

Via email to breems@crd.bc.ca

January 24, 2017

Brent Reems, Senior Manager
Legislative & Information Services
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street, PO Box 1000
Victoria, BC V8W 2S6

Dear Mr. Reems:

RE: 2016 RGS Bylaw 4017 – Referral for Municipal Acceptance

Further to the letter from Board Chair Barbara Desjardins dated December 2, 2016 regarding the above captioned matter, I am pleased to provide the Board with Township of Esquimalt Council's decision related to Municipal Acceptance of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Council considered this matter at their January 9, 2017 regular meeting and passed two motions. The first motion stated as follows:

*That Council respond to the December 2, 2016 letter from the Chair of the Capital Regional District (Schedule "A") that it does not "accept" the 2016 Proposed Regional Growth Strategy for the reasons outlined in the "Issues" section of Staff Report DEV-17-001.
Furthermore, that Council indicate to the Capital Regional District Board that, "it is willing that a provision to which it objects be included in the proposed Regional Growth Strategy on the basis that the provision will not apply to the Township of Esquimalt". **Carried Unanimously.***

The "Issues" section of Staff Report DEV-17-001 referred to in the motion has been copied here for your convenience:

ISSUES:

*The proposed Regional Growth Strategy states: "Local municipalities will identify how their **Official Community Plan aligns to each policy** (emphasis added) in a Regional Context Statement." Because the entirety of the Township's Official Community Plan will need to align with its Regional Context Statement, some of the policies in the proposed Regional Growth Strategy could severely limit the Township's opportunities to develop. These policies are identified in Table 1.*

Table 1 Summary of proposed Regional Growth Strategy policies that create potential problems for the Township.

Objective and Policy	Staff Comments
Objective 1.1 Keep Urban Settlement Compact	
Policy 1. Provide for land uses consistent with the Growth Management Concept Plan depicted on Map 3 and adopt policies to implement the Growth Management Concept	Map 3 indicates that the Gorge Vale Golf Course is designated as "Renewable Resource Lands". As such, future development may not be possible. The Board of the Gorge Vale Golf Course is

Objective and Policy	Staff Comments
<p><i>Plan consistent with the land use policy designation described in Objective 1.1.</i></p>	<p><i>currently seeking to have a portion of its land removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve in order to develop it for medium to high density mixed residential/commercial uses. The proposed development of a portion of the golf course would be consistent with the “Approaches” identified in the proposed Regional Growth Strategy under Objective 1 – namely:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- Focus employment and population growth primarily in complete communities, located in areas that meet criteria described in Objective 3.1, that will encourage the development of walkable, bikeable and transit-focused areas with a dense mix of housing, employment, services and public open space;</i> <i>- Increase the proportion of apartments, row houses and other attached housing types within the Growth Policy Area, especially within complete communities; and</i> <i>- Locate a minimum of 95% of the region’s new dwelling units to 2038 within the Growth Policy Area.</i> <p><i>The Gorge Vale Golf Course represents a fantastic opportunity to further the goals and objectives of the proposed Regional Growth Strategy for the “Growth Policy Area” which surrounds the Golf Course on all sides except for the First Nations Reserve which is exempt from the Regional Growth Strategy. Having it designated as “Renewable Resource Lands” because it is in the Agricultural Land Reserve is a classic “text out of context is pretext problem”. As part of the Official Community Plan review, staff will be recommending that portions of the Gorge Vale Golf Course be designated for Commercial and Residential Mixed Use.</i></p> <p><i>This issue was identified by Council and forwarded to the Capital Regional District in a letter dated October 17, 2016 (Schedule “C”). The Board chose not to act on Council’s request.</i></p> <p><i>Staff recommend that Council <u>not accept</u> this policy but indicate to the Board that it is willing that this provision be included in the proposed Regional Growth Strategy on the basis that the provision will not apply to the Township.</i></p>

Objective and Policy	Staff Comments
Objective 2.1 Protect, Conserve and Manage Ecosystem Health	
<p><i>Policy 1. Ensure the long-term protection of Capital Green Lands depicted on Map 3. This could include policies for buffering and land use transition between Capital Green Lands and adjacent settled areas (i.e. lands within Rural/Rural Residential Land Use Policy Area as well as the Growth Policy Area), as well as policies aimed at enhancing, restoring or naturalizing Capital Green Lands.</i></p>	<p><i>When Map 3 is enlarged approximately 1000 times (Schedule "D"), many small pixilated areas representing "Capital Green Lands" appear within the Township. It is impossible to positively identify most of them and absolutely impossible to accurately define the boundaries of each area. The proposed Regional Growth Strategy policy is incongruent with the lands indicated on Map 3 that are located within the Township. It is not reasonable that the Board would expect the Township to implement this policy on such small parcels of land that would have only a minute regional consequence.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, this policy could potentially block the Township from disposing of parkland through the statutory process outlined in the Community Charter.</i></p> <p><i>Staff recommend that Council not accept this policy but indicate to the Board that it is willing that this provision be included in the proposed Regional Growth Strategy on the basis that the provision will not apply to the Township.</i></p>
Objective 5.1 Realize the Region's Economic Potential	
<p><i>Policy 3. Prioritize the attraction of new businesses and investment that will support climate action.</i></p>	<p><i>The Township will prioritize the attraction of new businesses and investments that are desired by its citizens and that support the ship repair and refitting industry, high tech industry, and other allied industries irrespective of support for climate action.</i></p> <p><i>Staff recommend that Council not accept this policy but indicate to the Board that it is willing that this provision be included in the proposed Regional Growth Strategy on the basis that the provision will not apply to the Township.</i></p>
<p><i>Policy 4. Ensure the long-term protection of Renewable Resource Lands depicted on Maps 3 and 4.</i></p>	<p><i>As noted above, this would apply to the Gorge Vale Golf Course. Preventing the development of the Golf Course for housing or employment lands is a contradiction within the proposed RGS.</i></p> <p><i>Staff recommend that Council not accept this policy but indicate to the Board that it is willing</i></p>

Objective and Policy	Staff Comments
	<i>that this provision be included in the proposed Regional Growth Strategy on the basis that the provision will not apply to the Township.</i>

At the January 9th, 2017 Council meeting, the second motion passed by the Council of the Township of Esquimalt stated as follows:

*That all additional concerns identified by Council regarding Esquimalt be forwarded to the CRD by staff, to include reconsideration regarding the order of Priorities. **Carried Unanimously.***

The additional concerns that are referred to in the second main motion above are as follows:

- 1) Council would like the description of Esquimalt found in Appendix "A" amended by deleting the first sentence and adding reference in the description to Esquimalt's strengths such as its walkability and its outstanding green spaces.
- 2) Council would like to see the Climate Action objective moved up in the list of objectives. It is currently listed last; however, the importance of dealing with climate action is crucial and therefore, should be given greater importance by moving it up the list.

Please let me know if you have any questions relating to this matter.

Yours truly,



Anja Nurvo, BA, LLB
Director of Corporate Services