

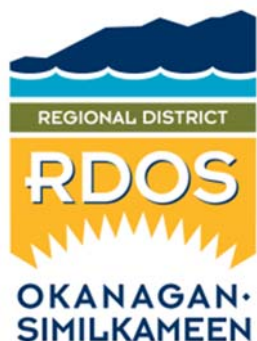
South Okanagan

Regional Growth Strategy

BYLAW 2770, 2017



*This Bylaw has been consolidated for
Convenience only and includes all
Amendments to the text up to:
October 18, 2018*



Bylaw History

Bylaw No. 2421, 2007 (RGS)

First and Second Reading – June 21, 2007

Reread – January 10, 2008

Reread – October 16, 2008

Reread – October 22, 2009

Public Hearing – December 8 and 9, 2009

Third Reading – March 18, 2010

Adopted – April 1, 2010

Bylaw No. 2421.01, 2011 (GHG)

Adopted – September 15, 2011

Bylaw 2770, 2017 (minor update)

Adopted – January 19, 2017

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REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
SOUTH OKANAGAN REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY
BYLAW NO. 2770, 2017

A bylaw to adopt the South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy

WHEREAS a regional board may develop, adopt, implement, monitor and a review a regional growth strategy under Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*;

AND WHEREAS the Regional Board of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, by resolution dated January 7, 2016, initiated the review of the “Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen Sub-regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2421, 2007”, pursuant to Section 433 of the *Local Government Act*;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Directors gave notice to affected local governments on November 4, 2016 that included information that the proposed amendment may be determined to be minor in nature;

NOW THEREFORE the Regional Board of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. the “Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen Sub-regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2421, 2007”, is hereby repealed;
2. pursuant to Section 443 of the *Local Government Act*, Schedule ‘A’ attached to and forming part of this bylaw is hereby designated as the “South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy”; and
3. this bylaw may be cited as the “South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2770, 2017”.

READ A FIRST TIME on the 19th day of January, 2017.

READ A SECOND TIME on the 19th day of January, 2017.

READ A THIRD TIME on the 19th day of January, 2017.

ADOPTED this 19th day of January, 2017.

Chair

Chief Administrative Officer

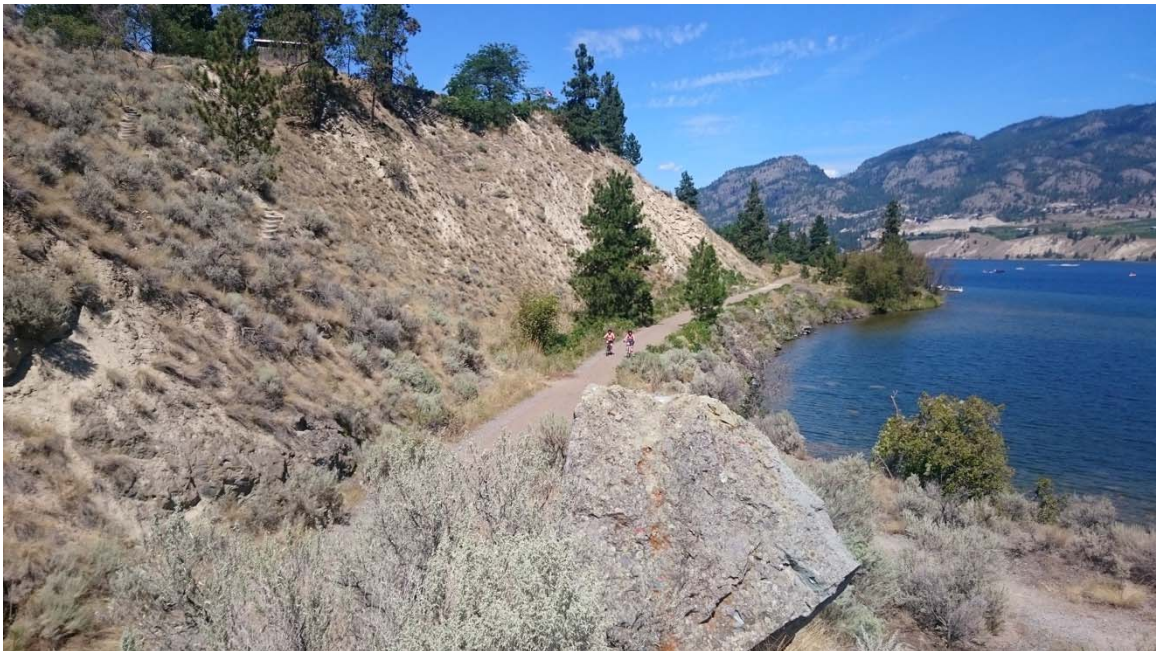
Part 1: Introduction and Context

INTRODUCTION

The South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was launched in 2004, adopted in 2010, amended in 2011, and updated in 2016 through a minor update process. It is a partnership between the Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS), the City of Penticton, the Town of Oliver, the Town of Osoyoos, and the District of Summerland to manage growth in the South Okanagan in manner that is consistent with long-term social, environmental and economic objectives.

The South Okanagan RGS applies to the southern-most reaches of the Okanagan Valley (see map 1) and includes the municipalities of Oliver, Osoyoos, Penticton and Summerland, and Electoral Areas “A”, “C”, “D”, “E”, “F” and “I”.¹

This RGS is comprised of three parts with supporting maps. Part one introduces the RGS process and planning context. Part two provides the seven RGS Goals and associated planning objectives and supporting policies. Part three provides details on the implementation and monitoring of the RGS.



Kettle Valley Railway. © RDOS

¹ Amendment Bylaw No. 2770.01, 2018 – adopted October 18, 2018.

Map 1: South Okanagan RGS area²



² Amendment Bylaw No. 2770.01, 2018 – adopted October 18, 2018.

PURPOSE

Part 13 of the *Local Government Act* establishes the purpose of an RGS: “to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources.”

The RGS provides the South Okanagan, and the communities that make up the area, a high-level framework for future decision-making and land use with the aim of preserving the region’s high quality of life and unique environmental features over the strategy’s 20-year period. It provides a shared regional vision of the South Okanagan and commits area municipalities and the RDOS to meet its broad, mutual social, economic and environmental goals.

This RGS also promotes coordination between area municipalities and the RDOS on achieving strategy goals that cross municipal boundaries. It also creates clear links with other regional partners (the Province, Okanagan Basin Water Board, South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program, Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, etc.) who should be engaged to help implement it.

At the core of this RGS is a commitment to broad-based, long-term sustainable development. The balancing of social, economic, and environmental dimensions of this commitment are clearly expressed in the seven policy areas and supporting goals:

1. **Housing and Development:** Focus development to serviced areas in designated Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.
2. **Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks:** Protect the health and biodiversity of ecosystems in the south Okanagan.
3. **Infrastructure and Transportation:** Support efficient and effective infrastructure services and an accessible multi-modal transportation network.
4. **Community Health and Wellbeing:** Foster healthy, safe communities that provide accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities.
5. **Regional Economic Development:** Achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous South Okanagan regional economy.
6. **Engagement and Collaboration:** Foster and support regional cooperation, collaboration and civic engagement.
7. **Energy Emissions and Climate Change:** Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate.

The input and engagement of residents who live, work and play in the South Okanagan was integral to developing the RGS and remains a fundamental ingredient to implementing it. In this context, residents have an important responsibility in the future to participate where possible to achieve the strategic actions, monitor and gauge whether the RGS vision is being met, and to support action and change where the RGS goals are not being met.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The South Okanagan RGS was initiated in 2004 and involved several rounds of revisions and modification. It was developed over three phases and had First and Second Readings on June 21, 2007. The Draft RGS Bylaw was then re-read on January 10, 2008, October 16, 2008 and on October 22, 2009. The final Bylaw was adopted on April 1, 2010 and adopted again on September 15, 2011 with a minor amendment that included a section on greenhouse gas reductions as mandated by new Provincial legislation.

Regional Context Statements for RDOS member governments were developed and adopted beginning with the Town of Osoyoos in July 2011, the Town of Oliver in October 2011, and both the City of Penticton and the District of Summerland in July 2012.

The *Local Government Act* requires local governments to review their regional growth strategies for possible amendment at least once every five years. As 2015 marked five years since the RGS was adopted, the RDOS conducted a review of the RGS to determine whether the RGS required updating, and should it require updating, whether a “minor” or “major” update of the RGS was required.

A consultant team was engaged to conduct the preliminary review with senior planning staff from RDOS, the City of Penticton, the District of Summerland, and the Town of Osoyoos, who functioned as a project Steering Committee for the project. Based on the review, it was determined that there were significant opportunities to reorganize and improve the organization and structure of the RGS and to revise and edit policies to improve clarity and reduce redundancy.

The study findings were brought forward to the RDOS Board for their consideration with the understanding that the revisions would be accommodated through a “minor amendment” revision process, as outlined in the *Local Government Act*. The Board made the recommendation to proceed with the minor amendment in December 2015 and the project to carry out the work was launched in June 2016 and completed in October 2016.



Oliver Town Hall. © RDOS

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The South Okanagan is a special and valued area. Located in the south-central interior of British Columbia, it covers a large geographical area that extends south from the District of Summerland to the US border at the Town of Osoyoos, east to Anarchist Mountain and west to Apex.

The South Okanagan region is a mountainous, semi-arid, landscape with intensive agricultural production (tree fruits, grapes, vegetables) in the valley bottom and rangeland in the grasslands below the tree line. Housing and development is concentrated primarily in the valley bottoms, although there is now a small year-round population at Apex.

The larger South Okanagan-Similkameen is recognized as a region that combines a wide range of natural habitat areas with a large number of unique species, many of which are not found elsewhere in the province or in Canada. The area is also home to the largest number of endangered and threatened species of plants and animals in BC and Canada.

With its mild and relatively dry climate, the region is home to a range of productive, but sensitive ecosystems, including wetlands, riparian areas, grasslands and shrub-steppe, and forests. Collectively and individually, these ecosystems support both provincially and nationally significant biodiversity, including many at-risk species.

Agriculture is a major contributor to the local economy, as the semi-arid region has exceptional growing conditions, with irrigation, fertile soil, hot summers and relatively mild winters. Tree fruits and grapes are two major crops in the South Okanagan, with major tree fruit processing facilities and a growing number (over 50) of well-known, award-winning vineyards that attract a significant number of tourists in the summer months.

With the area's lakes, climate and recreational activities, tourism is another major contributor to the regional economy, including agricultural, sport, and cultural tourism.

Community engagement carried out for the original RGS confirmed that residents strongly value the area's high quality of life and are committed to protecting and stewarding the region's unique environmental, agricultural and community assets. Other regional and municipal planning initiatives carried out since the original RGS was completed, including Official Community Plan updates and environmental planning programs, have strongly confirmed residents' values and commitments.



Osoyoos, cc-by-Tjflex2, flickr.com

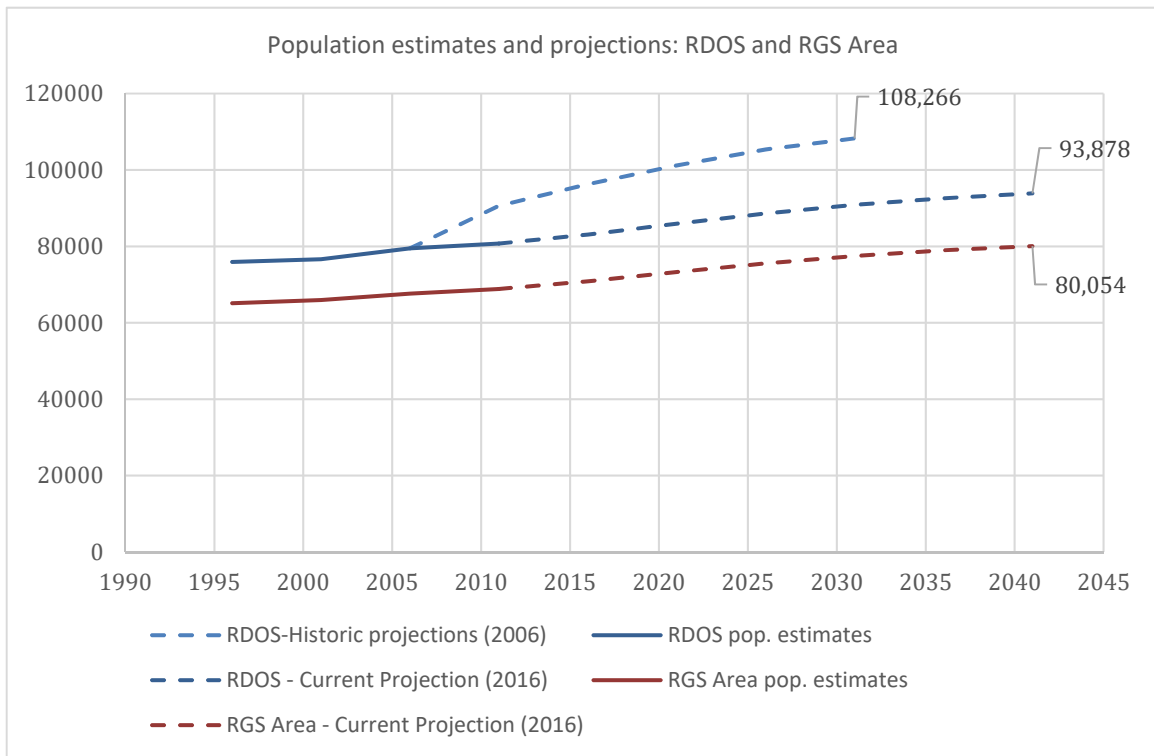
POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Population growth in the RDOS since 2006 has been much lower than was originally projected when the RGS was developed. The projected growth at the time (for the RDOS as a whole) was based on an expected annual increase of 1.45%, which would result in an additional 29,000 residents by 2031; the projected average annual growth has been revised down considerably to approximately 0.6%.

Figure 2 shows past and current projections for the RDOS, and current projections for the RGS Study Area. The two solid lines illustrate how the South Okanagan’s growth tracked fairly consistently with the RDOS as a whole from 1996 to 2011. According to the 2011 census, the RDOS numbered 80,742 and the RGS Study Area numbered 68,852.

The current projections by BC Stats resume assumptions for more robust growth from 2016 to 2041, with an annual rate of 0.84%; the areas are projected to add approximately 12,000 or 13,000 new residents by 2041.³ These figures do not include population numbers for on-reserve First Nations in the RGS area (Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band).

Figure 1: RDOS and RGS population estimates and projections



³ Population projections from BC Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. are only available at certain scales; projections for the RDOS have been used to develop projections for the RGS study area.

³ Mortality rates also plays into this change, but is relatively small for most age groups, so changes are primarily a result of migration patterns

Figure 2 illustrates the change in population cohorts for the region from 2006 to 2011 and shows movement patterns among the population⁴. The data suggests that a significant number of individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort are leaving the region (potentially to attend school), while a number of young families (ages 5 to 14 and 30 to 44) and middle-age residents (45 to 64) are arriving. It also suggests that there has been significant movement in and out of the area by other age groups, including the group aged 55 to 59, which increased by almost 10% in 2011. The increase is likely due to a significant net in-migration in that age group.

Figure 2: RDOS net change by age cohort, 2006 to 2011

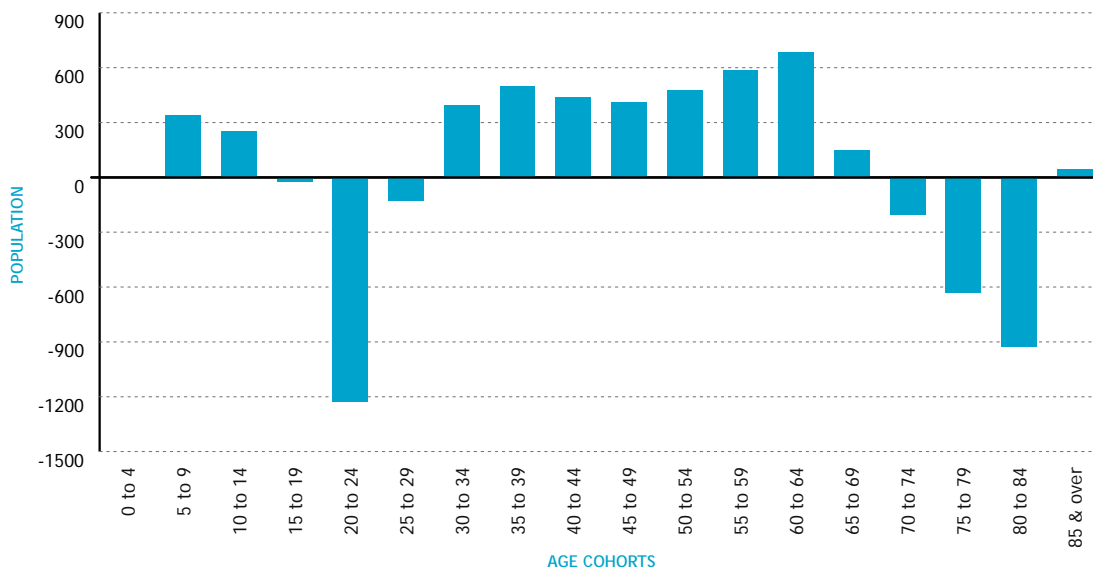
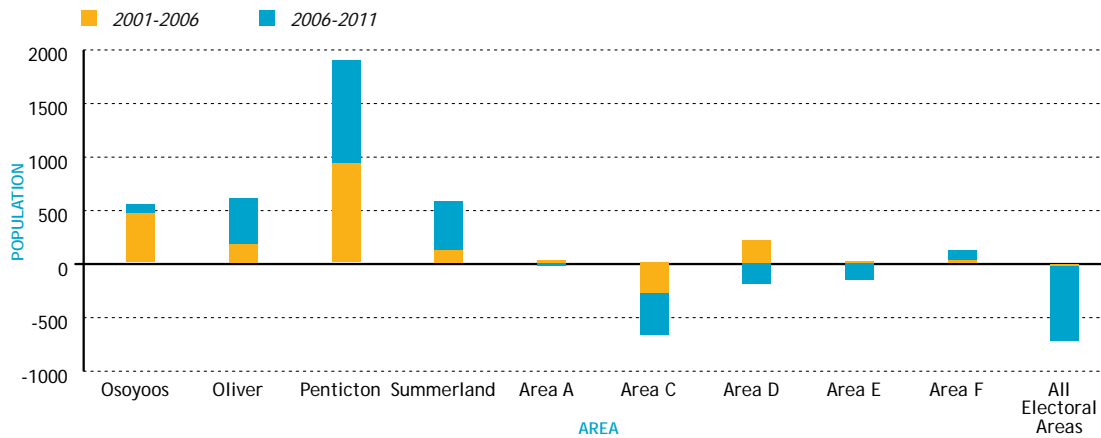
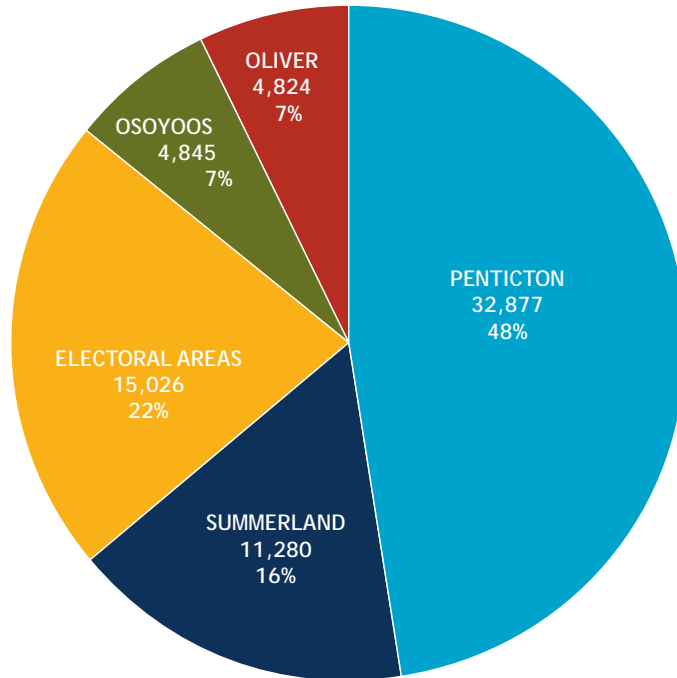


Figure 3: 10-Year Growth by area, 2001 to 2011



Within the RGS Study Area the population continues to urbanize. Penticton makes up approximately 48% of the population and 52% of growth from 2001 to 2011 (Figures 5 and 6); the Electoral Area populations have declined during the same time period by approximately 700 residents (4.5%).

Figure 4: RGS Study Area, population by sub-region, 2011



Part 2: REGIONAL POLICIES

VISION

The RGS vision statement describes the desired future for the South Okanagan region and sets the basic direction for planning, policies and action. The vision statement was first developed through public consultation and engagement during the early RGS process.

Key elements of this regional vision expressed by South Okanagan residents during RGS engagement in 2006 and 2007 included:

South Okanagan residents value and celebrate living in a sustainable region that balances environmental, social and economic considerations with a high quality of life and strong sense of community.

- *The Agricultural Land Reserve is protected and respected;*
- *Rural areas experience limited population growth and maintain a strong agricultural and resource base;*
- *An integrated biodiversity conservation strategy protects priority sensitive ecosystems;*
- *The majority of future population is housed in existing urban areas;*
- *New urban development is predominantly mixed-use, higher density with reduced parking requirements;*
- *New employment is encouraged, and distributed primarily between Penticton, Oliver, Osoyoos, and Summerland;*
- *Transportation emphasizes carpooling, public transit and other alternatives to single occupant automobiles and roadway expansion;*
- *Opportunities to reduce and recycle waste are maximized; and*
- *Water and energy conservation and efficiency are supported by incentive programs and funding.*

The RGS vision, goals and strategic actions were derived from comprehensive public consultation during which residents and RGS Advisory Committees identified the community issues, values and priorities across the region. Engagement also identified two additional planning considerations:

- **Use the precautionary principle when evaluating growth management decisions:**
The precautionary approach recognizes that when making many decisions, particularly those dealing with the natural environment and social fabric of communities, it is difficult to have perfect knowledge of all conditions and possible outcomes. When the effect of a decision is somewhat uncertain, that decision should be approached with caution with a view to mitigating any potential long-term negative impacts.

- **Establish a regional monitoring program for the RGS:** The long-term monitoring program should track a range of economic, environmental and social indicators over time. As RGS indicators are monitored annually, trends and conditions will be revealed, allowing a regional policy response when and where necessary. (Note: such monitoring program has been established and annual Regional Snapshots are produced. Snapshot structure, including indicators tracked was updated in 2016.)



Electoral Area C. © RDOS

STRATEGY

The RGS is organized around seven policy areas and supporting goals that were derived in consultation with South Okanagan communities and RGS advisory committees. Each of the policy goals are in turn supported by a series of related policy objectives. There are a number of supporting RGS policies organized under each of the objectives.

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1: Focus development to serviced areas in designated Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.

ECOSYSTEMS, NATURAL AREAS AND PARKS

Goal 2: Protect the health and biodiversity of ecosystems in the South Okanagan.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

Goal 3: Support efficient and effective infrastructure services and an accessible multi-modal transportation network.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Goal 4: Foster healthy, safe communities that provide accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 5: Achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous South Okanagan regional economy.

ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

Goal 6: Foster and support regional cooperation, collaboration and civic engagement.

ENERGY EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Goal 7: Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate.

Map 2: Existing Settlement Areas⁵



⁵ Amendment Bylaw No. 2770.01, 2018 – adopted October 18, 2018.

Map 3: Designated Regional Growth Strategy Primary and Rural Growth Areas⁶



⁶ Amendment Bylaw No. 2770.01, 2018 – adopted October 18, 2018.

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1: *Focus development in serviced areas in designated Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.*

The South Okanagan is composed of diverse and distinct settlement areas, that range in size, type (i.e., urban to rural), and predominant uses (e.g., resort residential to low-density rural residential). These communities are indicated on the *Existing Settlement Areas Map*.

As a guiding principle, land use decisions should take into account the broader values and needs of south Okanagan residents and the surrounding environment. The RGS recognizes that each community's land use decisions can have long-term consequences on social health, ecosystem function, and the local economy.

Compact urban development and the protection of the integrity of rural areas, including agricultural and ecologically sensitive lands, is one of the chief means of supporting economic, ecological and community health. It is also a way to enhance servicing efficiency. That's why the RGS directs development to settlement areas where services are located. The *Growth Management Map* identifies those existing settlement areas where future growth should be directed.

Primary Growth Areas are larger communities with all the necessary services, infrastructure and amenities in place to accommodate future growth. The majority of future growth in the south Okanagan should be directed to Primary Growth Areas. Rural Growth Areas – established rural settlement areas with some infrastructure and/or amenities in place – are where limited future development is anticipated, or where development has been pre-determined through approved zoning.

For those communities not shown on the *Growth Management Map*, it is understood that some infill development may be anticipated in rural areas, provided that such development:

- Does not significantly increase the number of units or the established density of the area; and
- Respects the character of the communities.

It is further acknowledged that in those areas not identified for growth, some resource, industrial, public and commercial uses may be considered, as specified in the policies of this section.

Primary Growth Areas

- Essential services / amenities are in place to accommodate growth; and
- All necessary infrastructure is in place.

Rural Growth Areas

- Established rural settlement areas with a minimum of 200 lots and/or dwelling units;
- Community water and/or community sewer services in place; and,
- Existing commercial, industrial or parks development.

Or,

- Where development has been pre-determined.

OBJECTIVES

Objective

- 1-A Collaborate and coordinate among regional partners to direct most new development to Primary Growth Areas.**

Supporting Policies

- 1A-1** Establish growth containment boundaries around Primary Growth Areas in Official Community Plans.
- 1A-2** Coordinate RDOS and municipal planning around major development proposals in rural/municipal fringe areas.
- 1A-3** Develop a memorandum of understanding between the RDOS and local governments to address the process for municipal boundary extensions, as required.
- 1A-4** Encourage appropriately located accessible commercial, institutional, light and heavy industrial development in Primary Growth Areas.

Objective

- 1-B Create walkable, liveable, mixed-use neighbourhoods and communities.**

Supporting Policies

- 1B-1** Promote compact development in both Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.
- 1B-2** Give priority to infill development in both Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.

Objective

- 1-C Protect character of rural areas.**

Supporting Policies

- 1C-1** Establish growth containment boundaries around Rural Growth Areas in Official Community Plans (OCPs).
- 1C-2** Direct limited development to Rural Growth Areas.
- 1C-3** Discourage rezoning of large rural land parcels to smaller parcel sizes, outside of Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.
- 1C-4** Limit consideration for rezoning of large rural land parcels to smaller parcel sizes outside of Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas only where such growth is infill, does not significantly increase the number of units or the established density, and respects the character of its surroundings.

- 1C-5** Strengthen policies in OCPs to discourage incremental and additional rural growth outside of identified growth areas (see Designated Regional Growth Strategy Primary and Rural Growth Areas Map, pg. 17). Proposed developments that do not closely adhere to OCP guidelines for the protection of rural and resource areas will not be supported.
- 1C-6** Identify areas where rezoning to larger minimum lot sizes is necessary to protect agricultural uses and/or rural character.
- 1C-7** Support and encourage all OCPs to require a site-specific report from a Qualified Professional for any new development in identified hazard areas.
- 1C-8** Communicate and work with Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, and Lower Similkameen Indian Band on potential cost sharing, delivery of services, capacity building and/or development plans for development abutting rural areas.
- 1C-9** Consider the following uses outside of identified Primary and Rural Growth Areas only where the uses are not feasible or appropriate in growth areas and where they will have minimal negative impacts on their surroundings: resource, industrial, resort (non-residential), small-scale commercial, public utility/institutional, parks and recreational development.

Objective

1-D Protect the agricultural land base.

Supporting Policies

- 1D-1** Support the establishment of a South Okanagan Agricultural Advisory Committee to advise the Regional District Board on agricultural matters.
- 1D-2** Work collaboratively with regional partners to develop a Regional Agriculture Strategy.
- 1D-3** Discourage further subdivision of farm parcels.
- 1D-4** Encourage and support value-added agricultural activities that improve farm economic viability.
- 1D-5** Encourage and support agri-tourism activities that improve farm economic viability.
- 1D-6** Undertake edge planning to mitigate the impacts of non-farm uses on farming activities and vice-versa when considering development adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve boundary and designated agricultural properties.
- 1D-7** Support urban growth boundaries that are consistent with the Agricultural Land Reserve boundaries.

Objective

1-E Recognize the critical links between social, environmental and economic sustainability and infrastructure in effective growth management.

Supporting Policies

1E-1 Continue to consult with the public, community leaders and professionals on growth management.

1E-2 Assess major development proposals against RDOS Sustainability Checklist.



Summerland. © Chamber of Commerce

ECOSYSTEMS, NATURAL AREAS AND PARKS

Goal 2: *Protect the health and biodiversity of ecosystems in the south Okanagan.*

The South Okanagan-Similkameen is a truly unique and special place with species and ecosystems that do not occur elsewhere in BC, or in Canada. The South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program's 2012 strategy, *Keeping Nature in our Future: A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the South Okanagan-Similkameen*, identified approximately 20% of the RGS area as having *high* or *very high* relative biodiversity value.

Over time, these valuable ecosystems and species have been impacted by population growth and residential, agricultural and commercial development in the region. Despite great efforts in the region and improving systems and planning, ecosystems have nonetheless been fragmented, habitat areas lost, and biodiversity remains threatened.

With most of the *high* or *very high* value habitat areas located within the South Okanagan's relatively narrow valley bottoms and bench lands, these pressures will remain as developable lands are clustered in the same areas.

In recognition of these ongoing challenges, the RGS environment goal was built upon two fundamental principles from public engagement:

- The environment should be respected for the ecosystem services it provides that entirely support human health and wellbeing; and
- Water supply, conservation, and quality are key environmental concerns and priority considerations for environment resource management initiatives.



Spotted Lake. © RDOS

OBJECTIVES

Objective

2-A Coordinate regional biodiversity conservation and management.

Supporting Policies

- 2A-1** Work with partners to maintain a regional approach to biodiversity conservation (*Keeping Nature in our Future: A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Okanagan Region*).
- 2A-2** Work with the RDOS Board and environmental partners on continued biodiversity conservation coordination and ecosystems protection.
- 2A-3** Work with Syilx leaders to develop partnerships for regional ecosystem health.
- 2A-4** Monitor the effectiveness of RGS regional biodiversity conservation and management actions.
- 2A-5** Respect and protect the ecosystem and environment by directing urban growth to Primary Growth Areas.

Objective

2-B Support environmental stewardship.

Supporting Policies

- 2B-1** Develop policy to protect the natural environment including updated development permit areas to protect sensitive ecosystems.
- 2B-2** Work with the RDOS Board and environmental partners on continued coordinated biodiversity conservation coordination and ecosystems protection.
- 2B-3** Conserve, protect and steward watersheds, wetlands, riparian areas, and open spaces.
- 2B-4** Seek opportunities to connect wetlands, riparian areas, and open spaces as wildlife corridors.
- 2B-5** Encourage best environmental management practices on farms.
- 2B-6** Restore and manage prime habitat areas, including lakeshores.

Objective

2-C Protect regional air quality.

Supporting Policies

- 2C-1** Develop a Regional Air Quality Management Plan.
- 2C-2** Ensure that a Regional Air Quality Management Plan identifies best management practices for reducing or eliminating residential and industrial burning, chemical spraying, and controlling air emissions.
- 2C-3** Support ongoing public awareness and education around air quality management practices.

Objective

2-D Promote and enhance water conservation and sustainability.

Supporting Policies

- 2D-1** Apply and promote best management practices for residential, commercial, institutional, industrial and agricultural uses.
- 2D-2** Maintain environmental flows to support ecological functions and groundwater recharge.
- 2D-3** Support continued implementation and future updates of the Okanagan Basin Water Board's *Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy*, including consideration of long term plans for upper level water storage / source water protection.
- 2D-4** Work collaboratively with the Okanagan Basin Water Board and other agencies and levels of government to utilize the data and findings from the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand study.
- 2D-5** Continue collaborating with the Water Sustainability Committee of the BC Water and Waste Association, the Okanagan Basin Water Board, local governments and other local stakeholders on basin-wide water management and conservation initiatives.
- 2D-6** Support the continued provision of adequate water resources for the agriculture sector, and ensure that adequate and secure access to water for the agriculture sector is a priority over non-essential urban uses.
- 2D-7** Recognize that each jurisdiction has a responsibility to sustainably manage and conserve water resources in times of drought, or where stream health is threatened.
- 2D-8** Promote the implementation of universal metering for water service connections, in collaboration with the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

Goal 3: *Support efficient, effective and affordable infrastructure services and an accessible multi-modal transportation network.*

Well-planned infrastructure services are important to the overall health, safety and livability of communities. More dispersed settlement patterns require servicing infrastructure extensions, which are expensive to build, operate and maintain, and can produce greater environmental impacts than development in existing serviced areas.

South Okanagan residents depend on a municipal and provincial transportation network and services for work, recreation and day-to-day travel, while the local economy depends upon the network for safe and efficient goods movement. Building more compact communities makes it easier to provide transportation services, including transit, bicycle and pedestrian options.

In partnership with all RGS local government partners, the Regional District is committed to the following guiding principles on transportation and infrastructure:

- The relationship between land use and the provision of efficient and affordable services must be considered, particularly for the identification of any future growth areas;
- Managing water quality and quantity for residential, commercial, and agricultural uses, while maintaining sustainable environmental flows, remains an ongoing priority for the future; and
- Coordinated inter-regional planning and management of infrastructure upgrades and services can maximize service efficiency and effectiveness.



Infrastructure pipe. © RDOS

OBJECTIVES

Objective

3-A Direct development to areas with publically operated services and infrastructure.

Supporting Policies

- 3A-1** Promote ongoing dialogue between rural and urban communities to coordinate and collaborate on new service and infrastructure development and ongoing operation and maintenance.
- 3A-2** Direct new development to Primary Growth Areas to provide more cost-effective infrastructure, facilities and services.
- 3A-3** Encourage publically operated utilities and discourage the establishment of private utilities and services.

Objective

3-B Reduce solid and liquid waste.

Supporting Policies

- 3B-1** Continue to implement and monitor RDOS *Solid Waste Management Plan* (2012).
- 3B-2** Continue to implement and monitor regional Liquid Waste Management Plans.
- 3B-3** Continue to research and implement best practices for effective solid and liquid waste management.
- 3B-4** Support and promote public waste reduction and education programs.
- 3B-5** Support sewer service within Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas where such services are not currently available.
- 3B-6** Minimize environmental impacts of solid and liquid waste management.

Objective

3-C Minimize environmental impacts of infrastructure and services.

Supporting Policies

- 3C-1** Ensure storm water management satisfies the requirements of Federal and Provincial legislation, including the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) *Fisheries Act*, *Federal Species at Risk Act* and the Provincial *Water Sustainability Act*.
- 3C-2** Support projects to improve water resource management, including water conservation and reuse, ground water management, and stormwater.

- 3C-3** Consider guidelines and alternative development standards to reduce environmental impacts of hillside development.
- 3C-4** Minimize infrastructure development impacts by avoiding hazard areas and environmentally sensitive areas.
- 3C-5** Work with other stakeholders to identify potential small-scale hydro and wind power sites.

Objective

- 3-D Expand safe, accessible efficient transportation options and connections, including transit, cycling and walking.**

Supporting Policies

- 3D-1** Support the creation of a Regional Transportation Plan.
- 3D-2** Support the creation of compact, walkable neighbourhoods with pedestrian and cycling connections and linkages.
- 3D-3** Support the development of an integrated active transportation (cycling, walking, scooters, etc.) network and connections in Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.
- 3D-4** Work with the Province to further develop a regional active transportation network with connections between Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas in conjunction with highway improvements.
- 3D-5** Continue working with BC Transit to enhance and expand transit options in the region.
- 3D-6** Work with partners, including BC Transit, to identify potential community transit hubs in Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.

Objective

- 3-E Protect and improve Highway 97 as a key transportation corridor.**

Supporting Policies

- 3E-1** Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to identify road network improvements as needed.
- 3E-2** Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure public safety and mitigate traffic impacts from Provincial highways and major network links.
- 3E-3** Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to identify areas where limited access highways outside of urban centres are needed to ensure public safety and transportation efficiency.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Goal 4: *Foster healthy, safe communities that provide accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities.*

Planning, land use and transportation decisions have public health consequences for people living, working, learning and playing in the South Okanagan RGS Plan Area. Numerous studies from Canada and around the world have demonstrated the relationship between the physical design and layout of cities, towns and communities – also known as the “built environment” – and the health and wellbeing of the people living in them. Community form is associated to varying degrees with physical activity, diet, safety and injury rates, exposure to pollutants and how easily people can access work, shops, services and schools.

Research on the associations between health and the built environment is expanding and becoming increasingly sophisticated⁷. While much work remains to unravel the complex relationship between health outcomes and the built environment, the research is at a point where the broad-based planning implications are clear – healthy community design matters.

The relationship between the built environment in the South Okanagan is becoming increasingly important, as the region’s population ages more quickly than other places in the province. Regional planning concerns around supportive housing options, enhanced mobility and accessibility, and access to services will continue to grow.



Kayaks on Okanagan Lake, cc-by-nc Amanda Coolidge, flickr.com

⁷ *Health Impact Assessment of Transportation and Land Use Planning Activities*. Metro Vancouver. 2015.

OBJECTIVES

Objective

4-A Support regional partnerships and collaborate for safe, healthy and active communities.

Supporting Policies

- 4A-1** Support development of a South Okanagan Health and Wellness Strategy for coordinated, multi-agency action on regional health and wellbeing and social development.
- 4A-2** Support the coordination of regional parks, recreation services, and trail networks to improve accessibility of recreational opportunities.
- 4A-3** Support the Interior Health Authority to expand regional health promotion programs and to develop a proactive recruitment program to increase medical services in the south Okanagan.
- 4A-4** Work with regional partners to support downtown and neighbourhood planning efforts that foster a sense of public ownership.
- 4A-5** Support emergency planning and networking of response services both regionally and inter-regionally.
- 4A-6** Support the RCMP in raising awareness for crime watch and prevention programs.
- 4A-7** Work with School Districts No 53 (Okanagan Similkameen) and No 67 (Okanagan Skaha) to recognize and support school facilities as a valuable neighbourhood resource and to share and utilize school resources.
- 4A-8** Collaborate with regional partners to improve accessibility of public spaces.
- 4A-9** Collaborate with regional partners to ensure public spaces and events are consistent with changing demographics and community needs.

Objective

4-B Enhance community wellbeing by supporting diversity.

Supporting Policies

- 4B-1** Support economic opportunities that attract and retain young families.
- 4B-2** Encourage new housing to provide accessibility features.
- 4B-3** Support a range of accessible and affordable housing.
- 4B-4** Support non-market housing opportunities, including emergency and transitional housing, particularly in those communities where additional supportive services exist.

4B-5 Explore the benefits of creating of a Regional Housing Plan.

Objective

4-C Support regional arts and culture and educational opportunities.

Supporting Policies

4C-1 Encourage education institutes to locate in urban areas.

4C-2 Support collaboration between educational providers, regional businesses and agencies.

4C-3 Support the celebration of community and local festivals, including cultural events and programs.

4C-4 Support and encourage community arts, culture and heritage programs and celebrations.

4C-5 Improve accessibility to public places.

4C-6 Identify and protect important cultural places and structures.

4C-7 Work with agencies, stakeholders and the arts and culture community to develop a Regional Arts and Culture Strategy.



Busking at Penticton Farmers' Market, cc-by-nc Jeremy Hiebert, flickr.com

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 5: *Achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous South Okanagan regional economy.*

A healthy, diverse regional economy is one of the cornerstones of more sustainable, resilient communities. The RGS provides an opportunity to encourage and support the development of a more diverse and healthier regional economy, which in turn will help support the South Okanagan on its journey to become a more sustainable region.

As a region, the South Okanagan offers a great deal of economic diversity. Public sector employment is significant, with government, health, and education services clustered in Penticton and, to a lesser degree, Oliver, Osoyoos, Summerland and smaller centres in the RDOS.

Agriculture, including viticulture and value-added processing, are major contributors, while manufacturing, value-added forestry, and tourism form other key sectors. In the region, Penticton functions as the regional employment centre and hub for the area, while Oliver, Osoyoos and Summerland also function as smaller scale employment centres.

Public consultation carried out at the beginning of the RGS identified jobs and the local economy as areas of critical concern to the region. This focus remains based on feedback from other regional and municipal planning initiatives carried out since the original RGS was completed, and in light of regional demographic trends and issues, including its aging population and diminishing youth employment opportunities.



Penticton Farmers' Market, cc-by-nc-nd, Province of BC, flickr.com

OBJECTIVES

Objective

5-A Coordinate and cooperate to support regional economic diversification.

Supporting Policies

- 5A-1** Work with economic development partners, including the RDOS Board, to develop a coordinated and collaborative regional business-enabling environment.
- 5A-2** Work with economic development partners, including the RDOS Board, to develop a diversified regional economy.
- 5A-3** Support the development of a Regional Economic Development Strategy.
- 5A-4** Encourage business retention, expansion and attraction activities with special focus on green, sustainable businesses.
- 5A-5** Explore economic opportunities and collaborate on projects of mutual interest and benefit with Syilx communities (Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band) as identified in the 2013 Protocol Agreement.
- 5A-6** Maintain and enhance the economic contributions of agricultural land and industries.
- 5A-7** Recognize the regional economic contributions provided by the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory and continue to work with the facility to minimize impacts of radio frequency interference on the facility.
- 5A-8** Support and encourage research and development initiatives and programs in conjunction with UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College, including agriculture, viticulture, food processing, water management, and tourism.
- 5A-9** Support the development of a targeted regional work-force attraction program in collaboration with Okanagan educational institutions.
- 5A-10** Support primary and secondary value-added industry in all sectors where feasible and appropriate.
- 5A-11** Collaborate with regional partners to attract high-tech, knowledge-based industries.

Objective

5-B Encourage business development in employment lands.

Supporting Policies

- 5B-1 Develop a Regional Employment Lands Strategy for accommodating diverse business needs.
- 5B-2 Identify development opportunity sites for different business types.
- 5B-3 Protect the existing industrial land base from conversion to other uses.
- 5B-4 Direct new industrial development to existing industrial areas.

Objective

5-C Support and promote tourism and tourism-related activity.

Supporting Policies

- 5C-1 Support regional tourism marketing efforts.
- 5C-2 Support agri-tourism and other rural tourism initiatives.
- 5C-3 Direct commercial tourist activities to appropriate areas.

Objective

5-D Support local agriculture and related businesses.

Supporting Policies

- 5D-1 Support the local agriculture industry and associated value-added agricultural processing and production.
- 5D-2 Encourage sustainable agricultural production and methods.
- 5D-3 Support preservation of the Agricultural Land Reserve for long-term agricultural uses.
- 5D-4 Support the development of coordinated Local Agriculture Plans for the region.

ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

Goal 6: *Foster and support regional cooperation, collaboration and civic engagement.*

Ongoing coordination, collaboration, and communication remain critical ingredients to RGS implementation and planning. Inclusive, transparent regional planning and governance also supports and facilitates community engagement and involvement, another critical ingredient to effective, accountable regional planning and development.

In partnership with all RGS local government partners, the Regional District is committed to the following guiding principles on engagement and collaboration:

- Effective governance is integral to the health of the region;
- Leadership demonstrated in an open and respectful manner can improve regional and inter-regional cooperation between member municipalities, electoral areas, Aboriginal communities, and the Province; and
- Enhanced citizen engagement and participation contributes to effective governance.



Protocol Agreement signing between Penticton, Osoyoos, and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands and the RDOS. © RDOS

OBJECTIVES

Objective

6-A Enhance regional-local government partnerships.

Supporting Policies

- 6A-1** Foster dialogue between electoral areas, municipalities and other organizations for cost sharing, delivery of services, capacity building, and development.
- 6A-2** Continue to foster dialogue between communities around shared goals, while recognizing and supporting unique community goals.
- 6A-3** Request that transfers of responsibilities to local government are matched with adequate resources.

Objective

6-B Build and enhance communication and relationship with regional Syilx / Okanagan Nation communities.

Supporting Policies

- 6B-1** Develop protocol agreements with Osoyoos Indian Band and Penticton Indian Band for communications, service delivery and joint services, and joint capacity building initiatives.
- 6B-2** Continue to implement the *Protocol Agreement between the Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band and RDOS (2013)*.
- 6B-3** Support development of an indigenous cultural awareness program for local communities and governments.

Objective

6-C Facilitate ongoing public participation and engagement in local and regional governance.

Supporting Policies

- 6C-1** Support governance education and awareness initiatives within the region.
- 6C-2** Facilitate community engagement and civic participation by providing enhanced public information on local governance, including opportunities for involvement on committees and community planning meetings and events.

Objective

6-D Cultivate effective, accountable, accessible, and transparent regional governance.

Supporting Policies

6D-1 Continue to enhance local governance transparency and accessibility.

6D-2 Measure progress toward achieving RGS goals and implementation of policies through annual base-line reports on RGS indicators and five-year evaluations.



RDOS public open house in Kaleden. © RDOS

ENERGY EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Goal 7: *Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate.*

The global scientific community has reached consensus that the increasing emissions of human-caused greenhouse gases (GHGs) are rapidly changing the earth's climate. With more extreme weather conditions, including more intense drought years and heavier rainfalls, the South Okanagan is particularly vulnerable to the anticipated impacts a warming climate will have.

Under the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*, B.C.'s GHG emissions are to be reduced by at least 33% below 2007 levels by 2020. A further emission-reduction target of 80% below 2007 levels is required for the year 2050. B.C.'s *Local Government Act* was then amended in 2008 to require all Official Community Plans to set targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases, as well as policies and actions to achieve the targets set.

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, City of Penticton, Town of Oliver, Town of Osoyoos, and District of Summerland are all signatories to the *B.C. Climate Action Charter*, which includes commitments to reducing GHGs and taking actions to prepare for a changing climate.

In 2010, the Regional District and member municipalities collaboratively developed Community Climate Action Plans (CCAP). The CCAPs provide strategic direction on how to reduce community energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Each community has its own CCAP that includes both regional strategies and local actions. Each community and RDOS electoral area also has its own targets set to reach the overall goal of a 35 percent reduction per person by 2030 across the region. In 2011, the RGS was amended and seventh policy goal on climate added.



Cycling in the RDOS. © RDOS

OBJECTIVES

Objective

7-A Plan for climate change adaptation and support ongoing mitigation efforts.

Supporting Policies

- 7A-1** Reduce regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 15% from 2007 levels by 2030.
- 7A-2** Develop a green building policy for local government buildings.
- 7A-3** Work with local businesses to adopt and apply green energy technologies and energy efficiency practices.
- 7A-4** Work with agricultural stakeholders to adopt and apply green energy technologies and energy efficiency practices.
- 7A-5** Support rebate programs for energy efficient and water conservation fixtures and appliances.
- 7A-6** Consider climate change adaptation/resiliency measures in existing and proposed activities and development.
- 7A-7** Support climate change adaptation and the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in existing and proposed activities and development.
- 7A-8** Support public awareness and education on climate change and its current and likely potential future impacts in the region.

Part 3: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND AMENDMENTS

INDICATORS AND MONITORING

The *Local Government Act* requires a regional district to measure its progress on an RGS. Performance indicators selected for the South Okanagan RGS will allow the RDOS to monitor its implementation and progress towards the vision articulated by the community.

A set of indicators was first developed as part of the RGS development in 2010. The selected indicators were based on the seven goals of the RGS. A long list of indicators, derived from a literature review of existing or proposed regional growth strategy monitoring programs from regional districts in British Columbia and other indicator programs, was refined based on how well they suited RGS goals, data availability, and reliability. Since 2010, some indicators have proven to be difficult to track, suffer from data challenges, or poorly represent the goal with which they are associated. These have been updated and replaced as necessary as part of the 2016 revisions.

There are now 16 indicators tracking the performance of the goals of the seven policy areas. Two additional context indicators show population growth trends against which change in other indicators can be made more meaningful. Indicators have been selected to balance fidelity to the goals with pragmatic concerns of data collection and reporting frequency. Data for all the indicators are available freely from trusted sources (including internal regional district processes), at least every two years.

The indicators will be used as regular reporting on progress towards RGS goals. A state of the region 'Snapshot' will be prepared annually.

With the monitoring program, the RDOS and its south Okanagan member municipalities will have added insight into what is working and where improvements can be made, allowing them to update RGS actions and policies accordingly.

Figure 6: RGS Indicators and Measures

Policy Area/Goal	Indicator	Measure
Context	Population growth	% annual change in population estimates/projections
	Population	Total regional population estimate/ projections
Housing and Development: Focus development to serviced areas in designated Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.	Growth containment	% of housing starts in primary/ rural growth areas
	Agricultural land protection	Hectares change to ALR, mapped
	Housing affordability	Median home price Affordability ratio: Median salary to median home price
	Housing diversity/ choice	# of new homes by type
Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks: Protect the health and biodiversity of ecosystems in the south Okanagan.	Amount of land protected	Annual cumulative area of parkland and protected areas
	Water stewardship	Water usage per capita
	Solid waste to landfill	Average tons of daily waste landfilled per person
Infrastructure and Transportation: Support efficient and effective infrastructure services and an accessible multi-modal transportation network.	Mode share/ auto dependence	Total annual regional bus ridership
		% of ICBC insurance holders by type (daily commuter, non-commuter)
Community Health and Wellbeing: Foster healthy, safe communities that provide accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities.	Community safety	Annual crime rates per 1000 residents
	Regional health outcomes	Based on Canadian Community Health Survey and annual reporting from Interior Healthy Authority
Regional Economic Development: Achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous South Okanagan regional economy.	Economic growth	% growth in # of businesses with employees
		Total value of building permits issued for residential, commercial, industrial and institutional
Engagement and Collaboration: Foster and support regional cooperation, collaboration and civic engagement.	Regional engagement and collaboration activity	Self-reporting annual survey for member communities and Regional Directors on collaborative planning and projects, including servicing agreements, protocol agreement activities with First Nations, and regional planning initiatives
Energy Emissions and Climate Change: Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate	Total GHG emissions	Tonnes of GHGs by source type (residential/ commercial buildings, vehicles)
	Energy efficiency	Average residential energy consumption/home

AMENDMENTS TO THE RGS

There are two types of amendments to an RGS, minor and major. Both must follow the process set out in Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*.

Minor Amendments

Recognizing that the RGS requires some flexibility to respond to changing conditions in the South Okanagan region, the minor amendment process provides a process for minor changes, while ensuring that amendments which substantially change the vision and direction of the strategy remain subject to acceptance by all affected local governments.

The *Local Government Act* enables minor amendments pursuant to section 437 (3) in accordance with the following:

- The board must give notice, including notice that the proposed amendment may be determined to be a minor amendment and the date, time and place of the board meeting at which the amending bylaw is to be considered for first reading, to each affected local government at least 30 days before the meeting;
- Before first reading of the amending bylaw, the board must allow an affected local government that is not represented on the board an opportunity to make representations to the board;
- If, at first reading, the amending bylaw receives an affirmative vote of all board members attending the meeting, the bylaw may be adopted in accordance with the procedures that apply to the adoption of a regional growth strategy bylaw under Division 3 [Voting and Voting Rights] of Part 6 [Regional Districts: Governance and Procedures] and the board's procedure bylaw;
- If, at first reading, the amending bylaw does not receive an affirmative vote of all board members attending the meeting, the bylaw may be adopted only in accordance with the procedure established by section 436 [acceptance by affected local governments required].

Criteria under which a proposed amendment to the RGS may be considered a minor amendment include the following:

- Where a land use or development proposal is inconsistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, and, in the opinion of the RDOS Board:
- Is not to be of regional significance in terms of scale, impacts or precedence; and
- Contributes to achieving the goals and objectives set out in Part 2: Regional Policies in this RGS.

- Text and map amendments that are not directly related to enabling specific proposed developments may be considered minor if, in the opinion of the Board, the amendment is not of regional significance.
- Any proposal that does not meet the criteria set out above would be considered a major amendment and will be required to follow the regular process as outlined in the *Local Government Act*, Part 13.

Major Amendments

Where proposals substantially change the vision and direction of the RGS, or where the addition of one or more new Primary or Rural Growth Areas is considered, a major amendment to the RGS, subject to the acceptance of all affected local governments, is required.