

## **CRP REGIONAL WATER & WASTEWATER SERVICING / WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP UPDATE for CRP Executive Committee (September 16, 2011)**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Regional Water and Wastewater Servicing Committee has been active since 2005 and has delivered outcomes to the CRP through numerous planning phases. Several reports have been published recommending infrastructure options and governance principles, including *Planning and Technical Study on Water and Wastewater Servicing in the Calgary Region – Phase 1 (2007)* and *Phase 2 (2009)*.

Current scope of work for this committee (Phase 3) includes:

- Fine-tuning regional servicing options including water license requirements;
- Developing and implementing a governance structure for regional servicing;
- Confirming and enhancing regional servicing principles and cost allocation approach;
- Integrating watershed management and research; and
- Creating a 10 year infrastructure investment and capital staging plan.

The Phase 3 work is nearing completion and the CRP Water and Wastewater Steering Committee will bring geographic-specific servicing recommendations to the Executive Committee this Fall. Decisions on infrastructure options, governance structure and servicing principles will be required in order to complete the CRP Regional Servicing Master Plan and 10 Year Infrastructure Investment and Capital Staging Plan. Since the CRP decision-making process may extend past the year-end timeframe suggested in Minister Goudreau's letter, the completion date may need to be extended to early 2012.

### **PROGRESS ON KEY PROJECT PRIORITIES:**

#### **1. Fine-tuning regional servicing options**

Triple Bottom Line evaluations of the infrastructure options described, for the most part, in the *Phase 2* report are complete and being summarized. An additional option referred to as Conjunctive Water Management has been investigated and a scoping report produced.

- infrastructure recommendations have been agreed to by the North Sub-Region Working Group and previewed by the Steering Committee
- infrastructure options are being finalized by the South Sub-Region Working Group and will be previewed by the Steering Committee once the wastewater evaluations have been incorporated
- geographic specific servicing recommendations may be available by November 2011

#### **2. Developing and implementing a governance structure**

On September 17 2010, the CRP Executive Committee approved the implementation of the interim solution for regional servicing governance, with a detailed governance charter and detailed implementation plan to be tabled with the Executive Committee for approval in 2011.

- draft Regional Servicing Committee Charter presented to Policy & Governance Work Group for discussion in May 2011
- Regional Servicing Committee Transition Plan and Proposed Hybrid Governance recommendation previewed by Steering Committee in July 2011
- Regional Servicing Governance Charter and detailed Implementation Plan requested by Executive Committee for approval in 2011.

### 3. Confirming and enhancing regional servicing principles

Regional Water and Wastewater Servicing Principles have been approved in the Calgary Metropolitan Plan. The priority principles that need to be articulated and confirmed include:

- Regional Servicing System Governance (see Governance Structure above)
- Funding and Cost Allocation - capital funding of regional infrastructure
- Transparency of Rate Calculations, including standard base calculation method subject to regulatory review by Alberta Utilities Commission
- Water Sharing Framework, including water license capacity sharing between existing license holders and communities without licenses.
- Steering Committee to continue Priority Principles discussions this Fall subject to availability of information (e.g. Wholly Owned Subsidiary approval by Province).

### 4. Integrating watershed management and research

The CRP works closely with Alberta Environment and provides a forum to discuss, coordinate and integrate watershed research and management. As an important stakeholder in the Bow and South Saskatchewan watersheds, CRP is sponsoring or associated with the following current research and management initiatives:

- South Saskatchewan Regional Plan – Alberta Land Use Framework
- Upper Bow Basin Cumulative Effects Study (UBBCES 2011) - ALCES
- Bow Basin Watershed Management Plan (BBWMP 2008-2013) - Bow Basin Council
- upgrading Bow Operations Oasis model with Sheep- Highwood River WRMM data (2011)
- Integrated Highwood Management Plan (Phase 2)
- Ecological infrastructure, resilience and governance in the Calgary region: a partnership for regional sustainability - Mistakis Institute (U of C, 2010-2013)
- The Elbow River Watershed Project - GEOIDE (U of C, 2011-2014)

### 5. Creating a 10 year infrastructure investment and capital staging plan

The CRP is preparing the case for significant capital investment in regional services and infrastructure in partnership with municipalities and senior orders of government. The interim development strategy we are building together is a 10 to 15-year implementation plan that includes a 10-year capital investment program. We will soon be in an informed and effective position to advise the Province on the parameters for a 10-year capital investment program to support the provision of water and wastewater services in the region.

Executive Committee decisions on **infrastructure options**, **governance structure** and **servicing principles** will be required in order to complete the CRP Regional Water & Wastewater Servicing Master Plan and infrastructure staging plan. As noted previously, since the CRP decision-making process may extend past the year-end timeframe suggested in the Minister Goudreau's letter of December 2010, the completion date for this work may need to be extended until early 2012.

## MOVING FORWARD STRATEGICALLY:

Recent media coverage of the water management and conservation challenges in the South Saskatchewan river basin highlight the urgent need to complete Phase 3 of the Water & Wastewater Servicing Project in a timely manner. The CRP currently has a unique opportunity to shape water servicing and conservation policy in the Bow river basin before the next provincial election. Given the magnitude of the water challenges in our region it would be prudent to assume that, no matter who forms the next provincial government, an improved regulatory framework for water servicing and conservation will be an essential part of our sustainable future. The *South Saskatchewan Regional Plan* and the *Calgary Metropolitan Plan* will no doubt play a pivotal role in the development and delivery of that regional framework.

## BENEFITS TO CRP MEMBERS:

*The future of the region's beautiful landscapes, clean water, fresh air and healthy communities depend on a collective vision for the region, and a determination to pursue that vision together. (O2 & CRP, 2010)*

The *Calgary Metropolitan Plan* delivers an estimated \$400 million in water and wastewater infrastructure capital cost savings over the life of the plan through a better coordinated regional approach, a more compact urban footprint and a commitment to water conservation. As a region-wide sustainability plan, the *CMP* rationalizes and makes viable the delivery of regional services, within the context of a strategic land use framework for the region. Funding to deliver these services, especially for required capital infrastructure, is well beyond the means of the local municipalities and requires Provincial and Federal partners. By articulating and enhancing the Regional Water and Wastewater Servicing policies in the *CMP*, the following benefits may be realized:

- Protection and conservation of the region's environmental assets and watershed as the region proactively assumes a leadership role in watershed protection and management
- More effective sequencing of regional growth with provincial and municipal investment; and capital funding scenarios that are now considered in the context of coordinated region wide priorities
- Enhancement of regional water and wastewater services and infrastructure for municipalities that need a more secure, reliable long-term water supply to support their growth and development
- Greater certainty of infrastructure servicing (i.e. type, timing, locations, funding expectations and conditions associated with gaining access to regional servicing)
- Ability for communities to participate in region-wide solutions to common municipal issues, increasing cooperation between neighbours while lessening the need to duplicate services and reducing pressure on residential taxes to support constantly growing local needs
- Respect for local autonomy by focusing on shared regional interests, leaving implementation approaches to be determined by each local municipality
- Increased economic competitiveness of the region through effective land use strategies and enhanced infrastructure provision.

### For more information please contact:

Project Chair, Councillor Don Moore, Town of High River, [don.moore@shaw.ca](mailto:don.moore@shaw.ca)  
Manager CMP Implementation, Darrell Burgess, [darrell@calgaryregion.ca](mailto:darrell@calgaryregion.ca)

Regional Water & Wastewater Servicing

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September 16, 2011