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SUBJECT: REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT SERVICES PUBLIC WORKSHOPS: SUSTAINABILITY & DRINKING WATER PROTECTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update regarding two public workshops - the Sustainability Workshop and the Drinking Water Protection Workshop - that will be conducted as a part of the Regional Growth Management Program this Spring.

BACKGROUND

A Sustainability Workshop and a Drinking Water Protection Workshop are currently being planned by Regional Growth Management Services staff. An update is provided about these workshops.

Sustainability Workshop

The Sustainability Workshop will be held on Saturday, April 3, 2004 at the Coast Bastion Inn.

The Sustainability Workshop is being conducted as a part of the State of Sustainability Project approved by the Board in 2003. The purposes of the Project are: [1] to assess the region’s progress towards sustainability; [2] to make residents aware of the region’s progress towards sustainability; and [3] to provide more and better opportunities to involve residents in that assessment. The Project includes work with the Regional Growth Monitoring Advisory Committee (RGMAC) to: [1] conduct a public event to discuss what sustainability means in the context of the Nanaimo region; [2] confirm an indicator set; [3] report about the sustainability of the region; [4] conduct a public event to discuss the results of that report; and [5] develop and implement a Regional Sustainability Awards Program. The RGMAC includes Director Bill Holdom (Chair), Director David Bartram (Deputy Chair), and nine residents appointed by the Board.

The purposes of the Sustainability Workshop are:
- To raise public awareness about sustainability, the RDN role in advancing sustainability, the regional growth strategy as a tool to promote sustainability, and the assessment of progress towards sustainability;
- To obtain public feedback regarding the characteristics of a sustainable Regional District of Nanaimo for the purpose of identifying possible indicators or measures of sustainability for the region; and
- To obtain information that will be helpful in developing indicators or measures to be used to monitor progress towards a more sustainable region.

The Workshop will consist of a series of presentations, small group discussions and plenary discussions.

Arrangements are being made for Mike Harcourt and Mark Holland to deliver keynote speeches at the Workshop. Mike Harcourt, former BC premier, is presently involved in a number of sustainability projects, including the Prime Minister’s National Round Table on the Environment and Economy, the International Centre for Sustainable Cities, the UBC Sustainable Development Research Institute, and the cities\textsuperscript{PLUS} Project (an International Sustainable Community Design Competition). Mr. Holland, an urban planner and landscape architect, provides consulting advice regarding sustainability and is also presently serving as the first “sustainability manager” for the City of Vancouver. Mr. Harcourt and Mr. Holland will speak about sustainability and how to determine if a region is becoming more or less sustainable.

The public will be informed about the Workshop through newspaper advertisements, the RDN web site and press releases. Additionally, letters will be sent to approximately 200 selected organizations that have roles and responsibilities related to sustainability to inform them about the Workshop directly.

Pre-registration will be required as a maximum of 200 people will be able to be accommodated at the event. A registration process will be established and implemented to help ensure that residents from all of the areas that are funding participants in the Regional Growth Management Service\textsuperscript{2} have an equal opportunity to attend the event. Registrations are not being accepted yet.

A Workshop Report will be written to document the proceedings of the event. It will be made available on the RDN web site and at the RDN offices so that every resident (even those who are unable to attend the event) can benefit from the workshop information.

\textit{Drinking Water Protection Workshop}

The Drinking Water Protection Workshop will be held on Saturday, May 8, 2004 at the Coast Bastion Inn.

The Board approved Terms of Reference and a Consultation Plan for the Drinking Water Protection Initiative Workshop on October 14, 2003.

The purpose of the Workshop is:
- To raise public awareness about the issues associated with drinking water protection;
- To raise public awareness about the new \textit{Drinking Water Protection Act}, particularly as it relates to water provider responsibilities;
- To discuss whether or not the Regional District of Nanaimo should provide assistance to ensure that the requirements of the \textit{Drinking Water Protection Act} are met and residents in the region are provided good quality drinking water.

The Workshop will consist of a series of presentations, small group discussions and plenary discussions.

It is anticipated that the Workshop will include presentations about the following topics:
- The importance of drinking water for human health (i.e. what good quality drinking water is, why good quality drinking water is required, how drinking water quality can be compromised, the range of potential negative human health impacts from consumption of poor quality drinking water);
- The new \textit{Drinking Water Protection Act} (with particular attention to the new drinking water provider requirements) and other legislation applicable to drinking water provision;
- The different types of providers of drinking water in the region (i.e. municipal/regional district, improvement district, water utility, water user community, other systems, individual wells);

Speakers have not yet been secured for these topics. Staff is currently in the process of identifying appropriate speakers with the assistance of the Province.

\textsuperscript{2}City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach, District of Lantzville, Electoral Areas A, C, D, E, F, G, and H.
A Discussion Paper will be published prior to the Workshop. It will provide background information about the topics to be discussed at the Workshop. It will also provide an opportunity for residents to provide feedback. This opportunity will be particularly attractive to people who are unable to attend the Workshop, or who wish to share more detailed perspectives than can be accommodated at the Workshop.

The public will be informed about the Workshop through newspaper advertisements, the RDN web site and press releases. Additionally, letters will be sent to approximately 100 selected organizations that have roles and responsibilities related to drinking water provision to inform them about the workshop directly.

Pre-registration will be required as a maximum of 200 people will be able to be accommodated at the event. A registration process will be established and implemented to help ensure that residents from all areas of the region have an equal opportunity to attend the event. Registrations are not being accepted yet.

A Workshop Report will be written to document the proceedings of the event. It will be made available on the RDN web site and at the RDN offices so that every resident (even those who are unable to attend the event) can benefit from the workshop information.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Receive the report for information.
2. Receive the report for information, and request additional information about specific identified topics.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2004 Regional Growth Management Services budget provides for the anticipated hard costs for the Sustainability Workshop ($15,000) and the Drinking Water Protection Workshop ($14,000).

In October of 2003 the Ministry of Health Planning agreed to provide $14,000 to the RDN for the hard costs associated with Drinking Water Protection Workshop.

SUMMARY

An update is provided regarding the Sustainability Workshop to be conducted on Saturday, April 3, 2004 and the Drinking Water Protection Workshop to be conducted on Saturday, May 8, 2004.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report, “Regional Growth Management Services Public Workshops: Sustainability and Drinking Water Protection,” be received.

Report Writer

General Manager Concurrence

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