

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee  
From: Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning

Date: 2022-07-13  
File No: 640-51-2011-01

**Subject: Regional Growth Strategy Engagement Update**

---

### INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Fraser Valley Regional District Board of information pertaining to ongoing engagement for the updated Fraser Valley Regional District Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), *Fraser Valley Future 2050*. Staff is not looking for a recommendation and has forwarded this information should members want more clarification or to discuss the item further.

### BACKGROUND

In March 2022, final results of the Phase 2 Public Engagement process were presented to the Board. Since then, staff have continued with Indigenous engagement both remotely and, more recently, in-person when invited by the First Nation.

The approach is one of building upon existing relationships and, where relationships do not yet exist, looking forward to developing new relationships as the process proceeds. As noted in the draft plan, there is hope that the RGS **will provide "...opportunities for mutual understanding of governing structures, planning tools, traditions, roles and responsibilities while respecting the views and authority of each party, recognizing that we have a common interest in a sustainable and resilient future."**

Staff have also worked with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to coordinate referrals to provincial ministries and agencies with an interest in the RGS with a goal of streamlining the referral process.

### DISCUSSION

#### Indigenous Engagement

This phase of Indigenous engagement began days before the atmospheric river (AR) event in November 2021. That event and the concurrent COVID-19 Omicron wave delayed the process until January 2022. Prior to the AR event, staff had met several times with People of the River Referral Office (PRRO), who represents 15 First Nations, to review the draft plan and receive input. The most recent

engagement has focussed on 18 non-PRRO affiliated communities and organizations within the region.

The focus of the initial meetings has been to introduce the RGS and the FVRD from a high level, but more importantly it has provided an opportunity for staff to learn about each community and the challenges and successes each community is experiencing. Each community is unique and it is important to respect those differences. Such meetings allow for more opportunities to hear from a community than a larger more formal Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) style meeting would. First Nations will still be invited to participate in future IAC meetings.

Some meetings have resulted in invitations for the FVRD to participate in community events to learn even more about their communities. **One such visit was to Xa'xtsa** (Douglas) First Nation at the north end of Harrison Lake for their annual general meeting in mid-June, the first in-person community event held since the COVID-19 closures.

Some common themes have arisen from engagement to-date – although may be experienced differently in each community:

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) – **the province's framework for reconciliation as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.**
  - Every First Nation community and organization has mentioned the importance of UNDRIP and how free, prior and informed consent will dictate engagement with First Nations moving forward.
- Treaty negotiations
  - Several First Nations in the region are in active treaty negotiation, which may impact the RGS moving forward, including opportunities for collaboration on issues of shared interest.
- Reconciliation and other agreements
  - Several First Nations are negotiating reconciliation agreements with the province. First Nations spoke of the need to increase land area and economic development opportunities, and reconciliation agreements are one mechanism to pursue this.
- Protecting natural areas and culturally significant sites
- Economic development opportunities on and off reserve (housing, industrial, tourism, etc.)
- Opportunities for collaboration
- Rural homelessness
  - People from outside the community living uninvited on or adjacent to reserve lands.
- Climate change and emergency management
- Access for remote communities
  - Road access to schools, emergency services and essential supplies (food, fuel etc) limited by poorly maintained resource roads.
  - Broadband access

Indigenous engagement is ongoing, focussing on second meetings with communities and organizations. A number of communities have noted that they are interested but have had limited capacity due to COVID-19 concerns and dealing with the recovery from **last year's** extreme weather events. As conditions have improved we have been able to schedule meetings with some of these communities.

### **Provincial ministries/agencies**

In addition to directly engaging individual ministries or agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) or Agricultural Land Commission, staff worked with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to coordinate a meeting with provincial ministries and agencies with a goal of streamlining the provincial referral process.

In early May 2022, the draft RGS was presented to an FVRD RGS Provincial Working Group for review. The meeting provided an opportunity to not only introduce the draft Regional Growth Strategy but also to familiarize participants with the FVRD as an organization and providing a regional overview of our population, economy, built-form and growth pressures. Municipal Affairs staff are collating provincial comments and will be forwarding them to the FVRD for consideration.

### **COST**

The costs of RGS consultation are incorporated in the 601 Regional Strategic Planning and Initiatives budget.

### **CONCLUSION**

**Staff continue to actively engage the region's First Nations in developing a plan that will reflect the common interests of a sustainable and resilient future in the FVRD.** The goal is for the Board to begin the adoption process for the *Fraser Valley Future 2050* RGS in early 2023.

### **COMMENTS BY:**

**Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services:** Reviewed and supported.

**Kelly Lownsbrough, Director of Corporate Services/CFO:** Reviewed and supported.

**Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer:** Reviewed and supported.