to attempt to reach acceptance on the regional growth strategy, or

(b) if satisfied that resolution using a non-binding resolution process under paragraph (a) is unlikely, direct that the regional growth strategy is to be settled under section 440.

(3) If requiring a non-binding resolution process under subsection (2) (a), the minister

(a) must, at the time of requiring the non-binding resolution process, specify a time period within which the parties must begin the resolution process, and

(b) may, before or after the resolution process has begun, specify a time period within which the parties must conclude the resolution process.

(4) The choice of non-binding resolution process under subsection (2) (a) is to be determined by agreement between the proposing board and the affected local government or governments that refused to accept the regional growth strategy but, if the minister considers that these parties will not be able to reach agreement, the minister must direct which process is to be used.

(5) Any affected local government may participate in a non-binding resolution process under this section.

(6) Unless otherwise agreed by these parties, the fees of any neutral person participating in the non-binding resolution process and the administrative costs of the process, other

than the costs incurred by the parties participating in the process, are to be shared proportionally between the proposing board and the affected local governments that participate in the process on the basis of the converted value of land and improvements in their jurisdictions.

(7) An affected local government is deemed to have accepted the provisions of the regional growth strategy that were not changed as a result of a resolution process under subsection (2) (a).

(8) The following apply if changes to a regional growth strategy are proposed as a result of a resolution process under subsection (2) (a):

(a) the regional growth strategy must be submitted again to the affected local governments for acceptance, subject to paragraph (b) of this subsection, in accordance with section 436;

(b) an affected local government may not indicate an objection to a provision it is deemed to have accepted under section 436 (8) *[no previous objection to provision]* or subsection (7) of this section.

(9) If acceptance is not reached within 60 days after a non-binding resolution process under this section is concluded, the regional growth strategy must be settled in accordance with section 440 unless the proposing board and the affected local governments can reach agreement on the provisions of the regional growth strategy before the settlement process is completed.

Settlement of regional growth strategy if acceptance not otherwise reached

440 (1) If acceptance by affected local governments cannot otherwise be reached under this Part, the regional growth strategy is to be settled by one of the following:

(a) peer panel settlement in accordance with section 441 (1);

(b) final proposal arbitration in accordance with section 441 (2);

(c) full arbitration in accordance with section 441 (3).

(2) If more than one affected local government has refused to accept a regional growth strategy, whether the refusals are in relation to the same or different issues, the regional growth strategy is to be settled for all affected local governments in the same settlement proceedings.

(3) The choice of process for settlement is to be determined by agreement between the proposing board and the affected local government or governments that refused to accept the regional growth strategy but, if the minister considers that these parties will not be able to reach agreement, the minister must direct which process is to be used.

(4) Any affected local government may participate in a settlement process under section 441.

(5) During the 60 days after the provisions of a regional growth strategy are settled under section 441, the proposing board and the affected local governments may agree on the acceptance of a regional growth strategy that differs from the one settled.

(6) At the end of the period under subsection (5), unless agreement is reached as referred to in that subsection, the provisions of a regional growth strategy as settled under section 441 become binding on the proposing board and all affected local governments, whether or not they participated in the settlement process.

Options for settlement process

441 (1) As one option, the provisions of a regional growth strategy may be settled by a peer panel as follows:

(a) the panel is to be composed of 3 persons selected from the applicable list prepared under section 442 (1);

(b) the selection of the panel is to be done by agreement between the proposing board and the affected local government or governments that refused to accept the regional growth strategy or, if the minister considers that these parties will not be able to reach agreement, by the minister;

(c) subject to the regulations, the panel may conduct the proceedings in the manner it determines;

(d) the panel must settle the disputed issues of the regional growth strategy and may make any changes to the provisions of the regional growth strategy that it considers necessary to resolve those issues;

(e) the panel must give written reasons for its decision if this is requested by the proposing board or an affected local government before the panel retires to make its decision.

(2) As a second option, the provisions of a regional growth strategy may be settled by final proposal arbitration by a single arbitrator as follows:

(a) the arbitrator is to be selected from the applicable list prepared under section 442 (1);

(b) the selection of the arbitrator is to be done by agreement between the proposing board and the affected local government or governments that refused to accept the regional growth strategy or, if the minister considers that these parties will not be able to reach agreement, by the minister;

(c) subject to the regulations, the arbitrator must conduct the proceedings on the basis of a review of written documents and written submissions only, and must determine each disputed issue by selecting one of the final written proposals for resolving that issue submitted by one of the participating parties;

(d) the provisions of the regional growth strategy will be as settled by the arbitrator after incorporation of the final proposals selected by the arbitrator under paragraph (c);

(e) no written reasons are to be provided by the arbitrator.

(3) As a third option, the provisions of a regional growth strategy may be settled by full arbitration by a single arbitrator as follows:

(a) the arbitrator is to be selected from the applicable list prepared under section 442 (1);

(b) the selection of the arbitrator is to be done by agreement between the proposing board and the affected local government or governments that refused to accept the regional growth strategy or, if the minister considers that these parties will not be able to reach agreement, by the minister;

(c) subject to the regulations, the arbitrator may conduct the proceedings in the manner he or she determines;

(d) the provisions of the regional growth strategy will be as settled by the arbitrator, who is not restricted in his or her decision to submissions made by the parties on the disputed issues;

(e) the arbitrator must give written reasons for the decision.

General provisions regarding settlement process

442 (1) Lists of persons who may act on a panel under section 441 (1), as an arbitrator under section 441 (2) or as an arbitrator under section 441 (3) are to be prepared by the

minister in consultation with representatives of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

(2) Persons who may be included on a list for a panel under section 441 (1) are persons who are or have been elected officials of a local government or who, in the opinion of the minister, have appropriate experience in relation to local government matters.

(3) In the case of a specific regional growth strategy, a person may not be appointed to a panel or as an arbitrator if the person is, or was at any time since the regional growth strategy was initiated, an elected official of the proposing board or of an affected local government for the regional growth strategy.

(4) Subject to a direction by the panel or arbitrator or to an agreement between the parties, the fees and reasonable and necessary expenses of the members of a peer panel or arbitrator and the administrative costs of the process, other than the costs incurred by the parties participating in the process, are to be shared proportionally between the proposing board and the affected local governments that participate in the process on the basis of the converted value of land and improvements in their jurisdictions.

(5) The directors of the electoral areas to which the regional growth strategy is proposed to apply and the Provincial government may make representations in the settlement process, subject to any conditions set by the panel or arbitrator.

(6) The time limit for bringing any judicial review of a decision of a panel or arbitrator under section 441 is the end of the period for agreement under section 440 (5) *[60 days after provisions settled by panel or arbitrator]*.

(7) The minister may make regulations regarding settlement processes under section 441, which may be different for different settlement processes, including regulations

(a) respecting matters that a panel or arbitrator may or must consider,

(b) respecting the authority of a panel or arbitrator to settle a regional growth strategy, and

(c) respecting the authority of a panel or arbitrator to require the cooperation of local governments in relation to the settlement processes.