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## REPORT TO PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2020

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### **SUBJECT**     Highlands Regional Context Statement

### **ISSUE SUMMARY**

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

### **BACKGROUND**

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

A RCS, 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 RCS. The *Act* requires that all municipal regional context statements be submitted to the Board within two years of RGS adoption. The *Act* also stipulates that upon receipt of a proposed RCS, the CRD Board must respond by resolution within 120 days to the municipal council to indicate whether or not it accepts the RCS. The Board is deemed to have accepted the RCS 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 November 14, 2019, the District of Highlands submitted a RCS for Board acceptance (see Appendix A). The RCS was prepared to reflect the content of the 2007 Highlands OCP in relation to the 2018 RGS. The CRD Board has until March 13, 2020, to review and respond to the Highlands RCS.

To date, Colwood, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, North Saanich, View Royal and Central Saanich's RCSs have been accepted. Saanich, Sidney, Sooke and Victoria's RCSs are being considered at this meeting. Should these RCSs be accepted, two RCSs will remain to be processed. Given that all municipalities must submit a revised RCS within two years of adoption of the RGS, the deadline to receive revised RCSs is March 14, 2020. The Board then has 120 days to review a RCS.

Regional and Strategic Planning staff have evaluated the Highlands RCS in accordance with the Board-approved "Regional Context Statement Framework". See Appendix B for a summary of the evaluation.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

#### *Alternative 1*

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

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

*Alternative 2*

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

That the District of Highlands' regional context statement be considered in relation to the 2018 Regional Growth Strategy (Bylaw No. 4017) and not be accepted in accordance with the requirements of section 448 of the *Local Government Act*.

*Alternative 3*

That the Highlands Regional Context Statement report be referred back to staff for additional information based on Committee direction.

**IMPLICATIONS**

*Intergovernmental Implications*

Board acceptance of the RCS 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.

*Regional Growth Strategy Implications*

Highlands' proposed RCS 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 as outlined in Appendix B. The RCS 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.

The referral period for Board acceptance of a RCS is 120 days (March 13, 2020).

*Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies*

The purpose of a RCS is to foster alignment between the RGS and municipal OCPs. Practically speaking, it can take time to achieve alignment, especially in cases where RGS content changes. While provincial legislation requires that RCSs 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. Highlands has submitted a proposed RCS to fulfill its statutory obligation that the context statement be received by the CRD Board within two years of RGS adoption.

**CONCLUSION**

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

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

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

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**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Appendix A: Highlands Regional Context Statement Referral

Appendix B: Regional Context Statement Evaluation