

To: Fraser Valley Regional District Board

Date: 2025-06-26

From: Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning

Subject: **Infrastructure Canada's** Rural Transit Needs Assessment Funding Formal Endorsement

Reviewed by: David Urban, Deputy Director of Regional Services
Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services/Deputy CAO
Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board confirm that the Fraser Valley Regional District has the capacity and authority to undertake the Regional Rural Transit Needs Assessment and Action Plan (BC-122474) project;

AND THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board authorize its signatories to execute and enter into an agreement to receive the Rural Transit Solutions Fund funding of \$50,000.

BACKGROUND

In September 2023, the Board directed staff to submit an application to **Infrastructure Canada's Rural Transit Solutions Fund (RTSF)** Planning Stream for the funding necessary to complete a regional Rural Transit Needs Assessment and Action Plan.

In March 2025, the FVRD received notification that the Regional Rural Needs Assessment and Action Plan had received approval in principle for \$50,000 in RTSF funding. Because of the federal election and related interregnum period, the FVRD has only recently been informed of the required documentation needed to finalize the funding agreement. RTSF requires, by resolution, a formal Board endorsement of the project and confirmation that the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) has the capacity and authority to undertake the project.

The funding agreement will be executed once it has been thoroughly reviewed by staff.

DISCUSSION

The Rural Transit Needs Assessment and Action Plan is a key action item in the FVRD's **Strategic Plan** for 2023-2026 and supports many Regional Growth Strategy policies related to community well-being,

transportation, and climate change. Furthermore, this project is an important step in addressing the transportation concerns and priorities shared by First Nations and the public during engagement for **the FVRD's Regional Growth Strategy update, the Active Transportation Network Plan**, and other initiatives.

After waiting several months for the application window to open, the FVRD submitted a funding application in May 2024 and received a letter dated March 6, 2025, from the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities for the approval in principle of this project. Some additional correspondence was received shortly afterward, which gave the go-ahead to undertake a Request for Proposals process, which is close to completion. Due to the federal election and related interregnum period, further instructions related to the funding agreement were not received until recently. One of the documents needed to execute the funding agreement includes a formal Board resolution:

"To receive funding, the project must be authorized or endorsed by a resolution of your Council, Band, or Board of Directors, as applicable. The resolution must confirm the recipient (e.g., your organization, municipality or First Nation) has the capacity and authority to undertake the project and enter into and execute an agreement for Rural Transit Solutions Fund funding. It must be received before a funding agreement can be executed."

While the Board has previously endorsed a proposal to pursue grant funding for this project (2023), a more specific resolution is now required before the funding agreement can be finalized.

Access to transit is a continuing concern for rural communities in the region, whether for day-to-day needs or access to health services. The lack of access to health services is repeatedly expressed in public consultation on transportation and transit-related initiatives. Given the funding delays, it is anticipated that after this formal endorsement the funding agreement for the project will be initiated promptly. The project must be completed within two years of the funding agreement being executed.

COST

The total project budget for the Regional Rural Needs Assessment and Action Plan is \$75,000, with \$50,000 coming from federal RTSF grant funding and \$25,000 of grant funding earlier secured from Fraser Health (Hope and Fraser Canyon).

CONCLUSION

After much delay, RTSF has notified the FVRD of its successful funding application to undertake the Regional Rural Needs Assessment and Action Plan project. In order to facilitate the creation of the funding agreement, the Board, by resolution, must confirm that the FVRD has the capacity and authority to undertake the project and enter into a funding agreement.

The funding agreement will be executed once it has been thoroughly reviewed by staff.