



Regional Board Report

TO: Regional Board

FROM: Brian Reardon
Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 24, 2020

SUBJECT: NWCA Request for Letter of Support for a Provincial Restructure Planning Grant

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority – LGA 208.1*

Purpose: To bring forward a request from the North Westside Communities Association for a Letter of Support for a Provincial Restructure Planning Grant.

Executive Summary:

At the regular Board Meeting held on June 22, 2020, the Regional Board received a delegation from the North Westside Community Association at which a request for a Letter of Support for a Restructure Planning Grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing was made.

Subsequently, the Board adopted the following resolution:

“THAT the January 15, 2018 staff report – North Westside Services Community Issues Report – Next Steps be brought forward to the next Board meeting for review and consideration.”

Accordingly, a copy of the January 15, 2018 report is attached to this report for the Board's review and consideration.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Regional Board receive the June 24, 2020 CAO report entitled NWCA Request for Letter of Support for a Provincial Restructure Planning Grant;

AND FURTHER THAT the Regional Board approve the North Westside Community Association request for a letter of support for a Provincial Restructure Planning Grant.

Respectfully Submitted:

Chief Administrative Officer

Background:

At the regular Board Meeting held on June 22, 2020 the Regional Board received a delegation from the North Westside Community Association at which a request for a Letter of Support for a Restructure Planning Grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing was made. This request referenced a staff report entitled “North Westside Community Issues Report – Next Steps” that was presented to the Board on January 22, 2018.

After receiving the NWCA presentation the Board deliberated the request, and subsequently adopted the following resolution:

“THAT the January 15, 2018 staff report – North Westside Services Community Issues Report – Next Steps be brought forward to the next Board meeting for review and consideration.”

Accordingly, a copy of the January 15, 2018 staff report is attached to this report for the Board’s review and consideration.

The “Next Steps” portion of the January 15, 2018 staff report included three “Considerations” that could be actioned to address the four “conclusions” identified in the EcoPlan International (EPI) report. They are:

1. Improve Communications:

- Clarifying expectations and constraints on information provided by RDCO staff and requested by the public;
- Clarify the role of the Electoral Area Director in community/regional district relations.

2. Establish a platform or channel for regular dialogue between North Westside residents and the RDCO.**3. Conducting a detailed diagnostic assessment of the service areas and costing that are principal concerns to the community:**

- Comparative analysis of water rates
- Comparative analysis of overhead rates
- Analysis of the degree to which Board voting has or has not represented local interests

Staff has been advised that we could apply to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for a Provincial Restructure Planning Grant to assist in having this work done by a third-party consultant. This would support providing factual information to the North Westside community.

It should be noted that since January 2018, the RDCO has improved its corporate communications capacity in the electoral areas, including the North Westside through:

- Hiring a new Director of Corporate Communications,
- Adding sections to our WEB Site that pertain specifically to issues in the two electoral areas,
- Advertising RDCO programs and services in local media that specifically serves the North Westside area residents.

That said, the work identified in Considerations 1 & 2 of the EPI Report has yet to be started.

If the Board wishes to proceed with any of the *Considerations* in the EPI Report, staff could formulate an approach to develop a communications strategy and advance Work Plans and Budget submissions for 2021 and 2022.

Financial Considerations:

The first step to dispelling misinformation in the community is to develop and implement a new communication strategy and public engagement process for the North Westside communities. It is suggested that an independent third party be retained to develop this new strategy and assist in its implementation.

If the Board supports this approach, a preliminary budget of \$15,000 should be set aside to augment the work of the third-party consultant for advertising, venues, public engagement, information boards & materials, etc. with the expectation of a further budget request should the new strategy be approved by the Board. It is premature to speculate on what those costs will be until we understand what the specific elements of the new communication strategy are.

These costs would be allocated to the Electoral Area West “Administration” function. A follow-up report on the implementation plan and its costs would be brought forward to the Board at a future date.

Attachment(s): January 15, 2018 CAO Next Steps Report