



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

Legislation Text

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REQUEST FOR DECISION

DATE: December 9, 2019

Report No. DEV-19-113

TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Bill Brown, Director of Development Services

SUBJECT:

Council Response to the referral from the Capital Regional District of Capital Regional District 2018 Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 4017 Amendment (Proposed Bylaw 4328) being an amendment to update Table 1 Population, Dwelling Unit, and Employment Projections to the year 2038

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Township of Esquimalt Council authorize the Mayor to send a letter to Mr. Colin Plant, Chair, Capital Regional District Board, stating that Council has the following concerns with proposed Amendment Bylaw No. 4328:

- 1) By consolidating projection data at the sub-regional level with municipalities that share very few common characteristics with the Township; the proposed bylaw has very limited practical applications for the Township; and
- 2) It is unclear how the Township will be able to make the population and dwelling unit projections in its Official Community Plan consistent with the proposed sub-regional population and dwelling unit projections given that it has no legal authority beyond its jurisdictional boundary as described in its Letter Patent.

RELEVANT POLICY:

Bylaw No. 4017 - Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy, Bylaw No. 1, 2016

Bylaw No. 4328 - Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2016, Amendment Bylaw No. 1, 2019

Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2018, No. 2922

Township of Esquimalt Strategic Priorities 2019-2023

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

Although the population, dwelling unit, and employment projections are not related to any specific strategic priority, goal, or operational strategy, an accurate understanding of demographic trends in Esquimalt informs the Township's response to many of the items in the Strategic Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Appendices:

Appendix “A” October 23, 2019, letter from Colin Plant, Chair of the Capital Regional District Board referring proposed Bylaw 4328 to Council for comments (a copy of proposed Bylaw 4328 attached).

Appendix “B” Proposed Bylaw 4328.

Appendix “C” June 21, 2019 letter from Colin Plant, Chair of the Capital Regional District Board.

Appendix “D” Letter from the Capital Regional District indicating that the Board has endorsed the Township’s Regional Context Statement.

Timeline:

June 13, 2018 - Capital Regional District Board endorsed the Township of Esquimalt’s regional context statement (Appendix “D”).

April 12, 2019 - DPAC (Development and Planning Advisory Committee) meeting to review population, dwelling unit, and employment projections. Esquimalt staff expressed concerns that the projections showed:

- The population decreasing by 800 people (-4.2%) between 2018 and 2038;
- The total number of dwelling units increasing by only 200 between 2018 and 2038 even though the Township has just issued an occupancy permit for a 30 dwelling unit multi-family building at 826 Esquimalt Road and that there were approximately 136 multi-family dwelling units under construction in Esquimalt:
 - o Town Square (102 units)
 - o 835 Dunsmuir Road (34 units)
- Employment dropping 16 % from 13,100 to 11,000.

April 16, 2019 - The Capital Regional District issued revised projections for the Township of Esquimalt:

- The population increases from 19,087 in 2018 to 21,137 in 2038, an increase of 2,050 residents or 10.74 percent;
- The number of dwelling units increases from 8147 in 2018 to 9,966 in 2038 for an increase of 1,819 or 22.32 percent; and
- The employment drops from 13,121 in 2018 to 10,994 in 2038 for a decrease of 2,127 or 16.2 percent.

June 10, 2019 - Staff Report DEV-19-050 is presented to Council with a recommendation that “That Council request the Capital Regional District to obtain a third-party review of the methodology used to calculate the population, dwelling unit, and employment projections prior to commencing the amending process for the Regional Growth Strategy”.

June 12, 2019 - Capital Regional District Board initiated an amendment to the 2018 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) to update regional population, dwelling unit and employment projections.

At that meeting, as per Council’s direction, Mayor Desjardins moved and the Board member from the District of Sooke seconded a motion to, “request the Capital Regional District to obtain a third-party review of the methodology used to calculate the population, dwelling unit, and employment projections prior to commencing the amending process for the Regional Growth Strategy”. The motion was defeated.

June 21, 2019 - Capital Regional District Board Chair sent out a letter to all Capital Regional District Mayors and the Juan de Fuca Land Use Committee requesting input on the regional population, dwelling unit and employment projections (Appendix "C").

July 8, 2019 - The Capital Regional District releases an amended dwelling unit projection. The new projection shows 9,100 dwelling units in Esquimalt in 2018 increasing to 10,700 in 2038 an increase of 1,600 or 17.58 percent (Table 1).

October 23, 2019 - Capital Regional District Board Chair sent a letter (Appendix "A") to all Capital Regional District Mayors and Council, the Juan de Fuca Land Use Committee, affected First Nations, and provincial and federal departments and agencies referring Proposed Bylaw 4328 (Appendix "B") for comment.

Analysis:

Staff's concerns with the issues surrounding the population projection methodology used by the Capital Regional District are documented in Staff Report DEV-19-069 that was presented to Council on July 15, 2019. Rather than address the concerns raised by the Township, the Capital Regional District has opted instead to consolidate all of the projections for each municipality at the sub-regional level. Esquimalt's projections have been consolidated with those of the City of Victoria, the District of Oak Bay, the District of Saanich, and the Town of View Royal. Given the significant different growth characteristics of each of these municipalities, the usefulness of such data is very questionable. Projection data is usually used to plan for schools, infrastructure capacity, capacity of recreation facilities, carrying capacity of parks and open space, and impacts on traffic and transportation such as public transportation. Once consolidated, the data has lost almost all of its usefulness. While the Capital Regional District has met its statutory obligation, the usefulness of the data as a planning tool has been compromised.

The second issue from the Township's perspective is the difficulty it will have meeting its obligation to make its Official Community Plan consistent with sub-regional projections when it has no control over most of the forces that are going to impact the projection since they are controlled by entities outside of its jurisdictional boundaries. The Capital Regional District asserts that the Township is not obligated to comply with the sub-regional projections, however, the regional context statement in the Township's Official Community Plan clearly states that "the Township will make the OCP consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy at the time that the Regional Growth Strategy is amended to reflect the revised projections". It was clearly contemplated at that time that the growth projections would be calculated for each municipality. In fact, this was the case until the April 12, 2019 - DPAC (Development and Planning Advisory Committee) meeting at which time it became apparent that there was a problem with some of the projections for some of the municipalities.

In summary, the consolidation of the population, dwelling unit, and employment projections to a sub-regional level does not give the Township a useful planning tool and furthermore, creates issues related to the Regional Context Statement in the Official Community Plan. These issues arise from the methodology employed by the CRD to make the projections. Alternative methodologies are available that would have provided projections that would have been much more useful to the Township for planning purposes. While fulfilling its legal obligations, the CRD has not provided any information that is of any value to the Township.

ISSUES:

1. Rationale for Selected Option

Consolidation of projection data at the sub-regional level makes it difficult for the Township to fulfill its obligations under the Regional Context Statement in its Official Community Plan. Furthermore, the data loses much of its usefulness once it has been consolidated at the sub-regional level due to the significant differences in the community characteristics of the sub-regional municipal cohort - particularly the core municipalities.

2. Organizational Implications

At this time there are no organizational implications, however, if the Capital Regional District Board pursues the bylaw as circulated and the Township does not support it - a conflict resolution process will be triggered that will require some additional staff time.

3. Financial Implications

At this time there are no financial implications, however, if the Capital Regional District Board pursues the bylaw as circulated and the Township does not support it - a conflict resolution process will be triggered that will require a financial contribution from the Township.

4. Sustainability & Environmental Implications

Good environmental policy and regulations are enhanced by good data. The data provided in proposed Bylaw No. 4328 is of very limited utility in generating good environmental policy and regulation.

5. Communication & Engagement

As proposed Bylaw No. 4328 is a Capital Regional District bylaw, they are responsible for communications and engagement. This referral forms part of the engagement process.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) That the Township of Esquimalt Council authorize the Mayor to send a letter to Mr. Colin Plant, Chair, Capital Regional District Board, stating that Council has the following concerns with Proposed Bylaw No. 4328:

- 1) By consolidating projection data at the sub-regional level with municipalities that share very few common characteristics with the Township; the Proposed Bylaw has very limited practical applications for the Township.
- 2) It is unclear how the Township will be able to make the population and dwelling unit projections in its Official Community Plan consistent with the proposed sub-regional population and dwelling unit projections given that it has no legal authority beyond its jurisdictional boundary as described in its Letter Patent.

- 2) That Council authorize the Mayor to send a letter to Mr. Colin Plant, Chair, Capital Regional

District Board, stating that Council has no concerns with Proposed Bylaw 4328.