



Fraser Valley Regional District
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STAFF REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Electoral Area Services Committee
From: Dawn Smith, MCIP, RPP - Planner 1
Date: May 27, 2014
Subject: Electoral Area "D" Official Community Plan Update - Workplan & Project Scope
File No.: 6480-20-427

FOR INFORMATION:

That the Fraser Valley Regional District Board receive for information the memorandum dated May 27, 2014 as the workplan and project scope report for the Electoral Area 'D' Official Community Plan Update.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES:

The FVRD is commencing an update to the Official Community Plan for Electoral Area "D". This report provides details on the proposed workplan, scope and budget of the OCP Update.

BACKGROUND:

Adopted in 1998, the Electoral Area "D" Official Community Plan has influenced land use in the Popkum-Bridal Falls for over 16 years. During this time a number of OCP amendments have occurred to facilitate suburban residential subdivision and recreation commercial developments as they arose. Generally, the OCP has functioned well during periods of growth in the community providing guidance to the Regional Board, FVRD staff and the public.

Electoral Area "D" is a growing community in the FVRD. From 1996 to 2011 (15 years), Electoral Area "D" has experienced a growth rate of 26% (Statistics Canada Census), meaning approximately 281 new residents have moved to Popkum-Bridal Falls. The community is expected to continue growing and new OCP policy is needed to ensure policies are relevant with current values and legislation to manage growth effectively.

DISCUSSION:

Following the update of OCP's in Electoral Area's "F", "G", and "E", the Update to the EA "D" was identified in the approved 2014 EA Planning Section Workplan. While 16 years has passed since the last EA "D" update, development in Popkum-Bridal Falls has generally kept to the Plan objectives, which primarily include:

- develop away from farmland/ALR, floodplain, watershed and geotechnical hazard areas
- enhance local identity and organize/separate conflicting land uses
- focus highway tourist – recreation commercial to Trans-Canada Highway south and Highway 9/Yale Rd intersection
- ensure appropriate water & sewage disposal
- protect, enhance and promote outdoor recreation – including Cheam Lake, Mount Cheam, Bridal Veil Falls
- protect agricultural land uses and compatibility between residential & agricultural uses

The current OCP has received ongoing support as development proposals have arisen and tested policy over time. The overall suburban residential form of development in Popkum fulfills a market niche and receives continued interest. FVRD staff anticipates that the OCP will be updated to address community values, new legislation (including servicing policy), and FVRD Board policy. Details of the policy update areas are presented in the Scope section below.

Scope

The current OCP land use designations respond to a number of technical land use constraints present in Popkum-Bridal Falls, including; geotechnical slopes from Mt. Cheam, Fraser River floodplain, water service areas, septic and wastewater treatment options, Agricultural Land Reserve, and utility and highway corridors (ie. Trans-Canada Highway, pipeline or hydro right of way). These same constraints remain. Accordingly, FVRD staff generally expects the OCP Update will maintain or build upon existing policies. However new information, legislation or community values point to policy review in the following seven key areas:

- ***Geotechnical hazards***
Popkum-Bridal Falls is located between the steep mountain slopes and creeks of Mt. Cheam and the Fraser River. The Popkum-Bridal Falls geotechnical overview study is underway to provide updated information for the OCP.
- ***Servicing and development***
Clarify water and wastewater servicing requirements based on recommendations from Electoral Area “D” Sewer Management Plan, and the Sewer and Water Gap Analysis reports by Urban Systems Ltd.
- ***Commercial form and character***
Review of current form and character policy in the commercial areas to reflect any changes in community values, and ensure high quality development continues in EA “D”.
- ***Suburban residential areas***
The current suburban residential density in Popkum has retained strong support and interest over the years. FVRD staff does not anticipate significant changes in current density policies. However the OCP update will review existing and new/future growth areas to accommodate residential development and/or redevelopment.
- ***Agricultural – residential boundary issues***
Popkum-Bridal Falls features a significant portion of Agricultural Land Reserve parcels, some of which are adjacent to residential neighbourhoods. Updating this policy area will require the co-operation of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).
- ***Trails***
Identify pedestrian connections within the community and to the Fraser River, Cheam Wetlands and Bridal Falls Provincial Park, and implementation approaches to facilitate their development.
- ***Improved readability***
The OCP document should be accessible to all readers. The OCP Update will include revisions to the format/layout, and utilize straightforward language and illustrations where possible.

Limitations

While an OCP in a wide-ranging document which outlines a vision for the community, there are boundaries to the power and extent of FVRD and OCP policy. Meaning that the OCP cannot directly regulate outcomes or make decisions in areas beyond our local government powers (ie. roads/highways, forestry or first nations land). These issues are outside the jurisdiction of the FVRD.

For example, the numerous pipeline, highway, railway and utility services passing though through Popkum-Bridal Falls enroute to points north, west and east. Given their strategic importance, federal and provincial legislation limits the local government role in their operation and land use. OCP policies can provide an advocacy role and even set out guidelines for consideration.

Workplan

In order to complete the OCP Update, FVRD staff proposes a four phase work plan presented in greater detail at the end of this report as Appendix A.



Consultation Strategy

Early and ongoing consultation is an essential and legislated requirement of the OCP update process. Community values help to inform many aspects of the plan such as future patterns of development, community values such as trail opportunities, density and housing options. The Regional District must identify who and how to undertake consultation, such as residents, business owners, First Nations and government agencies. A comprehensive consultation strategy dated May 27, 2014 is available on the June 2014 Regional Board agenda.

COST:

The Electoral Area "D" OCP Update is a scheduled 2014 Electoral Area Planning Section work priority. Funding is available in the 2014 Electoral Area Planning approved budget.

COMMENTS BY:

DIRECTOR OF EA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

Reviewed and supported.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER:

Comments, if any will be provided at the meeting.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

Reviewed and supported.