

**REPORT TO FIRST NATIONS RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2020**

SUBJECT **First Nations Economic Development Partnership Model**

ISSUE SUMMARY

This report seeks approval of a recommendation to the CRD Board of Directors to receive the *CRD First Nation Economic Development Partnership Model Feasibility Study Report, 2020* (the Report) attached as Appendix A for information.

BACKGROUND

In October 2018, the CRD approved the *Special Task Force on First Nations Relations Final Report* which included a recommendation under reconciliation through economic development that the Board direct staff to undertake a feasibility study for an Indigenous Economic Development Partnership Model to be considered by the incoming Board.

At the same time, the CRD approved a Statement of Reconciliation which includes the following theme:

Shared Prosperity – The CRD recognizes the gap in wealth between First Nations and settler governments. The CRD will work towards a prosperous economic future for all of its residents and believes that improving the lives of the most vulnerable citizens creates a stronger and more resilient region for everyone. The CRD will seek partnerships, share information and deliver fair and equitable services in working with First Nations on achieving their economic goals.

Through 2019 and into 2020, the Indigenomics Institute, on behalf of the CRD, directly engaged eight of the nine First Nations with occupied reserve lands within the capital region. This engagement allowed these First Nations to share interests, opportunities and barriers around economic development, current relationship with the CRD, and potential actions supporting First Nations' economic inclusion within CRD services.

The model presented within the Report is based on understanding the social/cultural, environmental and economic characteristics of each First Nation, the identified principles underpinning model development, and a consideration of strategic opportunities within CRD programs and services. The specific recommendations contained within the report are intended to help guide staff activities over the coming years and also allow for flexibility as the landscape underpinning reconciliation through economic development continues to evolve rapidly.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the *CRD First Nation Economic Development Partnership Model Feasibility Study Report, 2020* be received for information.

Alternative 2

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Implications

Environmental considerations have been identified as an overarching component of the model alongside social/cultural practices and beliefs and economic opportunities. The Report outlines that these three underpinning facets are not static in how they inform economic development opportunities and First Nations will likely be looking to acknowledge the interplay between these components which will then inform the type of partnership opportunities or resources the CRD could contribute in support of a potential activity or partnership.

Intergovernmental Implications

Goal three within the Report identifies a need to be working towards greater inclusivity of First Nations in CRD governance and decision-making. This goal touches on work that is already underway and is being more fully considered in a separate staff report.

Further, the Report outlines complementary actions that are intended to increase the effectiveness of more inclusive decision-making. First, identifying opportunities to First Nation's staff capacity in receiving referrals from the CRD and supporting their leadership in participating at CRD tables will establish a multi-pronged approach in supporting success at decision-making tables. Second, joint planning around economic development has been identified as another important component of bringing the CRD and First Nations together to work towards a prosperous economic future for all residents of the capital region.

Social Implications

The CRD, through the Statement of Reconciliation, recognized the gap in wealth between First Nations and settler governments. Goal one and four within the report are directly related to increasing opportunities for employment and the proportion of economic opportunities that go to First Nations. These two goals both seek to address wealth inequality within the context of CRD service delivery and acknowledge the CRD's limited, but important, role in broadly addressing significant systemic and structural barriers affecting Indigenous Peoples.

Financial Implications

There may be increases in the cost of certain activities associated with shifting the way the CRD procures goods and services from First Nations. Any increases in cost would be considered within the context of the CRD's Procurement Policy and the Board Priority of Reconciliation with First Nations and would be determined by staff on a project-by-project basis.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The 2019 – 2022 CRD Board Priorities include Reconciliation with First Nations, specifically:

- 3a Look to First Nations for leadership in understanding how to create new regional planning and decision-making systems together on their Traditional Territories.
- 3b Seek partnerships, share information and deliver fair and equitable services in working with First Nations on achieving their economic goals.
- 3c Work with First Nations on taking care of the land and water while providing space for cultural and ceremonial use, food and medicine harvesting, traditional management practices and reclaiming Indigenous place names.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The following strategies have been identified as related to the Reconciliation with First Nations Board Priority:

- Special Task Force on First Nations Relations Final Report and the Statement of Reconciliation
- Regional Climate Action Strategy
- Regional Food and Agricultural Strategy
- Regional Growth Strategy
- Regional Housing Affordability Strategy
- Regional Parks Strategic Plan
- Regional Water Supply Strategic Plan
- Organizational Development Plan

CONCLUSION

The Report begins to establish an approach for the CRD to better identify areas of opportunity within its service structure to advance reconciliation through economic development. Looking to enable partnerships and working directly with First Nations will be critical in supporting the First Nations in achieving their economic goals. This will help the CRD in defining its appropriate role in providing inputs towards an opportunity, being flexible in understanding and acknowledging the specific interests of each nation, and also taking a whole of CRD approach as there have been identified potential economic opportunities within a wide range of CRD departments. The final key component is for the CRD to maintain a focus on action and to look to taking measurable steps in supporting the Statement of Reconciliation theme of Shared Prosperity.

RECOMMENDATION

The First Nations Relations Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the *CRD First Nation Economic Development Partnership Model Feasibility Study Report, 2020* be received for information.

Submitted by:	Don Elliott, MUP, Manager, First Nations Relations
Concurrence:	Kristen Morley, J.D., General Manager, Corporate Services & Corporate Officer
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: CRD First Nation Economic Development Partnership Model Feasibility Study

Report, 2020