

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee
From: Marina Richter, Environmental Policy Analyst

Date: 2020-09-09
File No: 9050-20-099

Subject: FVRD Air Quality Management Plan Discussion Paper

INTENT

This report is intended to obtain feedback from the Board on the document titled "Air Quality Planning for the Fraser Valley: A Discussion Paper" and to advise the Board that staff will begin seeking input on this document from multiple levels of government and from interested organizations and stakeholders that play a role in airshed management within the Lower Fraser Valley.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Environmental Stewardship
Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

PRIORITIES

Priority #2 Air & Water Quality

BACKGROUND

Air quality is one of the top priorities for the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD). Most of the FVRD lies in the Lower Fraser Valley airshed, known for its sensitivity to air pollution and frequent episodes of poor air quality. While air quality in the Lower Fraser Valley is generally good, and a number of pollutant levels have been showing a downward trend, this is not always the case. Multiple health advisories are often issued each year, and our scenic mountains and beautiful landscapes are often hidden from view due to poor air quality. There is more that is needed to be done, particularly given ongoing population and economic growth, at local, regional, and even international levels to better understand pollution levels and reduce exposure.

The FVRD's 1998 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) is outdated and needs revising to better reflect the newest data, modelling, and research findings. Over the past several years, as information has been collected, staff have been bringing forward to the Board reports and

presentations on the main sources of emissions within the region, including on-road transportation, off-road equipment, and outdoor and indoor burning. These issues, as well as identifying strategies and tools for addressing emission, became a framework for updating the AQMP.

DISCUSSION

A draft of this new Air Quality Management Plan, presented here in the form of a discussion paper to elicit further feedback, defines a vision for our region's airshed and serves as a guiding document to inform, prioritize, and target air quality actions undertaken by the FVRD throughout the next decade. The FVRD remains committed to protecting air quality within its airshed by monitoring and modelling air quality data, by conducting research and policy development, by collaborating with airshed partners, and by supporting outreach and education efforts. By following the roadmap of a new AQMP, the FVRD will continue to advance its collective understanding of air quality and exposure concerns and to see continued improvements in the health and quality of the Lower Fraser Valley airshed.

Staff will share the AQMP Discussion Paper with multiple levels of government and with interested organizations and stakeholders that play a role in airshed management within the Lower Fraser Valley airshed to seek feedback on the proposed directions needed to address concerns and enhance our knowledge of air quality in this region. This collaborative approach is of particular importance with air quality due to the multitude of emission sources and the number of jurisdictions involved.

The Discussion Paper will be available for comments until November 15, 2020.

After feedback is obtained, the final steps in the AQMP preparation include making any necessary amendments, prioritizing actions, identifying implementation timelines, determining suitable performance indicators, and defining a progress reporting schedule. Once complete, the final AQMP will be brought back to the Board as early as December 2020.

COST

n/a

CONCLUSION

The FVRD is seeking feedback on a draft Discussion Paper as part of a new AQMP that includes the proposed framework, goals, and actions that will help the region continue to improve air quality conditions within the region.

COMMENTS BY:

Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services: Reviewed and supported.

Kelly Lownsborough, Chief Financial Officer/ Director of Financial Services:

Reviewed and supported.

Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.