



Regional Board Report

Information

Approved for Board Consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Reardon".

Brian Reardon, CAO

To: Regional Board

From: Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

Date: September 26, 2022

Subject: Regional Agricultural Strategy - Update

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority (LGA s.208)*

Purpose: To provide an update to the Regional Board regarding the Regional Agricultural Strategy.

Executive Summary:

The purpose of the Regional Agricultural Strategy (RAS) is to support knowledge sharing, data collection, joint investments, and developing regionally consistent policies to help the larger agricultural food system. The RAS would support related regional initiatives and could coordinate implementation of actions embedded in local level agricultural plans.

The RAS was identified as a priority project under the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Priority Projects Plan and funding was received from the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) to assist with the project.

Recommendation(s):

THAT the Regional Board receives the report Regional Agricultural Strategy - Update from the Director of Community Services, dated September 26, 2022, for information.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Cashin".

Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

Prepared by: Michael Czarny, Senior Planner

Attachments:

- Regional Board Report Dated May 13, 2021 (IAF Funding)
 - Regional Board Report Dated May 13, 2021 (BCHC Grant)
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Strategic Plan Alignment

Priorities: Sustainable Communities

Values: Transparency, Good Governance

Background**Regional Agricultural Strategy**

The strategy's purpose is to support knowledge sharing, data collection, joint investments, and developing regionally consistent policies to help several aspects of the larger agricultural food system. It would support related regional initiatives and could coordinate implementation of actions embedded in local level agricultural plans including the District of Lake Country's Agricultural Plan adopted in 2020, City of Kelowna's Agricultural Plan adopted in 2017 and the City of West Kelowna's Agricultural Plan adopted in 2011 and 2016. The RAS would consist of three phases:

1. Phase 1: Project Initiation, Background Scoping, Agricultural Profile and Background Report
2. Phase 2: Engagement Strategy, Public and Stakeholder Engagement
3. Phase 3: Develop Strategy

Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336

The undertaking of the RAS is supported by the Regional Growth Strategy as it is related to future planning to ensure the viability and protection of agricultural land and agricultural uses. Further, Central Okanagan regional partners have agreed to:

- Policy 3.2.5.1 Encourage cooperation with regional partners, provincial ministries and stakeholders that consider a regional agricultural strategy to identify issues and the present and future needs of the agricultural sector that contributes to the well-being of all residents to guide food security, economic opportunity and the protection of agricultural land;
- Policy 3.2.2.2 Encourage and support related economic development initiatives that address the needs and challenges in the Region;
- Policy 3.2.2.9 Support effectively managing and protecting the integrity of the Region's critical assets such as the lakes, natural environment and agricultural lands that promote attraction of employment and investment;
- Policy 3.2.4.6 Encourage cooperation with Interior Health to explore opportunities to develop healthy community strategies; and
- Policy 3.2.4.8 Incorporating health and principles of a Healthy Built Environment into the development of comprehensive plans.

Regional Growth Strategy Priority Project Plan

The RAS is identified as Project No. 8 in the RGS Priority Project Plan.

#	Project	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	Regional Flood Management Plan: Phases 2 and 3					
2	Regional Planning Lab					
3	Regional Housing Needs Assessment					
4	Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program					
5	Regional Citizen Survey					
6	Regional Housing Strategy					
7	Regional Growth Strategy Five-year Review					
8	Regional Agricultural Strategy					
9	Regional Employment Lands Inventory					

Timeline

In 2021, the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) announced \$40,000 in funding available through the Local Government Partnership Program to help regional districts and municipalities develop, update and implement agricultural planning tools. Likewise, BC Healthy Communities (BCHC) announced \$15,000 in funding available through the PlanH program for the development of healthy public policy.

In May 2021, RDCO staff submitted funding applications through these two programs under direction of the Regional Board for the purpose of developing a RAS that was anticipated to cost \$95,000. In July 2021, staff received confirmation that the RDCO would be granted \$40,000 from IAF with the condition that the project must be completed by December 31, 2022.

RDCO was not successful in the PlanH application for \$15,000.

Constraints including IAF not granting an extension to their timelines, a high number of development applications and staffing levels delayed the project until July 2022. Staff determined that completion of the Regional Agricultural Strategy between July 2022 and December 31, 2022, was not feasible. The scope of the project was amended to a RABR with a projected cost of \$60,000. As the IAF grant can contribute a maximum of 50% of the total project cost, the change in project scope required a change to the grant funding from \$40,000 to \$30,000.

A Request for Proposals for the RABR was published on July 18, 2022, and through the RFP process Upland Agricultural Consulting was selected to complete the project.

Upland Agricultural Consulting

Upland Agricultural Consulting has provided agricultural planning services to local governments in BC and has completed over 18 Agricultural Plans since 2010. The Upland Agricultural Consulting team members include a sub-consultant, Urban Food Strategies, who have in-depth professional and personal knowledge of the Okanagan's agricultural sector and how it fits within the larger BC context. Examples of Upland's work in the area includes the District of Lake Country Agriculture Plan, (2020), City of Kelowna Agriculture Plan (2017), Westbank Centre Agriculture Plan (2016), Food Secure Oliver (2018), and Regional District of North Okanagan Regional Agricultural Plan (2014).

Regional Agricultural Background Report

The purpose of the RABR is to provide a biophysical review to develop an agricultural profile of the region, a policy review including member municipalities agricultural plans, complimentary projects and applicable legislation, and an engagement strategy with a summary of findings through engagement with the agricultural community, partners, and stakeholders. The RABR would inform the future RAS. The background report was originally a deliverable for the RAS required at the conclusion of Phase 1. Through the change in scope, the RABR will also include a portion of Phase 2 of the RAS. The RABR will consist of two phases:

1. Phase 1: Project Initiation, Background Scoping, Agricultural Profile
2. Phase 2: Engagement Strategy, Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Completion of the RABR would complete approximately 50% of the proposed workplan and methodology required for the RAS. Undertaking the RAS would occur in 2023 when additional funding and grant opportunities are available.

Considerations

Organizational/External: As per the funding agreement with IAF, the RDCO will be responsible for the completion of the project by December 31, 2022, and for meeting reporting requirements.

Financial: The total budget for this project is \$60,000. The Local Government Partnership Program funding through Investment Agriculture Foundation contributed a maximum of 50% of the cost eligible activities equal to \$30,000. The RDCO will \$30,000 towards the Regional Agricultural Strategy. An amendment to the 2022 Budget will not be required.

A \$30,000 grant was provided from IAF and \$55,000 was approved by the Board for the Regional Agricultural Strategy through the adoption of the RDCO 2022-2026 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 1502.

Considerations not applicable:

- Legal/Statutory Authority
 - Alternate Recommendation
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