



Legislation Text

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Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance

Presented by: Christian Benson, Manager of Environment, Utilities & Environment Department

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Community Living Standing Committee recommend that Council receive the draft Watershed Management Plan (WMP) and the Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance (SRWA) Management Plan as information.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Community Living Standing Committee (CLSC) a background of the SRWA Watershed Management Plan and the recommendations for environmental management of the Sturgeon River watershed.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY #6: Environmental Stewardship: Explore innovative environmental and conservation opportunities. Seek innovative practices to protect waterways and green spaces and reduce our environmental footprint, to ensure the vitality of our natural resources for future generations.

ALIGNMENT TO SERVICE DELIVERY

Service Name: Environmental Strategy and Policy Development

Service Definition: In partnership with related agencies, environmental strategies, policies and actions are developed to protect the environment.

Service Component: Improvement of the Sturgeon River water quality

Current Service Level: Data is collected, and index created to help monitor the health of Carrot Creek and Sturgeon River. Progress is reported to the community on an annual basis.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL (OR COMMITTEE) DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

On June 23rd, 2014 Council passed the following motions: (C488-2014) That the Sturgeon River Watershed Alliance Steering Committee Terms of Reference provided as Attachment 1 dated May 23, 2014, be approved.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Guided by the Government of Alberta's *Water for Life* Strategy, the SRWA is a stewardship group made up of municipalities with jurisdiction in the Sturgeon River watershed. The vision of the SRWA is as follows:

The Sturgeon River watershed is recognized and valued as a natural prairie ecosystem that connects our communities and adds to our quality of life. It is healthy, sustaining its ecological structure, processes, functions and resiliency, within its range of natural variability. It is collaboratively stewarded by rural landowners, urban residents and Indigenous communities, and is managed with knowledge and ecological integrity as the foundation for decision making that balances our social/cultural, economic and environmental well-being.

To achieve its vision, the SRWA has collected and reviewed existing knowledge about the state of the Sturgeon River watershed, commissioned several studies to fill information gaps, and engaged others to better understand values and issues associated with water management in this area. To address the issues identified to date and to guide future actions, the SRWA has developed the *Sturgeon River Watershed Management Plan (2020)*. While the plan reflects the SRWA's collective consensus voice, it is presented as information and advice only, with voluntary implementation expected to occur over time, as resources allow.

The SRWA is submitting the WMP as advice to municipalities and the Provincial government. The watershed management plan contains six key outcomes supported by goals and strategies, accompanied by a list of potential implementers and performance measures. The actions are split into short and long-term actions, spread over a 10 year work plan period.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement was completed by the technical and steering committees of the SRWA. The WMP is a comprehensive report that included significant engagement and communication with relevant stakeholders and technical experts in the field of watershed management. A part of the overall stakeholder engagement is to provide the WMP and presentation to the member municipal Councils.

Should the WMP be accepted by Council as information, Administration will work to provide internal stakeholders a broader understanding of the plan's recommendations.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial: The attached report contains a number of recommendations and advice to member municipalities; however, these recommendations are non-binding with the approval of this report as information and will have no financial impact.

Administration may bring forward future operating business cases or capital charters for Council's consideration related to the Sturgeon River Watershed utilizing the recommendation or advice present in the WMP as a supporting document.

Legal / Risk: None at this time.

Program or Service: None at this time.

Organizational: None at this time.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

If Council does not wish to support the recommendation, the following alternative could be considered:

1. Direct Administration to continue support of the SRWA without receiving the draft Watershed Management Plan as information.

Report Date: January 13, 2020

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Committee/Department: Utilities & Environment Department

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble