TO: Regional Board
FROM: Ron Fralick
       Manager of Planning
DATE: April 18, 2016
SUBJECT: Okanagan Regional Adaptation Strategies (0410-20)

Purpose: To introduce the BC Agriculture and Food Climate Action Initiative’s Okanagan Regional Adaptation Strategies.

Executive Summary:
Since 2008, the BC Agriculture Council’s Agriculture and Food Climate Action Initiative (the ‘Initiative’) has worked to address agricultural challenges associated with climate change. In the fall of 2015 the Regional District of Central Okanagan partnered with the North Okanagan and Okanagan Similkameen Regional Districts to work with the Ministry of Agriculture on an Initiative for the Okanagan on a valley wide basis. It is anticipated that the Okanagan Adaptation Strategies will support and complement the RDCO Regional Growth Strategy and other related initiatives taking place in the region such as addressing water supply/management issues, wildfire preparedness, and invasive species/pest control measures.

Emily MacNair, Program Manager, Adaptation Programming, will provide an overview of the Okanagan Regional Adaptation Strategies progress to date and elaborate on anticipated next steps.

RECOMMENDATION:
THAT the presentation by Emily MacNair on the Okanagan Regional Adaptation Strategies be received for information.

Respectfully Submitted:

R. Fralick, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Planning

C. Radford
Director of Community Services

Prepared by: Janelle Taylor, Planner 1

Approved for Board’s Consideration

Brian Reardon, CAO
Background:
Since 2008, the Initiative has worked on collaborative projects to address agricultural challenges associated with climate change. The following five Regional Adaptation Strategies have been completed to date: Peace Region, Cariboo, Delta, Fraser Valley, and Cowichan.

Since the fall of 2015, RDCO staff has assisted the Initiative to complete Regional Adaptation Strategies for the Okanagan. It is anticipated that the Strategies will support and complement other related initiatives taking place in the region, and address Okanagan issues such as water supply/management, wildfire preparedness, and invasive species/pests.

The project meets the 2015-2018 Strategic Priorities Plan, Strategic Priority #3: Nurture Responsible Growth and Development, and Strategic Priority #4: Protect and Promote Our Environment and Lifestyle.

In addition, the Okanagan Regional Adaptation Strategies work to achieve the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336, Section 3.2.5 Our Food Goal: To support a regional food system that is healthy, resilient and sustainable.

Financial Considerations:
In addition to in-kind staff time, the three Okanagan Valley Regional Districts (Okanagan Similkameen, North Okanagan and Central Okanagan) have partnered to equally cover the total project workshop costs. In total, the Regional District of Central Okanagan has funded approximately $2,800.00 of the project.

External Implications:
All levels of government and local agricultural industry representatives have worked collaboratively to provide direction and feedback to produce the Strategies.

Considerations not applicable to this report:
- Policy
- Legal/Statutory Authority
- Organizational Issues
- Alternatives

Attachments:
Regional Agricultural Adaptation Strategies Series: Okanagan
Regional Agricultural Adaptation Strategies Series: Okanagan

“In tackling the challenges associated with climate change, the BC agriculture sector cannot (and should not) act in isolation. There is immense potential benefit in cultivating partnerships with others – across economic sectors, government departments and jurisdictions – interested in achieving similar outcomes.”

– BC Agriculture Climate Change Action Plan

Background
The BC Agriculture & Food Climate Action Initiative develops tools and resources to enhance agriculture’s ability to adapt to climate change. The Initiative is a project of the BC Agriculture Council, with an industry-led Advisory Committee and funding provided by Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture through Growing Forward 2.

Between 2008 and 2012 the Initiative developed and delivered a number of projects related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The BC Agriculture Climate Change Action Plan was released in 2010, followed by the Adaptation Risk & Opportunity Series – six reports summarizing climate impacts for key commodities across five BC regions (including the Okanagan).

Since 2013, the Initiative has been providing strategic guidance and program management for BC agriculture’s climate change adaptation programming through two programs: the Regional Adaptation Enhancement Program and the Farm Adaptation Innovator Program. The Regional Adaptation Strategies are an integral element of this programming.

The ability of agricultural producers to adapt to climate change is often linked to physical resources and decision-making processes that are beyond the individual farm. Some of the most significant issues affecting future food production in BC include: water management (water supply and storage, drainage and ditching); emergency planning; land use practices; and regional infrastructure.

The planning process for developing Regional Adaptation Strategies brings local governments and agricultural producers together to identify strategies and actions for addressing climate change impacts. Building collaboration to address agricultural adaptation issues is an important underlying goal of the process. The types of strategies and actions identified reflect the specifics of local climate change impacts, as well as the adaptive capacity, and adaptation challenges and opportunities facing local agriculture.

Five Regional Adaptation Strategies plans have been completed to date and the sixth – in the Okanagan – will be under development between the autumn of 2015 and the spring of 2016. Upon completion of the Okanagan Adaptation Strategies, up to $300,000 of Growing Forward 2 funding will be available for implementation of eligible projects.
**Project Outline: Key activities**

**July to September 2015**

**Step 1: Building collaboration**
- Meet and consult with industry organizations in the region
- Meet and consult with local/regional governments
- Develop a regional Advisory Committee to provide input during planning process

**August – November 2015**

**Step 2: Filling information gaps and developing the approach**
- Review existing regional resources (reports, plans)
- Draft a region-specific adaptation strategy approach that addresses specific needs and priorities within the region (and reflects current context)
- Where possible, fill informational gaps to support the adaptation strategy process

**December 2015 to February 2016**

**Step 3: Adaptation Strategy Workshops**
- Project team conducts background research and produces materials to support workshop activities
- Advisory committee meetings to be held prior to each workshop, to review workshop materials and plan
- Conduct two workshops to engage partners in development of regional adaptation strategies
  - Workshop 1 (December 2015):
    - Present climate change projections
    - Discuss climate impacts and key adaptation priorities
    - Identify of gaps, assets, and initial actions
  - Workshop 2 (February 2016):
    - Review and refine adaptation strategies
    - Define locally suitable action for adaptation

**February to March 2016**

**Step 4: Draft regional strategies, develop implementation plan**
- Draft regional strategies to address priority impact areas (based on research and workshop results)
- Hold an Implementation Meeting with invited participants to:
  - Identify priority actions, develop implementation details for these projects

**March-April 2016**

**Step 5: Findings, reporting and communications**
- Results of the research, workshops and advisory committee input will be combined into a “Regional Agricultural Adaptation Strategies” report (see existing examples: Delta, Cowichan Valley, Peace Region, Cariboo Region, Fraser Valley Region)
- Draft final report circulated to the advisory committee for final review
- Finalize report (content and layout)
- Final Advisory Committee meeting to discuss detailed project plans for immediate implementation and next steps
Key dates
  • Workshop 1: December 2015
  • Workshop 2: February 2016
  • Final report: April 2016

Role of industry & local government partners
  • Participation in consultations, the Advisory Committee and all workshops
  • Commitment of in-kind and/or financial resources to the project
  • Playing a central role in implementing the resulting strategies

Benefits of participation
  • Improved regional, community, government and industry understanding of potential climate change impacts and adaptation strategies
  • Strengthened collaboration between the agricultural sector, regional/local government and provincial governments
  • Potential to significantly improve available data for regional-level planning and decision-making, as well as to identify critical informational and resource gaps
  • Opportunity to integrate understanding of agricultural adaptation into community, regional and industry planning and decision-making
  • Completion of a regional strategy enables access to further funding support for implementation of priority collaborative projects