

DATE: November 3, 2020**FILE:** 0540-20/IRTSC**TO:** Chair and Members
Integrated Regional Transportation Select Committee**FROM:** Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer**RE:** **Integrated Regional Transportation
Select Committee - Update***R. Dyson***Purpose**

To update the Integrated Regional Transportation Select Committee (IRTSC) on the status of its mission and associated initiatives by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD).

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

None. This report is presented for informational purposes.

Executive Summary

- In 2016 the CVRD Board established the IRTSC to consider matters relating to collaboration on regional transportation projects, priorities and infrastructure including the specific promotion of a bike commuter path along Comox Road.
- Since its establishment the IRTSC has investigated and advanced each of the initiatives identified within its Terms of Reference (Appendix A). Specifically, the IRTSC's work to investigate approaches to regional cooperation for transportation initiatives is now nearing fruition with the establishment of an ongoing regional collaboration model, delivered under the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy Service (RGS) and formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix B).
- The Committee was also tasked with the specific promotion of a bike path along Comox Road, a corridor within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI), the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and K'ómoks First Nation (KFN). While significant progress was achieved, including a strategic analysis, stakeholder workshop, design renderings and preliminary cost estimates, the complexity of the project and required alignment with the desires and priorities of the key stakeholders has necessitated a suspension of the project and consideration over the long term.
- Although the IRTSC's broad membership and representation provides a valuable forum for dialogue respecting regional transportation projects and initiatives, the new regional collaboration model being established draws on the existing governance and advisory structures already established through the RGS Service. While direct public participation is absent, this approach reflects the limited capacity of staff and is predicated on the principle that public engagement will be considered on a project-by-project basis. It is also worth noting that as work progresses under this service community champions and other forms of active involvement are anticipated for initiatives that reflect the principle of integrated regional transportation.

- Public members' involvement with the IRTSC has proven valuable to bring concerns and issues forward that are not always raised through regular staff or elected official consideration. This unique perspective was evident in both of the IRTSC's key projects and helped to raise new ideas and "ground truth" aspects of the work.
- Concurrent with the work of the IRTSC the CVRD Board has expressed a strong desire to advance a holistic approach to transportation in order to meet the goals of the RGS. This was affirmed during the Board's strategic planning session conducted in September of this year in which they identified specific service outcomes, including, but not limited to, improved mobility, reduced GHG emissions, mode shift away from private vehicles and efficient use of public resources.
- As an initial step in activating work on regional transportation under the RGS, the CVRD Board has endorsed preparation of a Regional Active Transportation Network Plan. Grant funding has been received for this work and a procurement process is now underway with project completion estimated for Spring of 2021.
- Select committees are time-limited in that when findings are presented, the select committee disbands. This report seeks to engage the IRTSC respecting its mandate and the associated considerations. CVRD staff plan to present a report to Board in late November providing a review of the work plan for transportation related initiatives and will utilize the IRTSC's feedback to help inform any recommendations in this regard.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

J. Martens

J. Warren

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General Manager of Corporate Services

James Warren
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Government Partners and Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

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| N/A | ✓ |
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Background/Current Situation

The Integrated Regional Transportation Select Committee was established in 2016 following a referral from the City of Courtenay to establish a "Go Smart Advisory Committee" that would serve as a resource for cross-agency collaboration and make recommendations to the local governments and other agencies represented respecting active transportation issues.

Upon consideration by the CVRD, the IRTSC was established to:

- Provide a venue for regional representatives to discuss transportation projects and infrastructure and explore the concept of a single point of contact for transportation-related initiatives in the Comox Valley; and
- Promote the development and construction of a bike commuter path along Comox Road between the City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox by identifying appropriate funding sources and partnerships and specifically developing an application to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's (MOTI) BikeBC funding program for roadside greenway improvements.

Since its establishment the IRTSC has made considerable progress on these matters, particularly in light of the complex and patchwork nature of transportation jurisdiction and management. A brief

timeline is provided below highlighting the investigation and advancement of such work over the last several years.

| Date | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| Summer/Fall 2016 | - IRTSC Terms of Reference approved and membership confirmed |
| Winter 2017 | - Presentation to local governments and stakeholders re: Comox Road multi-use path - Review of CVRD governance, services and service delivery framework - Presentations from local stakeholders and community groups on active transportation |
| Summer 2017 | - Delivery of regional transportation planning collaboration survey - Technical workshops held on Comox Road multi-use path - Recommendation advanced to the CVRD Board to establish an advocacy and planning service for regional transportation initiatives. In response, the Board sought further consideration of service delivery options. |
| Fall/Winter 2017 | - Completion of strategic analysis respecting the Comox Road multi-use path - Further consideration of service options respecting regional transportation planning and advocacy - Development of Comox Road multi-use path and stakeholder presentation |
| Winter 2018 | - Development of concept renderings of Comox Road multi-use path |
| Summer 2018 | - Presentation to stakeholders regarding Comox Road multi-use path |
| Fall 2018 | - Limited activity by IRTSC due to local government elections |
| Winter 2019 | - Re-introduction of the various regional transportation service delivery and governance models and consideration by the IRTSC. |
| Spring/Summer 2019 | - Identification of preferred regional transportation service delivery and governance model and recommendation to the CVRD Board to establish an agreement (Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)) with regional stakeholders to undertake transportation planning and advocacy under the Regional Growth Strategy Service - Suspension of the Comox Road multi-use path project based on feedback from stakeholders |
| Winter/Spring 2020 | - Presentation of draft Regional Transportation Memorandum of Understanding to local governments and other agencies |
| Fall 2020 | - CVRD Board ratifies Regional Transportation Memorandum of Understanding |

At the current time, the CVRD is awaiting final ratification by the parties of the proposed MOU. Based on the feedback received, this is expected to occur shortly prior to the end of 2020. As the MOU serves as a written understanding of the commitments and responsibilities of the parties to enhance co-operative planning and advocacy respecting transportation issues that have a regional and, therefore, multi-jurisdictional impact, this document represents a concluding milestone respecting the IRTSC's primary purpose.

In conjunction with the recommendations of the IRTSC respecting regional transportation planning and advocacy, the CVRD Board has provided consistent direction to advance a holistic approach to transportation and transit service management in order to meet their corporate goals and that of the RGS. This was affirmed during the Board's strategic planning session conducted in September in which they identified the following specific service outcomes:

- Improved mobility of citizens
- Reduced GHG emissions

- Convenient and safe alternatives to gas fueled automobiles
- Efficient use of public money
- Mode shift away from private gas fueled vehicles
- A broad community conversation about transportation

Clearly, this transition to a broader consideration of transportation in the Comox Valley aligns with the framework for regional policy development and planning through the Regional Growth Strategy framework as proposed by the IRTSC. In this regard, staff have already established an initial work plan for regional transportation initiatives, including the development of a regional active transportation network plan and electric vehicle charger installation strategy. Also envisioned for 2021 is scoping of a transportation alternatives assessment project that considers the broad aspects of the community including alternative modes of transportation and opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The framework established by the IRTSC will facilitate collaboration and conversation about these and other transportation projects in a local government technical and planning setting and at the political level through the CVRD Board. Community engagement and participation will be considered with each project to help determine the role of the public in the planning and decision-making.

In addition to investigating approaches to regional collaboration, the IRTSC was also tasked with the specific promotion of a bike path along Comox Road, a corridor within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox and K'ómoks First Nation (KFN). As noted in the summary timeline above, substantial progress was achieved prior to the suspension of the project in 2019. The complexity of the project and required alignment with the desires and priorities of the key stakeholders has necessitated a continued suspension and consideration over the long term. This status is not expected to change in the short term but the project will continue to be considered as part of the ongoing active transportation planning work under the RGS.

Policy Analysis

The Terms of Reference for the IRTSC identify that the Committee exists until the latter of:

- The final presentation of options associated with exploring the concept of a single point of contact for transportation-related initiatives in the Comox Valley; and
- Substantial promotion for the development and construction of a bike commuter path along Comox Road between the City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox. The Committee exists at the pleasure of the Board.

Although not entirely complete, these matters have reached milestones in which further work by the IRTSC is not required at this time.

Options

Upon consideration of this report, the IRTSC may:

1. Advance a recommendation to the Board to consider an amendment to its Terms of Reference;
2. Advance a recommendation respecting the status of the existing IRTSC assignments; or
3. Take no action at this time and receive further direction or decision by the CVRD Board.

Financial Factors

If the IRTSC is to continue it will require increased resourcing through a financial commitment to reflect the necessary staff resources to prepare reports, action recommendations/direction, prepare agendas and minutes, attend meetings and conduct follow-up activities, as well as cover meeting

expenses and, if required, newspaper advertising, internet and social media promotion and public engagement depending on the nature of the work undertaken.

Legal Factors

In accordance with section 218 of the *Local Government Act* (RSBC, 2015, c.1) select committees are tasked with considering or inquiring into any matter and reporting its findings and opinions to the Board. Select committees are generally time-limited in that when findings are presented, the select committee disbands. The terms of reference acknowledge that the IRTSC is not a decision making authority.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The work of the IRTSC, namely the investigation of a model for regional transportation collaboration, is directly aligned with Goal 4 of the Regional Growth, as follows:

- Transportation: Develop an accessible, efficient, affordable and connected multi-modal transportation network.

Intergovernmental Factors

The IRTSC includes representation from the Comox Valley member municipalities and other regional agencies as well as members of the public. One of the goals of the select committee was to provide a venue for collaborative discussions on transportation projects amongst the local governments and regional agencies. Through the work and investigation by the Committee, it was confirmed that such staff-level collaboration exists at the current time, though through informal means. The proposed MOU on regional transportation planning and advocacy provides for a more formal structure of collaboration through the senior planning and administrative staff (“Technical Advisory Committee” and “Steering Committee”) of the various local governments and agencies. Final decision making would be held by the CVRD Board with representation from each local government.

Interdepartmental Involvement

The work of the IRTSC has been supported by the Corporate Services Branch, Planning and Development Branch and the Community Services Branch. Supports have included administrative support to the committee, including producing agendas and minutes, preparing reports, conducting follow-up activities and co-ordinating public engagement efforts, as well as technical support respecting the proposed Comox Road multi-use path.

Citizen/Public Relations

The contributions of the members of the public and stakeholder representatives to the IRTSC is greatly valued. New perspectives on issues, fulsome dialogue and diverse expertise and experiences have contributed to the meaningful progress achieved to date.

Annual projects and initiatives under the RGS are considered on a case-by-case basis for public engagement and participation. A public advisory committee does not exist and is not planned at the current time.

Attachments: Appendix A – “IRTSC Terms of Reference”
Appendix B – “Regional Transportation Memorandum of Understanding”

File: 0540-20

Terms of Reference
Integrated Regional Transportation Select Committee

Mission: Established by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board of Directors and comprising of elected officials, agency or partner representatives and members of the public, this committee considers matters relating to collaboration on regional transportation projects, priorities and infrastructure including the specific promotion of a bike commuter path or multi-use corridor along Comox Road and the development of an application to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's (MOTT) BikeBC funding program for roadside greenway improvements. The mission includes consideration of the concept of a single point of contact for transportation-related initiatives in the Comox Valley.

Authority: The Integrated Regional Transportation Select Committee (IRTSC) serves as an advisory body to the CVRD Board. The committee may also provide advice to CVRD member municipalities and regional partner organizations.

Mandate: The IRTSC will have the authority to provide advice to the Board on matters pertaining to its mission.

Membership: As a select committee of the CVRD Board, the Board has appointed the following to comprise the IRTSC:

- Director Grieve / Alternate – Director Hamir representing the CVRD electoral areas
- Councillor David Frisch (Chair)/ Alternate Melanie McCollum representing the City of Courtenay
- Councillor Alex Bissinger/ Alternate Stephanie McGowan representing the Town of Comox
- Village of Cumberland – Councillor Vicky Brown/ Alternate Jesse Ketler (liaison role only)
- K'ómoks First Nation – Chief Councillor Nicole Rempel
- School District No. 71 – Sheila McDonnell / Alternate Kat Hawksby
- John Higginbotham as a member of the public
- Angela Holmes (Vice-Chair) as a member of the public
- Catherine Davidson as a member of the public
- Georgina Price as a member of the public

Alycia Traas representing the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure serves as a staff resource.

Committee Chair: The committee shall elect a chair and vice-chair from amongst its members at the first meeting of the committee. The chair and/or vice-chair serves until such time as the committee resolves to determine a new chair and/or vice-chair.

Meeting Frequency: The committee shall meet on a quarterly basis throughout the year unless otherwise required.

Resources: The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will determine and assign a staff member as an advisor to the committee. If necessary, a recording secretary may also be appointed. The committee will also be accorded a budget to cover meeting expenses, meals/coffee, photocopying and other related activities.

Tenure: This select committee exists until the latter of:

- The final presentation of options associated with exploring the concept of a single point of contact for transportation-related initiatives in the Comox Valley; and
- Substantial promotion for the development and construction of a bike commuter path or multi-use corridor along Comox Road between the City of Courtenay and the Town of Comox.

The committee exists at the pleasure of the Board.

Reporting: The committee will provide its minutes to the corporate legislative officer within 48 hours of any committee meeting. Where the Board feels it is necessary, the committee may be asked to meet with the Board and brief the Board on an issue(s) within its purview. This invitation shall be extended to the chair of the committee as the representative of the committee.

Contact with the Media: Any contact with the media regarding issues related to the work of this committee shall be handled by the committee chair or shall be referred by the committee chair to the CVRD Board Chair. If the matter under questioning by the media deals with CVRD Board policy around issues related to the work of this committee, the matter shall be referred to the Board Chair. The Chief Administrative Officer and General Manager of Corporate Services will provide assistance and / or guidance to the Board Chair and Committee Chair in responding to the media.

Public Meetings: Unless otherwise provided for in the CVRD procedure bylaw, the committee meetings are open to the public. Where the matter deals with an issue that is confidential, the committee may adjourn to an “in-camera” session to discuss that matter.

Terms of Reference History

Approved: July 26, 2016
Amended: February 23, 2017
November 28, 2017
January 29, 2019
February 26, 2019

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**BETWEEN:**

**THE COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT, THE CITY OF COURTENAY,
THE TOWN OF COMOX, THE VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND, SCHOOL
DISTRICT NO. 71 and the MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

REGARDING:**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING WITHIN THE COMOX VALLEY**

**THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING dated for reference the ____ day of
_____ 2020.**

1.0 PREAMBLE

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) adopted Bylaw No. 120 being “Comox Valley Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 120, 2010” on March 29, 2011 to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources. The RGS outlines the need for regional coordination on a variety of issues that cross local government boundaries, including housing, transportation, food security, public health, environmental protection and climate change and economic development. With respect to transportation, Goal 4 and its supporting objectives of the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy provide for the following:

- **Goal 4: Transportation:**

Develop an accessible, efficient and affordable multi-modal transportation network that connects Core Settlement Areas and designated Town Centres, and links the Comox Valley to neighbouring communities and regions.

Objective 4-A: Increase public transit use.

Objective 4-B: Improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to increase the use of active transportation options.

Objective 4-C: Develop and maintain an inter-regional transportation system that efficiently and safely facilitates the movement of people and goods.

In addition to the goals, objectives and supporting policies outlined in the RGS, the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox and the Village of Cumberland have identified objectives and requirements for transportation mobility within their official community plans. Recognizing the affinities in provincial, regional and community goals for transportation planning for the future of the Comox Valley, and the need for coordination between the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Regional District, the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox, the Village of Cumberland and School District No. 71 in establishing and implementing unified regional policies and strategic transportation plans, the parties establish this Memorandum of Understanding (herein after referred to as ‘MOU’) to foster enhanced cooperation towards achieving the transportation goals and objectives of the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy.

This MOU relates only to the goals, objectives and policies of the Regional Growth Strategy that are related to transportation. Specific implementation agreements are intended to be developed in the future with respect to the projects and initiatives developed to achieve the transportation objectives within the Regional Growth Strategy.

2.0 PART 2 - PURPOSE

This MOU provides a mechanism for the development of inter-jurisdictional strategies and plans for implementing the growth management goals and commitments in the Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). Its purpose is to serve as a written understanding of the commitments and responsibilities of the parties to enhance cooperative planning and advocacy respecting transportation issues that have a regional and, therefore, multi-jurisdictional impact.

The parties acknowledge that notwithstanding any wording contained within, neither the MOU as a whole nor any of its parts taken separately are intended to be either a contract or contractual in nature. This MOU is not legally binding in any way and places no legal obligation on the parties either individually or collectively.

3.0 PART 3 - PRINCIPLES

The parties are committed to the following principles:

- **Local Autonomy:** mutual respect for the different and distinct statutory powers, authority, ownership and responsibility relating to land use and transportation related infrastructure and services, and acknowledgement that this MOU does not amend, modify, limit, extend or add to statutory powers and authority. Any formal actions that may result from this MOU, between the parties, have to follow the appropriate decision-making protocols;
- **Holistic:** appreciation of the need for a complete system-view in terms of the transportation system's social, economic and environmental impacts and value for a coherent multi-modal system for the cost-effective and efficient movement of people and goods.
- **Healthy and Sustainable:** active transportation has been demonstrated to provide multiple transportation, environmental and public health benefits, including promoting physical activity, reducing contributions to climate change, improving air quality and improving community livability. For these reasons active transportation strategies should be given priority status.
- **Equity:** Universal access to affordable, reliable, safe, and accessible transportation options provides equal access to social and economic opportunities. Strategies and plans should seek to eliminate transportation-related disparities for low-income and other disadvantaged communities.
- **Co-ordinated Planning and Co-operation:** appreciation of the need for co-ordinated regional planning and co-operation on regionally-significant transportation projects and programs.

4.0 PART 4 - GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

- 4.1 The Comox Valley Regional District Board, as the service participants of the Regional Growth Strategy Service, Function 512, is the governing body for the operation and administration of the service.
- 4.2 Without limiting the scope of responsibilities of the Senior Manager of Sustainability and RGS Planning for the Comox Valley Regional District, this position shall be responsible for the operation and administration of the services under this MOU, including the following specific matters:
- a) preparing and presenting an annual budget and workplan for the services under this MOU;
 - b) reporting to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and CVRD Board with respect to the work undertaken for services under this MOU and any other matter considered appropriate.

5.0 PART 5 - ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- 5.1 The Comox Valley Regional Growth Strategy Technical Advisory Committee shall serve as advisory committees concerning the services provided under this MOU. When matters concerning regional transportation are considered by the TAC, the membership shall include a staff representative from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and School District No. 71.
- 5.2 The activities of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) are to include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a) to provide comments or advice upon request, or at the Committee's initiative, to local government boards/councils, or other agencies respecting regional transportation initiatives;
 - b) to ensure proper process and consultation in regards to regional transportation plans and priorities, policy, monitoring, and related issues;
 - c) to support the monitoring and evaluation of this MOU and progress towards the achievement of the Regional Growth Strategy goals and objectives related to transportation.
- 5.3 The TAC shall provide such advice and comments in the form of a report prepared by regional district staff, to the Steering Committee. Upon receipt of a report from the Technical Advisory Committee, the Steering Committee will meet to review and discuss. The Steering Committee will provide its comments and recommendations to the CVRD Board via a report prepared by regional district staff.
- 5.4 The TAC shall meet as necessary and at least twice each calendar year to discuss each jurisdiction's regionally-significant transportation projects and consider the annual budget and work plan for services under this MOU.

- 5.5 The TAC may receive and require reports and information regarding the services under this MOU as it considers necessary.

6.0 PART 6 - SERVICES

- 6.1 The services established and provided in respect of this MOU, and without limiting the forgoing, may include:
- a) regional transportation data-collection and monitoring;
 - b) advocacy respecting transportation issues of common interest to the local governments and other agencies within the Comox Valley;
 - c) multi-modal regional transportation planning and policy development; and
 - d) public education and promotion respecting active transportation.
- 6.2 The specific services to be provided under this MOU shall be considered annually by the Comox Valley Regional District Board as part of the budget deliberations concerning the Regional Growth Strategy Service, Function 512.

7.0 PART 7 - FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Funding for services and projects under this MOU shall be provided under the Comox Valley Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Service, Function 512.
- 7.2 Notwithstanding any provision of this MOU, the expenditure of money by any party to achieve any of the objectives or plans established by, set out in or created by this MOU or to fulfil any of the commitments set in out or created by this MOU is subject to funds being available.
- 7.3 The parties acknowledge that this MOU is not intended to be a procurement instrument or influence procurement in any way. Any procurement resulting from or required by the implementation of this MOU must be accomplished in accordance with applicable procurement laws, regulations and policies.

8.0 PART 8 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 8.1 This MOU may be reviewed in conjunction with the formal reviews of the Comox Valley Regional District Regional Growth Strategy or at the request of any of the parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF THE parties have executed this Memorandum of Understanding as of the date first above written.

COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

by its authorized signatory:

THE CITY OF COURTENAY

by its authorized signatory:

THE TOWN OF COMOX

by its authorized signatory:

THE VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND

by its authorized signatory:

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 71

by its authorized signatory:

THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

by its authorized signatory: