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TO: Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Road to 2030: Comox Valley Climate Action Challenge

Purpose

To provide an update on the Climate Action Community Action Granting Program recommended by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board September 15, 2020.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

This staff report is provided for information.

Executive Summary

- Road to 2030: Comox Valley Climate Action Challenge is a participatory competition to support community-led climate action projects that advance the Regional Growth Strategy's target of 50 per cent greenhouse gas emission reductions by 2030. Community members of all ages, local non-profit organizations and small local businesses with high impact climate action projects in the Comox Valley are invited to apply. \$27,000 will be awarded to either one outstanding project or split for up to three selected projects. The purpose is to provide grant funding to incentivize local climate action projects.
- Projects will be accepted from areas in water management, transportation, renewable energy, sequestration, food and solid waste management. Projects will be evaluated according to their Green House Gas (GHG) reduction capabilities, community impact, feasibility, scalability and durability.
- The grants for the competition will be funded by the remaining amount used to purchase verified carbon offsets for 2019.
- Community engagement to date includes the creation and consultation of an advisory group represented by CVRD staff and consultation with the School District No. 71.
- The granting program will be implemented over the course of four months. Information dissemination was initiated with the news release and website launch of the program on February 25, 2021. The competition winners will be announced on June 18, 2021 and awarded their grants on June 26, 2021.

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Government Partners and Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

City of Courtenay	✓
Town of Comox	✓
Village of Cumberland	✓
K'ómoks First Nation	✓
School District No. 71	✓

Background/Current Situation

In September 2020, the board directed staff to proceed with the establishment of a granting program that would catalyze community-led climate action and GHG emission reductions. The board directed that the remaining 2019 offset funds of \$31,170 be used to finance the program. GHG Accounting in partnership with Local Carbon Fund were retained to design and implement the granting program.

Program Design

The Community Climate Action Granting Program has been branded as the Road to 2030: Comox Valley Climate Challenge. This is in keeping with the board's strategic drivers for climate action and community partnerships. The program branding was also inspired by the Regional Growth Strategy's midterm target to reduce GHG Emissions by 50 per cent from 2007 levels. An advisory group represented by nine members from various departments in the CVRD was consulted in two meetings on December 2, 2020 and February 11, 2021 to provide feedback and review the program design. The grant competition will seek applications from the following challenge areas:

1. Water management
2. Transportation
3. Renewable Energy
4. Sequestration (e.g. Reforestation/Afforestation/Wetland Restoration)
5. Food (e.g. Waste/Security/Local Production)
6. Solid Waste Management

Timeline

Date	Event / Phase
Feb 25, 2021	Webpage launch, news release and competition information dissemination
Mar 12, 2021	Virtual Information Session (CVRD Zoom)
Mar 12, 2021	Challenge Forum Opens (Connect CVRD Question and Answer)
Apr 14, 2021	Virtual Capacity Building Workshop (How to measure GHG emissions)
Apr 22, 2021	Competition Opens (Earth Day)
Jun 08, 2021	Selection Committee Reviews applications (tentative to schedules)
Jun 18, 2021	Winner Announcement (Connect CVRD)
Jun 26, 2021	Award Ceremony (Virtual / In person)

Grant Competition

The grant competition is available for projects that do not have the scale or capacity to participate in traditional carbon offset markets. The program invites individuals, non-profits, community organizations and small local businesses to apply for a grant to catalyze climate action. The competition will seek the best community-led project ideas in the CVRD in the six identified challenge areas. The projects must demonstrate that the grant will be used to reduce community GHG emissions which provides a service to the community. Projects must satisfy the evaluation criteria which requires the demonstration of GHG impact, community impact, feasibility, scalability and durability. The competition is developed in a way that benefits the local community. Community engagement will be enhanced in the implementation phase through a capacity building

workshop. Program engagement will be conducted on the Connect CVRD Road to 2030 and virtual zoom sessions.

Virtual Information Session

The information session will be a virtual session that will provide more detailed information about the challenge areas, submission boundaries and selection criteria. This will be supported by an online forum on the Road to 2030 Connect CVRD page that will publicly answer competition questions, facilitate the conversations of community members and manage the interactions between community members.

Virtual Capacity Building Workshop

The virtual capacity building workshop is a learning opportunity where community members can learn more about climate action and GHG emission reduction strategies. Community members who register for the workshop will learn how to calculate and quantify GHG emissions based on internationally recognized protocols and industry best practices. GHG Accounting will lead this capacity building workshop.

Selection Process

A selection committee made of four to six community members, including three School District No. 71 secondary students, will be invited to be part of the judging panel. The members will be provided with some capacity building for their role. The following criteria will be used to select projects and project ideas.

1. GHG Impact – Projects: ideas that have an environmental impact with real GHG emission reductions that are quantifiable within the period till 2030.
2. Community Impact / Co-benefits – Projects: ideas that benefit the entire community and not just one individual household. Benefits may include potential for improved air quality, health and social resilience outcomes.
3. Feasibility – Projects: ideas must be supported within the community and be able to provide a business case that is supported by the community because of the community benefits.
4. Scalability – Projects: ideas should demonstrate the potential to be scaled out and the ability to grow and be implemented on a larger scale.
5. Durability – Projects: ideas should create an irreversible and lasting reduction in GHG emissions.

Next Steps

Most of the aspects of the program design have been completed. The next steps entail the implementation of the various events over the next four months. These key events include the virtual information session, the capacity building workshop, establishment of a selection committee and the selection, announcement and granting of winning submissions.

Policy Analysis

Each year, the CVRD reports on corporate emissions as part of our participation in the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program (CARIP). The climate action granting program is an initiative to spend the remainder of the budgeted carbon offset funds to reduce local emissions without the restrictions of the CARIP program or *Climate Action Charter*.

Options

This report serves to update the board on the current stage of the Community Climate Action Granting Program which has been rebranded as the Road to 2030: Comox Valley Climate Action Challenge.

Financial Factors

The program is financed by \$31,170 which remained from the purchase of verified carbon offsets in 2019. GHG Accounting/Local Carbon Fund were retained to design and implement the granting program. \$4,000 was allocated to the consultant and the remaining \$ 27,170 will be used to award the winners of the competition.

Legal Factors

The granting program is not considered to be providing assistance to business which is prohibited in the Local Government Act under section 273. Only projects that demonstrate GHG reductions which provide a service to the community are eligible for the grant.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The Regional Growth Strategy, Bylaw No. 120, being the “Comox Valley Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 120, 2010”, has adopted a long-term target of 80 per cent reduction of GHG emissions from 2007 levels by 2050, with a mid-term target of 50 per cent reduction by 2030. (Goal 8: Climate Change). Reducing GHG emissions from buildings relates to regional climate change goals

Intergovernmental Factors

The Road to 2030 is a regional initiative: the competition is open to community members in the CVRD which includes the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, the K’ómoks First Nation and Electoral Areas A, B and C excluding Hornby and Denman Islands.

Interdepartmental Involvement

Planning staff are responsible for the coordination and promotion of the program. Assistance is provided by communications staff. The Road to 2030 Advisory Group was well supported with interdepartmental staff members who provided feedback on the design and direction of the program.

Citizen/Public Relations

The community will be informed about the competition through the CVRD website and the media. Community members are also encouraged to participate in the online forum on the project page and Connect CVRD page. Participants may also be involved by partaking in the virtual sessions.