PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

REPORT

To: Chair and Directors   Report Number: CS-BRD-251

From: Sean Cairns, Protective Services Coordinator   Date: October 5, 2023

Subject: **Update on the Collaborative Accessibility Strategy**

RECOMMENDATION: *[Corporate Unweighted]*

That the Regional Board receive the report titled "Update on the Collaborative Accessibility Strategy – CS-BRD-251", including the attached report titled "Northern B.C. Collaborative Accessibility Plan" completed by Urban Matters CCC Ltd. which provides an update on the collaborative approach within the region for local governments to meet the requirements of the *Accessible BC Act*, for information.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The *Accessible British Columbia Act* requires local governments to be compliant with the following requirements by September 1, 2023:

- Establish and maintain an accessibility committee.
- Develop an accessibility plan.
- Maintain a process to receive public comments on the accessibility plan and accessibility barriers.

On June 8, 2023, the Regional Board passed the following resolution:

> *MOVED, SECONDED, and CARRIED*
> *That the Regional Board award a contract to Urban Matters CCC Ltd. to complete a collaborative accessibility strategy on behalf of the Peace River Regional District, all member municipalities, and the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality for an estimated cost of $30,000 (excluding taxes) to the PRRD, of the $94,800 (excluding taxes) total cost of the project; further, that the costs be divided amongst each of the participating local governments on a per capita basis using the 2021 census data; and further that the Chair and Chief Administrative Officer be authorized to sign the agreement on behalf of the Peace River Regional District.*

Urban Matters was subsequently engaged to complete the collaborative accessibility strategy on behalf of the PRRD, all member municipalities, and the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality. Staff from these local governments worked closely with Urban Matters over the summer to develop an Accessibility Plan and Accessibility Committee to meet the needs of the group. The completed Accessibility Plan is attached for reference. The Accessibility Committee, which consists of staff representatives from each local government and up to twelve community members who represent the wide geography and diversity of persons with disabilities within the region, held its inaugural meeting on September 14, 2023. As a result of the completion of this work, the PRRD is fully compliant with the requirements of the Accessible British Columbia Act.

Per the Accessibility Committee's terms of reference, the purpose of the committee is to:
- Provide a forum for discussion of issues affecting people with all types of disabilities in the region.
- Inform local governments on accessibility issues and solutions in the region and make recommendations for improving accessibility in communities.
- Identify accessibility barriers in the region and solutions to addressing them.
- Review and provide input on community plans, actions, designs, and so forth with an accessibility lens.
- Organize and/or participate in relevant community events or awareness activities wherever possible.

Urban Matters will be facilitating a second committee meeting this year under the existing scope of work, and then it is anticipated that the City of Fort St John will engage Urban Matters on behalf of the collective group to continue to facilitate the committee in 2024.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:
1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:
☒   Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):
$10,000 will be included in the proposed 2024 budget for function 100 – Administration for the PRRD's share of the annual cost of the Accessibility Committee Facilitator.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):
The Accessibility Plan and details on the public comment process will be published on the PRRD website on October 6, 2023.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):
None at this time.

Attachments:
1. Northeastern BC Collaborative Accessibility Plan