



Regional Board Report

TO: Regional Board

FROM: Brian Reardon, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: December 6, 2021

SUBJECT: RDCO Electoral Area West - North Westside Governance and Services Study - Terms of Reference

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority – LGA 208*

Purpose: To consider a proposed Terms of Reference for a RDCO Electoral Area West – North Westside Governance and Services Study.

Executive Summary:

At the October 25, 2021 regular meeting, the Regional Board was provided correspondence from the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Honourable Josie Osborne, which confirmed funding in the amount of \$60,000 for a Restructure Planning Grant to undertake a Governance and Services Study (the 'Study') for Electoral Area West - North Westside (Attachment 1).

In her letter, the Minister provided direction on the intended purpose of the grant, including what was in scope, and not in scope, for the study. The CAO has been working with the Electoral Area West Director on an independent qualified consultant to facilitate the study, and with the Ministry to finalize the terms and conditions of the study. The terms of reference for the study are being brought to the Regional Board for consideration, which, if approved, would establish the Study committee.

As noted in the terms of reference (Attachment 2), the governance Study area is Electoral Area West, with an emphasis on the North Westside communities. The scope of the work to be undertaken by the Study committee is guided by the terms of reference, including interim reporting criteria and timelines. It is proposed that the Study be complete, and a final formatted report delivered to the Board and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, by September 30, 2022.

Should the Regional Board support the approval of the Terms of Reference as presented, the following recommendation is for Board consideration.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Regional Board approve the Ministry of Municipal Affairs Terms of Reference for the RDCO Electoral Area West – North Westside Governance and Services Study, as attached to the report from the Chief Administrative Officer dated December 6, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted:



Corie Griffiths,
Director of Corporate Services

Approved for Board's Consideration



Brian Reardon, CAO

Prepared by: Karen Needham, Corporate Officer

Attachment(s):

1. Correspondence from the Honourable Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs (dated October 12, 2021)
2. Proposed Terms of Reference - RDCO Electoral Area West – North Westside Governance and Services Study

Implications of Recommendation:

Organizational:	Administration of the Study will require RDCO resources to secure and work with the Consultant on the establishment of the study committee and in support of open meetings; and to ensure the completion and alignment of the expected outputs meet Ministry requirements for the grant, including research, documentation, public engagement and stakeholder consultation processes.
Financial:	\$60,000 grant from Municipal Affairs, \$5,000 RDCO proposed in 2022 budget request

Background:

At the [Regular Board Meeting - October 25, 2021 \(escribemeetings.com\)](https://www.escribemeetings.com), the CAO provided an information report to the Regional Board which provided the background for the letter received by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Josie Osborne in response to a RDCO grant request (Attachment 1).

The report provided the history that led to the request for a Restructure Planning Grant from the Ministry and highlighted the conditions of the grant for a governance and services study of Electoral Area West, with an emphasis on the North Westside communities.

In sum, the report noted that the letter stated the purpose of the grant is to:

- *assist the RDCO with education on facets of governance and services in Electoral Area West,*
- *engage the public to understand the concerns and interests of North Westside residents,*
- *identify robust options within the regional district framework for addressing the most pressing interests of the community,*
- *address the misinformation and education issues noted in the 2017 study,*
- *synthesize the situation and issues to determine realistic options for addressing issues and concerns.*

The letter also confirmed that the Study, and the grant funding, is not for an incorporation study, and will therefore not provide detailed technical or financial information on the impact of municipal incorporation.

Next Steps

The proposed terms of reference (Attachment 2), provides the framework for a Study committee and further defines the scope, process, roles, public engagement, reporting requirements, and timeline for the final report.

As noted in the overview, this Study will:

- describe and educate on facets of governance and services in Electoral Area West,
- engage the public to understand the concerns and interests of North Westside residents, and,
- identify robust options, within the regional district framework, for addressing the most pressing interests of the communities.

Further, the overview notes that any options identified in the final study report will,

“...be informed by different restructure approaches made available by the *Local Government Act*, including flexibility with electoral area boundaries, establishment of advisory or management commissions for service delivery, and broad scope with communication and public engagement approaches to meet the unique needs of rural communities.”

RDCO staff, working with the Electoral Area Director will develop a request for proposal (RFP) for the consultant that builds upon the parameters set out in the terms of reference. The RFP will be issued by the RDCO following the regional district's procurement policy and process.

The terms of reference are clear that the Study consultant is to be independent, neutral, and qualified from the private sector. The Study consultant is a technician who will facilitate discussions and provide information without taking a position within the Committee or community. The consultant's report will confirm these principles and will be free of undue influence and will represent unbiased statements of facts and conclusions.

Once established, the Study Committee will work with the consultant through the research and education elements included within the scope of work and engage the community in discussion of the Study findings.

The RDCO is to be the administrator of the contract of the consultant who will work closely with the Study Committee and the related work to inform the study.

The Study will culminate in final governance and services reports, providing a synopsis of both the governance and services findings and a summary of the outcomes from the public engagement process and a framework for assessing options, including their next steps.

Should the Board wish to move forward with the Study, it is recommended that the Board establish a RDCO Electoral West – North Westside Governance and Services Study committee, by approving the Ministry of Municipal Affairs Terms of Reference.