



To: Planning Committee

Date: May 1, 2006

From: Terry Crowe  
Manager, Policy Planning

File:

Re: **Richmond State of the Environment (SOE): 2005 Update Report**

**Staff Recommendation**

1. That the Richmond State of the Environment (SOE): 2005 Update Report (attached to the report, dated April 28, 2006, from the Manager, Policy Planning) be endorsed;
2. That staff be directed to continue working on the SOE Implementation Program, as outlined in the Policy Planning Manager's report dated May 1, 2006.

Terry Crowe  
Manager, Policy Planning

Att. 1

<b>FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY</b>		
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>		
<b>REVIEWED BY TAG</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>REVIEWED BY CAO</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

## Staff Report

### Origin

As noted in Richmond's Official Community Plan (OCP), it is Council's Policy to update the City's State of the Environment (SOE) Report every three years, and use the results to adjust and enhance environmental policies and Programs as required. In direct response to this Policy, the attached Richmond State of the Environment: 2005 Update Report (**Attachment 1**) was produced under the guidance of Council's Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE) with the assistance of The Sheltair Group and City staff.

This is the second comprehensive update of the City's original State of the Environment (SOE) report which was completed in 1998. The first update was completed in 2001.

### Findings Of Fact

The original SOE Report provided a report card on eight (8) topics and fourteen (14) indicators regarding the City's environmental health and the City's progress towards achieving its environmental goals.

The 2005 update contains 27 indicators organized into the eight (8) categories listed below:

- Context Indicators – Population Size and Growth
- Preserve a Sustainable Agricultural Land Base
- Protect Natural Areas and Provide Parks and Trails
- Reduce Resource Consumption and Emissions
- Build Compact and Complete Communities
- Increase Transportation Choice
- Maintain Clean Water, Land and Air and Minimize Noise; and,
- Provide Environmental Leadership by the City

The SOE assists in identifying key environment related trends and issues which can subsequently form a basis for making more effective decisions related to managing our urban and natural environments.

### Analysis

Summary conclusions for each of the categories mentioned above, as well as tables comparing overall ratings for each of the indicators between the 1998 SOE, 2001 Update and the 2005 Update are included within the Update Report (*see pages 99 through 101 in Attachment 1*). Through these comparisons it is apparent that:

- certain indicators are improving (e.g. labour force living and working in Richmond and overall noise levels in the community);
- some are stable (e.g. residential housing mix and amenity access), and;
- a few (e.g. water consumption and waste generation) are worsening.

The benefits of regularly updating the SOE are now becoming evident in revealing overall trends and identifying areas where additional focus may be warranted. In order to capitalize upon the information provided through this most recent update, the following SOE Implementation Program is suggested.

*SOE Implementation Program*

1. Staff will work with ACE to finish preparing the response to Council's referral on how to maintain a quality environment in light of future growth. A recent workshop was held with ACE, a guest speaker from UBC, and staff as part of the SOE update program to explore this issue and begin formulating recommendations which will be further developed and brought forward to Council in the near future.
2. SOE Distribution
  - a) Staff, will undertake the limited reproduction and distribution of hard copies of the 2005 SOE Update Report. Distribution will include copies to local schools, libraries, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), Fraser River Estuary Management Program (FREMP), and the North Port and Fraser Port Authorities. Feedback will be channelled through to ACE for consideration.
  - b) The document will be placed on City's web site and made available as a free download.
3. As both the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) and the GVRD's Livable Region Strategic Plan are to be updated over the next two (2) years, ACE and staff will review the findings of the 2005 SOE Update Report to develop appropriate recommendations for possible incorporation into these plans.
4. The next SOE update is proposed for 2008 in order to coincide with the release of the 2006 census data.
5. After 2008, it is recommended that the SOE be updated every five (5) years in order to coincide with the release of future census results.

**Financial Impact**

None.

**Conclusion**

Council's Advisory Committee on the Environment, with the assistance of The Sheltair Group and a cross departmental committee of staff have completed the 2005 comprehensive update of Richmond's State of the Environment Report. An implementation program is proposed to disseminate the document and to develop recommendations for action that could enhance the updates, to the City's OCP and the GVRD's LRSP documents.



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