CORPORATE REPORT

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee   Date: 2023-06-08

From: Theresa Alexander, Planner I   File No: 6430-30-13
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Subject: Launch of RGS Story Map

INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Fraser Valley Regional District Board of information pertaining to a new web component of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Monitoring Program using ArcGIS StoryMaps. Staff is not looking for a recommendation and has forwarded this information should members want more clarification or to discuss the item further.

BACKGROUND

An important aspect of RGS implementation is the monitoring and evaluation of progress or issues related to the Strategy's goals and policies. Reporting and tracking progress on RGS monitoring indicators contributes to collective decision-making by communicating regional opportunities and challenges to relevant senior levels of government, agencies, and organizations.

DISCUSSION

With the support of the GIS department, staff have developed a web-based interactive storytelling tool as part of the RGS monitoring program using ArcGIS StoryMaps, an Esri product hosted on FVRD's web mapping portal. This is the first Story Map developed by staff. The story map will go live for public viewing later this month.

ArcGIS StoryMaps

ArcGIS StoryMaps are configurable web applications that combine interactive maps with multimedia content and text to tell stories visually and geo-spatially. This user-friendly GIS software is designed for non-technical audiences and is ideal for fostering citizen engagement, providing meaningful context to complex topics and concepts, and empowering informed decision-making[1]. Dynamic infographics and charts can be embedded in the site making visuals more approachable and understandable using

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[1] Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware: *GIS Story Maps: A Tool to Empower and Engage Stakeholders in Planning Sustainable Places*, 2016: http://rb.gy/fs7bn

ArcGIS StoryMaps' responsive design offering optimal viewing on different devices, including smartphones and tablets. Web analytics can be used to measure the tool's performance by collecting anonymous data associated with user behaviour such as clicks and downloads.

This tool supports priorities within the FVRD's Strategic Plan related to improving organizational effectiveness. When used in conjunction with other engagement tools, such as FVRD Have Your Say, story maps can improve public participation by growing understanding of specific projects or engagement topics. Story maps may also drive more visits to the FVRD's website; building awareness and understanding of the organization and the services provided.

The RGS Story Map

The RGS Story Map will help to inform and engage various stakeholders, including members of the public, by sharing information related to the thirty-five indicators used to track progress on RGS goals and policies, as well as highlighting important regional opportunities and issues.

Interactive maps allow users to explore spatial data in a way that is not possible with printed maps, which leads to improved engagement[2]. Story map users can zoom in, pan, and click on map features (pop-ups) to explore indicator data at the community level, which provides more value to the user while also helping to build a deeper understanding of regional topics and issues.

The story map reflects the analysis of indicator data included in the 2023 RGS Monitoring Report presented to the FVRD Board in April of this year. Formal monitoring reports will be produced every five years following the release of Statistics Canada Census data. However, the RGS Story Map will be updated annually to reflect updates to non-Census datasets and to reflect new indicators or maps developed by staff.

COST

The costs of the 2023 RGS Monitoring Report are incorporated in the 601 Regional Strategic Planning and Initiatives budget. There are no additional costs associated with using ArcGIS StoryMaps as it is included with the FVRD's enterprise ArcGIS license.

CONCLUSION

The RGS Story Map provides an engaging way for stakeholders, including the public, to learn about RGS indicators and the complexities of managing population growth in the region. The monitoring program as described in this report fully meets RGS reporting requirements as per Section 452 of the *Local Government Act*.

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[2] A Journal of the Society for American Archaeology: *Integrating Digital Datasets into Public Engagement through ArcGIS StoryMaps,* 2020: https://rb.gy/t8lf0

COMMENTS BY:

Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning: Reviewed and supported

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.