



REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

SOUTH OKANAGAN REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY VOL 1 2008/2009

Photo credits

Front cover Photo:
Mike Biden



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Okanagan River oxbow (Mike Biden)



Naramata Benchlands (Mike Biden)



Okanagan apple blossom (Cheryl Fortier)



Why and how indicators are being monitored

Introduction

Indicators

Background

The south Okanagan region has been undergoing significant changes, from population growth and development pressure, to a fundamental shift in agriculture brought on by the emergence of the wine industry in the valley

While these changes carry with them many positive benefits, such as economic growth and tourism, they also pose new challenges and force us to ask ourselves difficult questions about what the future of the south Okanagan should be.

The purpose of the south Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is to create a “big picture” vision for the south Okanagan over the next twenty years. In doing so, the RGS sets common social, economic and environmental objectives.

Once a RGS is adopted, the *Local Government Act* requires that ongoing monitoring be established to assess implementation and measure progress being made towards the stated objectives.

Indicators

In order to enable measurement of the progress being made in addressing the identified objectives, the RDOS created a set of Performance Indicators. In December of 2008, the RDOS released the RGS Baseline Study, which used the established performance indicators to build a

baseline picture of the region against which future measurement might be compared, using the baseline year of 2006 .

Each year, a snapshot report will be released that uses a selection of performance indicators to measure progress. Every five years in conjunction with the release of census data, a comprehensive report will be released using all of the performance indicators.

The following is the first of the annual reports on the state of the region. After a discussion of each indicator, an analysis will be conducted highlighting any interesting results between the baseline and the data gathered for 2008 and 2009.

Statistics and Indicators

Monitoring progress on implementing the RGS can be best accomplished with a long term perspective in mind. Annual fluctuations of data may perhaps be misleading from a statistical perspective and any trend information presented should be recognized as potentially insignificant.

“If you don’t measure results, you can’t tell success from failure”

- David Osborne & Ted Graebler



SECTION 1.
**POPULATION
GROWTH**

INDICATOR: Population Growth in the RGS Study Area		
Projected population		
2007: 67,613	2008: 68,461	2009: 70,157

What is being measured?

Using Provincial population projections, this indicator estimates the respective population growth rate of member municipalities and Regional District Electoral Areas that fall within the RGS study area.

Why is it important?

Population growth brings both benefits and challenges to a community. A growing population is integral to building a strong local economy. As the population grows more jobs are created to meet the demand for housing, retail goods and services. The challenge of a growing population is managing the growth in such a way that the values and character of the community remain strong.

What does the RGS say?

The RGS doesn't specify whether population growth should be encouraged or discouraged.



If unchecked, development can have serious consequences on the environment, infrastructure, and, ultimately, on quality of life.

Instead, the RGS provides policy direction that promotes sustainable growth, if growth occurs.

How are we performing?

Based on provincial population projections for the RDOS, the south Okanagan has grown since 2007, going from an estimated 67,613 residents to 70,157 residents in 2009. This suggests that the annual growth rate over the past three years (see Highlight) has been higher than previous years. However, this growth rate has been slightly below the Provincial average.

Presently, 76.6% of the population of the RDOS is situated within south Okanagan municipalities. Unfortunately, further tracking of this percentage will only be possible using updated Census data.

1.24%

Average annual projected population growth in S. Okanagan for 2006 -2009.

NOTE: More detailed population data that can be used to evaluate the success of the RGS efforts to direct population growth will be available after the next Census data is available.



SECTION 2.

AGRICULTURE

INDICATOR:
Amount of Land included in the ALR

2006—2009

Inclusions : 42.0 ha Exclusions: 21.7 ha

What is being measured?

This indicator tracks the success of the protection of agricultural land by measuring the amount of land that has been added or removed annually from the Agricultural Land Reserve within the RGS study area. This is determined through ALC applications approved for either inclusion or exclusion each year.

NOTE: *farming activities also occur on agricultural land that is not in the ALR, and land in the ALR may not be actively farmed.*

Why is it important?

Only 5% of BC's land is suitable for farming, making farmland a valuable commodity. With the goal of protecting agricultural land, the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) recognizes the importance of agriculture as an economic driver, and an important food source.



Wineries and vineyards now form an important component of the agriculture and agri-tourism industries in the south Okanagan.

Within the south Okanagan, farming forms and integral part of the local and regional economies.

What does the RGS say?

One of the key directives in the RGS is the protection of farmland and the agriculture industry in the south Okanagan by promoting the retention of farmland and by directing development to established townsites.

The RGS goes further, recognizing the right to farm and promoting the enhancement of a sustainable local agriculture industry.

How are we performing?

Between 2006 and 2009, the Agricultural Land Commission approved 42.0 hectares (ha) to be included within the ALR. At the same time there were only 21.7 hectares allowed to be excluded.

20.3 ha

Net Increase of land included in the ALR in the RGS study area between 2006 & 2009



SECTION 3.

BIODIVERSITY & NATURAL SPACES

INDICATOR:
Annual & cumulative area of parkland and protected areas

Percentage of land base		
2007: 7.99%	2008: 8.04%	2009: 8.23%

What is being measured?

This indicator measures the total amount and percentage of total land area of parks and protected natural areas in the South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy area. It includes lands zoned as a park and lands owned by Natures Trust of BC, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and The Land Conservancy.

Why is it important?

The Okanagan Valley supports some of the most rare flora and fauna in Canada. Several species exist only here and nowhere else.

From an environmental perspective parks and protected areas provide habitat and support biological diversity. Generally, the larger the park, the greater the habitat value.

From a social perspective, parks and protected areas provide focal points for community recreation, enhance aesthetic values, foster civic pride and encourage outdoor activities that contribute to personal health and vitality.

What does the RGS say?

The RGS recognizes at a fundamental level the intrinsic value of all components of the natural environment. The Strategy further acknowledges the relationship between a healthy environment and the quality of life enjoyed by residents of the south Okanagan.



The south Okanagan is home to many rare and endangered species, including the provincially red-listed Rusty Cord-moss shown above (photo credit: Ole Westby).

The policies of the RGS strongly support the conservation, protection and enhancement of ecologically sensitive lands and the retention of open spaces, parks and large rural holdings.

How are we performing?

As of 2006, 7.99% of the land base within the RGS study area was protected by various jurisdictions and organizations.

Between 2007 and 2008, there was no significant change in the total land area for parks and protected areas in the south Okanagan. In 2009 there was a slight increase within Area 'D' relating to Nature Trust land base that increased the overall percentage to 8.23%.



SECTION 4.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

INDICATOR:
 Housing starts by structural type & average house price

Average house price

2006: \$315,045 2007: \$394,719 2008: \$407,232 2009: \$372,886

What is being measured?

This indicator measures the percentage mix of new housing starts by structural type, that is the number of units that are single family and those as multi-family. The average annual housing price calculated from homes sales is also measured. A comparison of how many households are paying more than 30% of income will be included after the next census.

Why is it important?

The range of housing types found within the total number has the potential of indicating overall community health.

Specifically, developing complete communities that are accessible to their residents requires a mix of housing types. Generally, multi-unit dwellings are more affordable than single detached dwellings.

What does the RGS say?

The RGS strongly encourages the development of compact, complete communities in the south Okanagan. In order to achieve this, the RGS promotes “accessible” housing, which addresses a number of barriers to housing, including affordability.

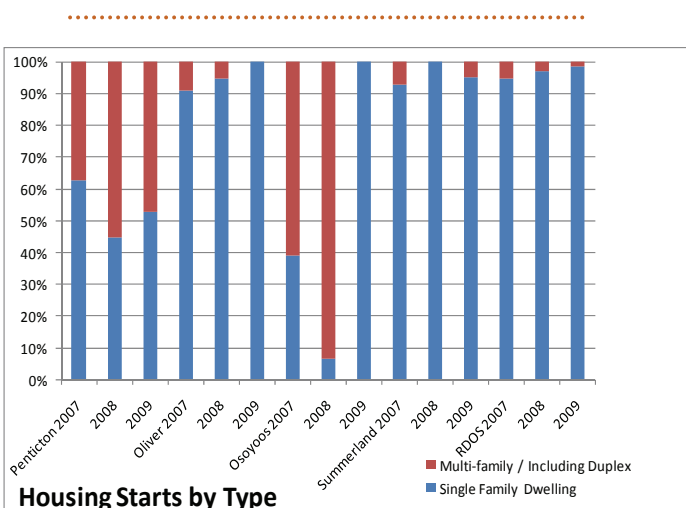
How are we performing?

The overall average house price increased by \$57,841 between the years 2006 and 2009 for the RGS study area. Two areas, Electoral Area 'D' and Summerland saw a drop in price between 2008 and 2009.

The percentage of multi-family vs single family units decreased between 2006 and 2009. In 2006 there were 661 multi and 266 single family units, in 2009, 55 multi and 246 single family units.



Multi-family units may serve to increase housing affordability and variety. This is a Kivanas housing project in Penticton.



SECTION 5.

ENERGY USE

INDICATOR:

Residential building energy consumption

Per Capita total consumption (GJs)

2006: 59.93

2007: 61.28

2008: 58.99

What is being measured?

In homes in the south Okanagan, the two primary sources for energy are electricity and natural gas. This indicator measures the amount of energy used in residential buildings in the south Okanagan, both per capita and in total.

For electricity the data is reported in kilowatt hours (kWh) per person per year, and for natural gas, in gigajoules (GJ) per person per year.

Why is it important?

Residential building energy consumption shows how much energy residents of the south Okanagan consume. The generation of energy is associated with environmental impacts to land, air and water resources. However, different sources of energy have different environmental impacts. For instance, natural gas results in significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other air emissions, while hydro-electric power generation may cause harm to water resources and to habitat.



What does the RGS say?

The RGS prioritizes the preservation and protection of our valuable air and water resources, recognizing the important role they play as the foundation for the quality of life enjoyed by residents of the area.

In addition, the Strategy encourages the efficient use of infrastructure to reduce the cost burden of constructing additional infrastructure services.

How are we performing?

According to data collected from Terasen Gas and Fortis, the average resident of the RGS study area consumed 59.93 GJ in 2006, 61.28 GJ in 2007 and 58.99 GJ in 2008. Data for natural gas in 2009 is not yet available. These figures indicate a possible decreasing trend in per capita energy consumption.

Energy use between natural gas and hydro electricity for the RGS study area indicates that for residential usage 33.5% of energy use is natural gas while 66.5% is electricity (2008).

.....
58.99 GJ

The total amount of energy, natural gas and electricity, used per capita
.....

SECTION 6.

WATER MANAGEMENT

INDICATOR:
water consumption

Litres per capita

2007: 629

2008: 687

2009: 687

What is being measured?

This indicator uses the data collected and analyzed for the water supply/demand model developed by the Okanagan Basin Water Board. This model separates water consumption into four categories: indoor residential, outdoor residential, commercial, and outdoor other (agriculture).

Why is it important?

In the South Okanagan, water availability is a concern. With the population growth and increases in water demand for agriculture, there is a potential shortfall in supply relative to demand in the next decades.

Agricultural irrigation accounts for approximately 75% of consumptive water use in the entire Okanagan Basin. The shift to viticulture in many parts of the study area may use overall less water but relies heavily on water supplies in the early fall, a time when supplies are typically at their lowest level.



There have been long been concerns that our water supply is over allocated; licenses have been given for more water than is actually available.

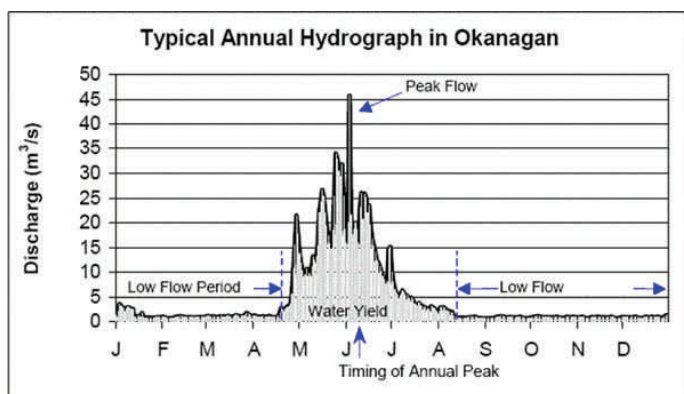
What does the RGS say?

The RGS promotes water sustainability through conservation and related best practices. This policy includes 10 actions for communities, organizations and governments to work collaboratively to ensure that water remains available for all future uses.

How are we performing?

The water supply/demand model was not run for 2009 therefore the consumption is assumed to the same.

Note: Determining a water quality indicator proved to be problematic given the large number of water systems and the lack of data collected.





SECTION 7.

MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE

INDICATOR:

Municipal solid waste disposed per capita

Average daily waste (kg/person/day)

2007: 2.67

2008: 2.44

2009: 2.40

What is being measured?

This indicator provides data on the annual amount of municipal solid waste (MSW) disposed in landfills or incinerated by residential, commercial, institutional, demolition, land clearing or construction sources.

Total MSW includes amounts disposed within the regional district as well as any amount incinerated or exported via transfer stations. The definition of MSW excludes sewage sludge, agricultural waste and industrial wood waste.

More specifically, this indicator is measured in kilograms (kg) of solid waste per person per year and consists of measurements taken from the Campbell Mountain, Summerland and Oliver landfills. The Okanagan Falls landfill does not have the facilities necessary to gather this data.

Why is it important?

By taking measures to reduce waste, such as recycling, composting and diverting waste, we can reduce the environmental impact that solid waste represents.

In addition, reducing the volume of solid waste that goes to RDOS landfills extends the lives of the facilities, reducing the need for additional landfills and the associated capital costs.

What does the RGS say?

The Infrastructure section of the RGS speaks

directly to reducing solid waste production by promoting and encouraging targets for waste reduction, by developing best practices and by supporting public awareness and action around waste management.

The growth strategy also addresses waste reduction by directing the efficient use of existing infrastructure over the development of new infrastructure.

How are we performing?

Based on data collected at the three landfills the average daily mass of waste per capita has decreased from 2007 to 2009. These figures are calculated using an estimated 2008 population base and may not correctly reflect actual per capita waste amounts.

However, it appears that the trend is that less waste has been disposed of in each landfill. The figures indicate in 2007 average daily mass of waste disposed was 2.67 kg /per capita, in 2008, 2.44 kg and in 2009, 2.4 kg .





SECTION 8.
**SOCIAL, CULTURAL
 & THE ARTS**

INDICATOR:
 Crime rate

Crime rate per 1000 population
 2006: 430 2007: 402 2008: 359 2009: 350

What is being measured?

This indicator measures the number of Criminal Code offenses (excluding traffic offenses) per 1,000 population.

Crime rates are reported by policing jurisdiction. For the south Okanagan, there are four policing jurisdictions: Summerland, Penticton, Penticton Provincial (RCMP), and South Okanagan Provincial (RCMP).

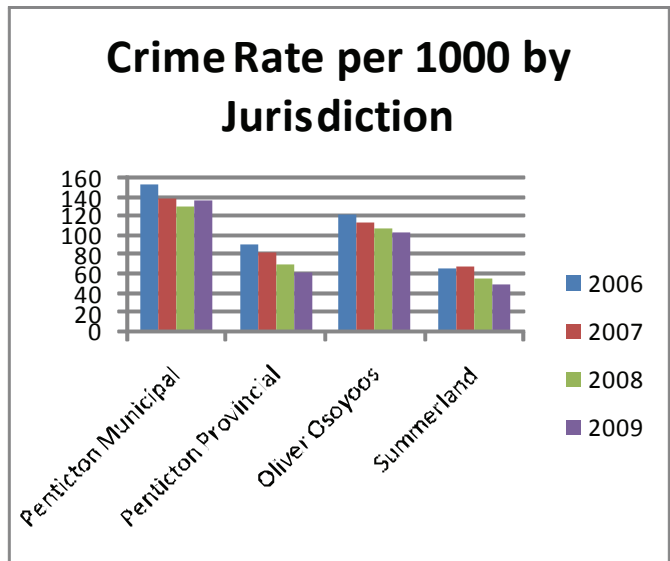
Why is it important?

Crime rate statistics are used as an indicator of community safety, where the lower the crime rate is, the safer the community is.

What does the RGS say?

One of the primary directives of the RGS is to establish “safe, culturally diverse and healthy communities.”

The RGS proposes to achieve this by supporting emergency planning and by supporting the local police authority in its awareness programs for crime reduction.



The RCMP patrols the entire RGS study area.

How are we performing?

In almost every policing jurisdiction in the south Okanagan, crime rates have steadily decreased since 2006 but with a small increase for 2009 for the Penticton municipality. Overall between 2006 and 2009, there was a 12.1% decrease in criminal code offenses. This reflects overall BC rates where in 2008, BC reached its lowest crime rate in over 30 years.

Trails (km)

2008: 566

2009: no change

What is being measured?

The total length of trails in kilometers by surface and trail type.

Why is it important?

Well planned trails and greenway systems contribute to a livable community by connecting people to nature and providing connections between neighbourhoods and key destinations. Trails promote a healthy lifestyle and encourage alternative transportation choices. Trails can also provide an economic benefit by attracting visitors to the area and can strengthen awareness of the heritage and natural history of an area.

What does the RGS say?

The RGS supports the creation of walkable neighbourhoods and pedestrian & cycle networks that offer both recreational and alternative transportation opportunities.

How are we performing?

Data from 2008 indicate that there is a total of 566 kilometers of trails in the RGS study area. Approximately 73% of which are unpaved and 26% are partly paved. Approximately 72% of the trails are classified as multi-purpose, which can include walking, cycling, horseback riding and cross country skiing.

There has been no changes to the amount of trails in 2009.



The KVR trail over Naramata attracts a number of visitors every year.

Percentage of budget

2007: 53.9

2008: 27.1

2009: 34.4

What is being measured?

This indicator measures the percentage of funding committed to the arts and culture allocated from local government's budget each year.

Why is it important?

Financial support for arts, culture, diversity and heritage indicates a commitment to building community and fostering civic pride. As well strong support for these activities may better position a community to attract and retain economic development.

What does the RGS say?

The RGS supports and encourages a strong arts community and encourages the identification and protection of important cultural places.

How are we performing?

Between the years 2007 and 2009 there has been a marked decline in the percentage of budget allocated to arts funding for the RGS study area. Although data varies for each community, in general member municipalities showed a slight decrease in funding with the RDOS showing the most significant cut for arts funding within its overall budget.



Analysis & Summary

Indicators

This Regional Snapshot Report uses a number of performance indicators that enable us to measure the progress being made in addressing objectives contained within the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). An indicator is a measure that reveals a condition, a trend, or an emerging issue. This report combines data collected for the years 2006 to 2009 to the greatest extent possible and highlights the years 2008 and 2009 for the indicators throughout.

There are limitations to the use of indicators. A region comprises many subsystems with complex relationships and interdependencies. Many indicators are too crude to capture any type of site specific condition, they also rely on 'after the fact' data information. Data capture for indicators may also have inconsistencies. However, to be able to perceive any trends with information, monitoring indicators continues to be a worthwhile exercise, particularly over the long term.

Trends

A number of indicators seem to point towards a positive move in meeting objectives contained in the RGS. These include: a net increase in lands included to the Agricultural Land Reserve, a slight increase in lands protected as park or conservation area, decreasing crime statistics and decreasing amount of waste entering our landfills. How-

ever, whether these indicators will prove to be consistent in the long term remains to be seen.

Data

Some of data being used for monitoring in this report needed to be adjusted from the initial baseline report using 2006 data. This is a result of some propriety rights for the data, used by the consultant, that RDOS could not access. With the data now in place, it is anticipated that there will be a consistent collection approach in future years. Some indicators proved to be more challenging than others to obtain useful regional information.

One of these indicators, in particular was for water management. Water management, both in terms of quantity and quality, is one of the most problematic for a regional approach to data collection. While relying on the water supply/demand model developed by the OBWB, the model is only as useful as the data entered.

Water quality both for the 'out of the tap' water and for the ambient lake and stream water quality also proved to be challenging to collect. The Province categorizes any water system with two more users as a community system but there is no central water monitoring agency that collects water quality data.



Looking Ahead

Future Updates

The next Regional Growth Snapshot report will be prepared using 2010 data should be ready later in 2011. Every five years a more inclusive indicator report will be published using all of the monitoring indicators. Data received from the next census will also be useful for fine tuning many of the indicators.

While a number of data issues have been resolved for this report, there may be new methods evolving that could be employed in the future when to provide more consistency for monitoring throughout the region.

For example, the Province has developed a new water use reporting tool to monitor many of the larger water utilities that may prove to provide valuable water use data in the future.

The affordable housing indicator will be enhanced every five years when the census data calculates the number of residents who are paying more than 30% of their gross annual income for housing. This amount is a standard measurement of housing affordability developed by CMHC. In the years between, monitoring the sales data and the number multi and single family homes provides a decent 'snapshot'.

The purpose of the Regional Growth Strategy is to work towards a long term vision of greater

community sustainability. It sets out a number of objectives and actions to move us towards this goal.

The regional Climate Action Plans were endorsed by the Board in 2010 and the targets to reduce GHG emissions will need to be incorporated in both Official Community Plans and into the RGS. These measures, along with other measures being addressed through the implementation of the RGS will help inform the shape, densities, location of future development and also informs communities on living more sustainability.

