REGIONAL DISTRICT of CENTRAL OKANAGAN

APPENDIX 1

DELEGATION REQUEST FORM

Name of person or group wishing to appear:

North Westside Community Association and North Westside Governance Committee Representative

Callie Simpson

Subject of presentation: RDCO Board follow through on the January 15, 2018 North Westside Services & Community Issues Report - "Next Steps" Consideration #3 - "Staff fully supports EPI's commentary and recommends the Board instruct staff to apply for a Restructure Planning Grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing".

Purpose of presentation:

RDCO Staff have been advised and fully support EPI's recommendation of the Board instruction to staff to apply for a Restructure Planning

- [ ] Information only
- [X] Requesting a letter of support
- [ ] Requesting funding
- [X] Other (provide details below)

Grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to conduct a detailed diagnostic assessment of the service areas and costing that are principal concerns to the community. It is the Community's understanding that under the "Next Steps" the RDCO has achieved their "ask" (step 1 & 2) which included the financial resources to retain a communications subject matter expert along with the ongoing development of the website. Now the community is looking for follow through on our ask of having an independent consultant conducting a detailed diagnostic assessment to reach their own conclusions.

Telephone number: 250-870-6858 **Email address:** callie.simpson75@gmail.com

Meeting and date requested: June 22, 2020

In order to accommodate our resident's work schedules we prefer to attend a Monday evening meeting

Technical requirements:

Will you be using a PowerPoint presentation ☐ Yes

If yes, you are required to submit prior to the meeting or bring the presentation on a memory stick.

If your software requirements are not compatible with the Regional District's you will be unable to use an electronic presentation.

For more information contact:

Corporate Services
1450 K.L.O. Road
Kelowna, B.C. V1W 3Z4
Telephone: (250) 469-6224
Fax: (250) 763-0606
www.regionaldistrict.com

To facilitate constructive and effective public engagement, the following information is provided:

1. A ten-minute time limit is necessary regardless of how many people will speak. Try to leave time for questions.
2. Name of person &/or group and subject will be published on the agenda (available to public and on website)
3. You are required to provide supporting documentation to be published in the agenda (no later than the Tuesday of the week prior to the meeting). If using PowerPoint, it is to be provided in advance and will be pre-loaded on the Regional District's computer.
4. Direct your presentation to the Regional Board or Board Committee.
5. Use the microphone provided.
6. Participate with integrity. A collaborative and respectful approach is appreciated.
7. Be concise.
8. Do not expect an immediate answer – your issue may be referred to staff for more information or to another meeting for further consideration.
9. Delegations regarding any aspect of an Official Community Plan or a Zoning application are prohibited between the conclusion of Public Hearing and Adoption of the Bylaw.
10. Your presentation may not be on the date requested due to prior commitments or staff resources. Your delegation is not confirmed until you are contacted by RDCO staff to confirm your place on the agenda.

Helpful Suggestions:

Arrive in advance of the meeting start time as delegations are heard as one of the first items of business.
Turn off cell phones and pagers.
Be prepared.
Have purpose.
Support your position with facts.
Consider the big picture, as many issues are inter-related and shouldn't be considered in isolation.
State your request, if any.
Provide the Recording Secretary with any relevant notes if not handed out or published in the agenda.

I understand and agree to these rules for delegations:

Callie Simpson
Name of Delegate/Representative of Group

May 25, 2020
Date

Callie Simpson
Signature

For Office Use Only

☐ **Approved** ☐ **Declined** ☐ **Other**

By (signature): _____

Appearance date (if applicable): _____

Applicant informed of decision on (date): _____

By (signature): _____ Date: _____

REGIONAL DISTRICT of CENTRAL OKANAGAN

Regional Board Report

TO: Regional Board

FROM: Brian Reardon
Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 15, 2018

SUBJECT: North Westside Services and Community Issues Report – Next Steps

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority – LGA 208.1*

Purpose: To provide a "Next Steps" report to the Regional Board on the "*Considerations*" provided by EcoPlan International in their October 23rd, 2017 presentation and final report entitled "North Westside Services and Community Issues Review".

Executive Summary:

On October 23rd, 2017 the Regional Board received a presentation by EcoPlan International (EPI) entitled *"North Westside Services and Community Issues Review"*. Following the presentation and questions from the Board the following resolution was adopted:

> *"THAT staff be directed to bring forward a report outlining next steps for Board consideration in regards to the North Westside Services and Community Issues Review."*

Staff has reviewed the EPI report and wish to confirm that the Terms of Reference for this assignment have been met, all contractual obligations have been satisfied and the assignment with EPI is now considered complete.

EPI captured it well when they wrote *"Through project work it became clear that misinformation in the community about service delivery, costing and decision-making is prevalent. Indeed, it is difficult to identify legitimate concerns around service delivery amongst the backdrop of misunderstandings."* They go on to write *"While issues in the community are not only about communications, dispelling misinformation is an important first step."*

It is suggested serious consideration be given to retaining a subject matter expert to develop a communications and public engagement strategy for the North Westside and to direct staff to apply for a Provincial Restructure Planning Grant for a detailed diagnostic assessment of the services identified as having concerns to dispel misinformation and foster an informed citizenry.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Regional Board receive the January 15, 2018 CAO "Next Steps" Report for information.

Respectfully Submitted:

Brian Reardon

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Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan:	Strategic Priority #1 – Provide Proactive and Responsive Governance includes an objective of improving the Electoral Area working relationships within the RDCO.
Legal/Statutory Authority:	Decision making authority for this matter is derived through the provisions of the Local Government Act and the Regional Board's bylaws and policies.

Background:

On October 23rd, 2017 the Regional Board received a presentation by EcoPlan International (EPI) entitled *"North Westside Services and Community Issues Review".* Following the presentation and questions from the Board of Directors the following resolutions were adopted:

> *"THAT the North Westside Services and Community Issues Review report by Paul Siggers, Planning Associate, EcoPlan International (EPI) be received."*

And

> *"THAT staff be directed to bring forward a report outlining next steps for Board consideration in regards to the North Westside Services and Community Issues Review."*

Staff has reviewed the EPI report and wish to confirm the Terms of Reference for this assignment have been met, all contractual obligations have been satisfied and the assignment with EPI is now considered complete.

In bringing forward a "Next Steps" report to the Board, staff focused on the *"Conclusions and Considerations"* sections of the EPI's report. It was hoped this report would clarify the concerns in the North Westside however the key findings cast doubt on whether property owners in the study area are basing their opinions on factual information. We cite the following report extracts below:

1. Under **Section 3.1 Key Findings** EPI writes "The following are key findings on community opinion and perception that came from an analysis of the 264 survey responses received."
2. At the top of page 15 under **Section 3.2 Survey – Detailed Results** of the EPI report it states "These survey results are not be read as a statistically significant description of the population in the North Westside." The survey results falls well below the 300 to 400 response threshold to consider the results statistically valid. EPI's aim was to inventory and explore a set of concerns and issues raised by the community;
3. On page 31 of the report under **Section 4.2 Considerations** they state "This review was limited to creating an inventory of issues – ground truthing whether they were valid criticisms of regional services was beyond the review's scope."
4. The concluding paragraph on page 32 under **Section 4.2 Considerations** of the EPI report states "While input was received from RDCO staff and Board members, the focus of this review was on community engagement and as a result these considerations are largely based on what was heard from the community. As such, a more systematic review by staff and Board members of the issues identified by the community may be needed to provide a fuller understanding of the options available for addressing them."

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The Board needs to draw its own conclusions however it is clear to staff that taking inventory and exploring a set of concerns, based mostly on community opinions and perceptions that the community admits understanding poorly or not at all, fed by prevalent misinformation in the community without a ground truthing process will not and does not achieve the Province's second step objective to *"Clarify the Problem"*. More work needs to be done to provide factual information and dispel misinformation in the study area.

The **Key Findings** and **Survey – Detailed Results** under **Sections 3.1 and 3.2** respectively of the EPI report provide a comprehensive list of community concerns and issues that, even though they may be opinions and perceptions based on a poor understanding of service delivery and decision making amid the backdrop of misinformation in the community, they should be treated as bonafide concerns that should shape how the Regional District responds with a new communication strategy and community engagement plan that provides factual information.

On page 24 of the EPI report, under *Communications* it is interesting to note that the preferred method of receiving information from the RDCO was overwhelmingly via email or regular mail. It also states the preferred method to provide feedback, in order of priority, to the RDCO is via email, Open House/Meetings and by regular mail.

Under *Services* in the same section it lists the services most valued by the community, in order of priority:

- North Westside Volunteer Fire/Rescue Department (11 votes)
- Killiney Community Hall (7 votes)
- 9-1-1 Emergency Call Centre (7 votes)
- Electoral Area Fire Prevention (5 votes)

As well, a list of services that residents were most concerned about, in order of priority are:

- Dog Control (11 votes)
- Regional Board (9 votes)
- Enforcement of Unsightly/Untidy Premises Bylaw (8 votes)
- Electoral Areas – General Government (8 votes)
- Regional Administration (8 votes)

These kernels of knowledge are important factors to keep in mind as we work towards dispelling the misinformation in the community.

EcoPlan International did a good job engaging with the community, creating an inventory of community issues and concerns, and summarizing the key findings. They also compiled a list of *Conclusions* and *Considerations* that are summarized on page 28 of their report under **Section 4 Conclusions and Considerations**.

The tables on the next two pages list these points along with commentary from the consultant as well as RDCO staff.

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Conclusions:

The following conclusions are drawn from analysis of community and stakeholder engagement as well as observations about the context made while EcoPlan International conducted the review:

	Conclusion	EPI Commentary	RDCO Staff Commentary
1.	**An erosion of trust is impacting working relationships among and between community and RDCO personnel.**	Transparency and accountability about RDCO service delivery were 3rd & 4th ranked items of concern in the community survey. Distrust touches on concerns about information received from RDCO staff, decisions of the RDCO Board, information distributed by the Electoral Area Director, and even among different community groups. The result is a highly unproductive and corrosive working relationship among community, RDCO staff, the Electoral Area Director and the RDCO Board.	It is understandable that a real or perceived lack of transparency could lead to distrust. We can't speak for the Electoral Area Director or the North Westside community groups but what we can say is that RDCO staff and certainly the Regional Board make every attempt at being transparent and accountable. Dispelling misinformation in the community is a necessary first step.
2.	**Misinformation is prevalent within the community and may be exacerbated by difficulty in locating information.**	Through project work it became clear that misinformation in the community about service delivery, costing and decision-making is prevalent. Indeed, it is difficult to identify legitimate concerns around service delivery amongst the backdrop of misunderstandings.	The source of misinformation has yet to be verified however we know it certainly hasn't originated with the RDCO. Website improvements and a new communications plan would go a long way to resolve this.
3.	**There is a persistent feeling among community members that the community's interests are not represented by the RDCO Board or staff.**	Two of the top five concerns identified by survey respondents were "responsiveness to local concerns" and "representation of local interests". Specifically, residents feel they are dominated, or a minority voice, at the Board level where their elected representative could be "outvoted" by larger jurisdictions (e.g., City of Kelowna) on areas of local concern where there is a divergence of opinions at the Board. This concern is most acute around decisions on local services, which involve a stakeholder vote of the entire Board (consistent with provincial legislation).	The composition of the Regional Board is a matter of public record and all voting on matters dealt with by the Board is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act. An analysis of decisions made at the RDCO Board table from December 2014 to December 2016 shows the Regional Board supporting 98% of EA Director motions. EA Director supported 95% of Board motions.
4.	**Community members feel that service costs, including administrative overheads, are too high.**	The focus of most concerns about service costs were the increase in water rates and what drives the increase. There is also concern about how much it costs to administer services (i.e. Administrative Overhead), particularly local services, such as the Killiney Beach Community Hall. Specifically, some have suggested that local revenues are being used to offset larger RDCO administrative costs.	Most residents don't like to pay higher taxes and fees. The North Westside water systems have benefited from the policies put in place in terms of receiving grants. The overhead costs are calculated based on the policy approved by the Board. This policy is being reviewed in 2018.

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Considerations:

The following Considerations address the issues described in the preceding Conclusions table from the perspective of EcoPlan International. The considerations are intentionally general, leaving specific mechanisms and actions to the discretion of the Board.

	Consideration	EPI Commentary	RDCO Staff Commentary
1.	**Improve Communications:** • **Clarifying expectations and constraints on information provided by RDCO staff and requested by the public;** • **Clarify the role of the Electoral Area Director in community/regional district relations.**	While issues in the community are not only about communications, dispelling misinformation is an important first step. The dissemination of accessible, factual and timely information is critical to an informed citizenry. Some options may include a North Westside Services webpage with information specific to the area and its its services, or a regular newsletter to property owners. It should be understood that any choice will need a balance of costs of communications with how well they fulfill the communications needs for the community. As such , a first step might be to collaboratively develop a communication strategy outlining the communications needs, channels, procedures, roles and expectations of all parties involved in distributing and requesting information.	Staff fully supports EPI's commentary and recommend the Regional Board support efforts to dispel misinformation as a top priority and an important first step. This should include financial resources to retain a subject matter expert to bring forward a new communications plan to address all issues raised in the EPI report. Should the Board agree, a motion to refer this matter to staff to bring forward in the 2018 Budget Process would be in order.
2.	**Establish a platform or channel for regular dialogue between North Westside residents and the RDCO.**	The purpose of such a platform would be to formalize and regularize opportunities for direct dialogue between community members and RDCO personnel, which would help to rebuild trust.	Staff fully supports EPI's commentary and recommends this issue be included in the development of a new communications strategy for the North Westside.
3.	**Conducting a detailed diagnostic assessment of the service areas and costing that are principal concerns to the community:** • **Comparative analysis of water rates** • **Comparative analysis of overhead rates** • **Analysis of the degree to which Board voting has or has not represented local interests.**	There are persistent concerns about service delivery costs that may be alleviated through a better understanding of the legislated process or improved communications around the rationale for a service decision. On certain issues, residents' concerns are focused more on implementation and its costs. This review was limited to creating an inventory of issues – ground trothing whether they were valid criticisms of regional services was beyond the reviewer's scope. As such, conducting detailed assessments to determine if RDCO service costs and performance levels are within an acceptable range is an option for further work.	Staff fully supports EPI's commentary and recommends the Board instruct staff to apply for a Restructure Planning Grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to have this work done. Some of this work has already been done by staff however there may be value in having an independent consultant reach their own conclusions.

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Next Steps:

Based on the key findings, conclusions and considerations provided in the EPI report it is clear that the Provinces objective of *"Clarifying the Problem"* has yet to be achieved. The "Next Steps" for the Board is to determine if they have enough information to make an informed decision about this matter.

The consultant has suggested the RDCO needs to:

1. **Improve Communications:**
   - **Clarifying expectations and constraints on information provided by RDCO staff and requested by the public;**
   - **Clarify the role of the Electoral Area Director in community/regional district relations.**

Staff couldn't agree more.

2. **Establish a platform or channel for regular dialogue between North Westside residents and the RDCO.**

Properly structured and adequately resourced, staff supports this initiative.

3. **Conducting a detailed diagnostic assessment of the service areas and costing that are principal concerns to the community:**
   - **Comparative analysis of water rates**
   - **Comparative analysis of overhead rates**
   - **Analysis of the degree to which Board voting has or has not represented local interests**

Staff have been advised that we could apply to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for a Restructure Planning Grant to assist in having this work done by a third party consultant. This would go a long way in providing factual information and dispelling misinformation in the community.

Should the Board agree with three points mentioned above, the only question is how to procced. Four options are provided below

1. Proceed with all three of the consultants' suggested considerations in 2018. If this is the wish of the Board then a motion to that affect would be in order. Staff would then add this to the 2018 Work Plan and Budget approval process;
2. Proceed with a phased approach of completing Considerations 1 and 2, assess the outcomes, then make a determination whether to proceed with Consideration 3. If this is the wish of the Board then a motion to that affect would be in order. Staff would then add this to the 2018 Work Plan and Budget approval process;
3. Proceed with all three of the consultant's suggested considerations throughout 2018 and 2019. Considering the nature of this work it may be prudent not to rush and take the time necessary to do this work well. If this is the wish of the Board then a motion to that affect would be in order. Staff would then add this to the 2018 and 2019 Work Plans and Budget approval processes; OR

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4. Proceed with Consideration 1 only at this time. If this is the wish of the Board then a motion to that affect would be in order. Staff would then add this to the 2018 Work Plan and Budget approval process.

Financial Considerations:

The first step to dispelling misinformation in the community is to develop and implement a new communication strategy and public engagement process for the North Westside communities. It is suggested that an independent third party be retained to develop this new strategy and assist in its implementation. A preliminary budget of $15,000 should be set aside for this work to be done with the expectation of a further budget request after the new strategy has been approved by the Board. It is premature to speculate on what those costs will be until we understand what the specific elements of the new communication strategy are.

We anticipate the Regional Board being responsible for the costs of the study, estimated at $15,000 with the costs of implementation, currently unknown, being borne by the service area that benefits by it. A follow-up report on the implementation plan and its costs will be brought forward to the Board at a future date.

We believe an application to the Province for a Restructure Planning Grant will be looked upon favourably considering the findings in the EPI report. This grant funding will help offset costs associated with developing an informed citizenry in the North Westside communities.

Organizational Issues:

As this process is a Board led initiative, there are no organizational issues other than to ensure the Board's direction is carried out.

External Implications:

Based on the nature of this initiative, we believe there is an expectation from the North Westside Communities that there will be a response from the Regional Board on this matter.

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