



Corporate Report

NO: C002

COUNCIL DATE: February 9, 2009

COUNCIL-IN-COMMITTEE

TO: Mayor & Council

DATE: January 29, 2009

FROM: City Manager

FILE: Livability Accord

SUBJECT: Livability Accord Between High Growth Municipalities – Status Report

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. receive this report as information;
2. endorse the commitments that are listed in the body of this report; and
3. authorize the City Clerk to forward as information a copy of this report and the related Council resolution to each of the other local governments that is a party to the Livability Accord, to the Metro Vancouver Board, to the Fraser Valley Regional District Board and to the TransLink Board.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to update City Council regarding the work that has taken place on the “Livability Accord” of the high growth communities (HGCs) of Abbotsford, Coquitlam, the Township of Langley, and Surrey since the last report to Council on this important matter, to seek Council endorsement of specific commitments that are necessary to move the process forward and to advise Council about the next steps in the process.

BACKGROUND

City Council received and considered a Corporate report regarding the “Livability Accord” at its meeting on September 10, 2007. At that time Council also received a presentation from Mr. Michael Harcourt, who is acting as a special advisor to the HGCs. Council adopted the recommendations of the report, which included approval of the proposed Livability Accord that is attached as Appendix A to this report.

On October 12, 2007 at a press conference in the Central City tower in Surrey City Centre, the four Mayors of the HGCs formally signed the Livability Accord and, thereby, formally kicked off the work of the Accord.

On October 24, 2007, a presentation about the Livability Accord and its related objectives was made to the Metro Vancouver Mayors' Committee. On November 14, 2007, a similar presentation was made to the Executive Committee of the Fraser Valley Regional District.

DISCUSSION

Urban Systems Ltd., a consultant, was retained to assist with the development of the Accord strategies. The consultant was responsible for project management, information gathering, analysis and strategy development in collaboration with senior staff of the HGCs.

The work has been carried out in the following phases:

Phase 1: Workshop to Establish Fundamental Accord Principles

On November 28, 2007, a workshop was held to establish the principles that would form the basis for the development of the strategies that are the expected output of the work of the Livability Accord. The Mayor, the City Manager, the General Manager of Engineering, the General Manager of Planning and Development and the Manager of Long Range Planning from each HGC were invited to the workshop. Michael Harcourt, special advisor to the HGCs, was also in attendance.

The work of the Accord is to result in a strategy in each of the following areas:

- a. Sustainable land use (economic, social/cultural and environmental);
- b. Public transit and transportation infrastructure;
- c. Public safety and social infrastructure;
- d. Re-defining the relationship between cities and with other orders of government; and
- e. Developing new partnerships between cities and with other orders of government to achieve common objectives.

Phase 2: Gather, organize and compile background information

Information was compiled from each of the four HGCs and from regional, provincial and federal departments and other sources in each of the strategic topic areas. This information was used to analyze how current plans of the HGCs in each of the strategic topic areas fit together across the boundaries of the HGCs and with the objectives of the Accord.

Phase 3: Development of an Action Plan

The consultant and the City Managers have met regularly during the last year to develop strategies, an action plan and related presentation materials. This phase of the project involved the identification of the most significant challenges facing the HGCs.

Attached as Appendix "B" to this report is an executive summary of the outcomes of the work of Phase 3. This document will form the basis for the next steps in the Livability

Accord process, which are discussed later in this report. The summary indicates that HGCs will need to make some commitments as the basis for making requests of the Province, the Federal government and TransLink in relation to the future of the HGCs.

Priorities to Meet the Challenges

The following have been identified as the priorities to meet the significant challenges facing the HGCs:

1. The need for significantly more investment in transit services and infrastructure complemented by a more refined focus by the HGCs on the implementation of transit-oriented land use plans and strategies;
2. The need for collaboration with the Province, the Federal government and TransLink to address the need for enhanced transit, public safety, and social services and infrastructure; and
3. The need for new revenue sources for the HGCs to ensure a liveable and sustainable future for the HGCs, which in turn will support the health of the Region, the Province and the nation.

Commitments of the HGCs:

In support of the next steps in the Accord process, the HGCs need to commit to the following:

1. To take all reasonable steps to assist in ensuring that future development in each HGC occurs in densely populated, compact mixed use nodes and corridors at and along current and future rail and bus rapid transit lines;
2. To design neighbourhoods and the larger community with a view to encouraging the use of a frequent transit network as a primary mode of transportation; and
3. To dedicate senior staff to work on a task force with Provincial, Federal and TransLink senior representatives to address the above-identified three primary challenges of the HGCs.

Next Steps:

Subject to the City Council's of the HGCs determining that they are prepared to make the above-referenced commitments, the next step in the Livability Accord process is to inform other government jurisdictions about the results of the analysis that has been completed by the HGCs and to make appropriate requests of them in relation to addressing the challenges that have been identified. In this regard, subject to the recommendations of this report being adopted by the HGC Councils, a presentation will be made to the Metro Vancouver Board, the Fraser Valley Regional District Board and TransLink Board to inform them of the results of the work of the Accord.

TransLink will be requested to commit to the following:

1. support the principle of significantly accelerating investment in transit services and facilities in HGCs;
2. provide levels of transit services consistent with the more established areas of Metro Vancouver as soon as possible;
3. ensure the timely provision of attractive transit services in conjunction with growth and development; and
4. resources to work with HGCs on shaping the integration of land use and transit services.

In parallel with these presentations, the Mayors of the HGCs will meet with appropriate elected officials of the provincial and federal governments to inform them of the results of the work of the Accord and of the commitments of HGCs and to request that these other orders of government appoint senior staff to work on a task force with senior staff of the HGCs and TransLink toward resolving the identified challenges.

The Province will be requested to commit to the following:

1. the principle of enhanced and accelerated investment in transit for the HGCs;
2. recognition of the need to increase coordination and resources for those programs and initiatives where there is shared responsibilities with local government; and
3. the identification and exploration of expanded and diversified revenue sources for HGCs.

Further reports on the work of the Accord will be provided to Council as the work of the Livability Accord continues.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that City Council endorse the commitments as listed in the body of this report and authorize the City Clerk to forward as information a copy of this report and the related Council resolution to each of the other HGCs that is party to the Livability Accord, to the Metro Vancouver Board, to the Fraser Valley Regional District Board and to the TransLink Board.

Murray Dinwoodie
City Manager

Appendix A: Livability Accord
Appendix B: Executive Summary

