

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

Date: 2020-12-08
File No: 9050-01

Subject: Air Quality Service Agreement with Metro Vancouver

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board authorize its signatories to execute an Air Quality Monitoring Agreement with Metro Vancouver to not exceed the maximum cost of \$228,600 per year, plus the rate of inflation, for 2021-2030.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Environmental Stewardship
Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

PRIORITIES

Priority #2 Air & Water Quality

BACKGROUND

The Air Quality Monitoring Network in the Lower Fraser Valley (LFV) is a collection of 31 stations which continuously monitors air pollutants. The data collected from those stations form the foundation of knowledge about regional air quality and is used in decision making by both Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) for air quality policies and practices which affect public health. Operation and maintenance of these stations is critically important for air quality management in the LFV airshed.

The FVRD currently hosts six (6) air quality monitoring stations located as part of this network. They are in Abbotsford (2), Mission, Chilliwack, Agassiz, and Hope.

Metro Vancouver operates and maintains the LFV Air Quality Monitoring Network, including the stations within the Fraser Valley on behalf of the FVRD based on a 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the FVRD and Metro Vancouver. With addition of two new stations (in Mission and Agassiz) since this original MOU, there is a need for an updated agreement to account for cost increases and to provide clarification about ownership and responsibilities related to the growing network.

DISCUSSION

An updated Air Quality Monitoring Agreement has been prepared jointly by FVRD and Metro Vancouver. It reflects the continuation of the arrangement with Metro Vancouver for operation and maintenance of the FVRD Air Quality Stations that preserves the integrity of the network and ensures compliance to the best standards and practices. The Agreement formalizes Metro Vancouver's role with regards to this operation and maintenance, and includes equipment inspection and calibration, collection and analysis

of air quality data, provision of raw and processed data to the FVRD, working with FVRD staff on issuing of air quality advisories and bulletins, and provision of annual summary reports to the FVRD. The Air Quality Monitoring Station ownership and the full equipment inventory for each station is now clearly identified within the Agreement.

Under the Agreement, the FVRD agrees to continue having a staff person assist, as needed, with data and technical review and to serve as a liaison with air quality matters. The FVRD also agrees to the provision of an Annual Fee to Metro Vancouver for the services they provide. The amount of this Annual Fee, outlined below, represents an increase over the previous rate of \$155,000 per year to account for increases in the cost of labour and materials since 1998 and to account for the additional stations and equipment that have been added to the FVRD portion of the network.

Maintaining Metro Vancouver's participation in the operation and maintenance of all of the air quality monitoring stations within the Lower Fraser Valley Air Quality Monitoring Network, including the stations with the FVRD, is essential for continuity, for data quality, and for economies of scale. If the FVRD were to manage these stations themselves, the cost to do so would be prohibitively greater than under this agreement, and it would limit the ability to analyze data at a regional level for trends or concerns. To-date, this partnership has proven successful and is a great example of collaboration between the two regional districts.

COST

Under the new agreement, the FVRD will pay Metro Vancouver an Annual Fee for the entire cost of providing the services, with a discounted but increasing rate for the first two years, as follows:

- 2021: \$180,000
- 2022: \$205,000
- 2023: \$228,600
- 2024-2030: \$228,600/year plus the rate of inflation as determined by the Consumer Price Index from the previous year.

The increase in the Annual Fee compared to the prior rate was accounted for in the annual budgets for this program during the 2020-2024 FVRD financial planning process.

CONCLUSION

The Air Quality Monitoring Agreement between the FVRD and Metro Vancouver reflects an updated budget, roles, and responsibilities in maintaining the FVRD portion of the network. The Agreement will help ensure continuity, uniformity, compliance and high quality of air quality data that will contribute to our achievement of our goals for clean air in the region.

COMMENTS BY:

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

Kelly Lownsbrough, Chief Financial Officer/ Director of Financial Services: Reviewed and supported.

Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.