

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Okanagan Valley is home to a diversity of ecosystems, communities, and political jurisdictions. At the same time, there are a number of valley-wide systems (ecological, economic, and social) that link these diverse places together. With development pressure growing across the valley and new stresses resulting from climate change, alterations to these systems could have major implications for economic, ecological, and social goals. Developing a cohesive picture of changes across the Okanagan is increasingly important for coordinating decision-making and planning initiatives to address common sustainability challenges.

With support from the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia, the Okanagan Basin Water Board, the Regional Districts of North Okanagan (RDNO), Central Okanagan (RDCO) and Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) developed a framework for monitoring change across the entire Okanagan Valley. While an ambitious project—with no direct precedents in B.C. or Canada—participants recognized the significant potential benefits in supporting a more collaborative approach to sustainability challenges that traverse the entire Okanagan Valley.

Monitoring has long been recognized as a best practice in the field of planning. By exploring the development of transferable frameworks for monitoring changes at the regional and interregional level, this project may also provide other districts and areas with the tools to more easily incorporate this critical element of planning into their work.

The final framework has 36 indicators monitoring performance across the following 9 planning Policy Areas:

- Urban Containment & Rural Protection
- Agriculture
- Water Stewardship
- Environment & Natural Lands
- Economic Development
- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Housing
- Climate Change & Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs)
- Community Health and Wellbeing

For each indicator, data was collected for each regional district wherever possible, with the exception of the RDOS, where data collection was focused on the study area for the South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy.

The scope of the South Okanagan RGS includes Electoral Areas A,C,D,E,F and the municipalities of Osoyoos, Oliver, Penticton, and Summerland. However, data limitations often required collecting data for the entire RDOS.

Data was analyzed to establish baselines and, where possible, identify trends. Results have been assembled as part of this State of the Basin report. It is expected data will be collected on an ongoing basis and the State of the Basin report will be updated on a five-year cycle. More details about the process for developing indicators can be found in the Okanagan State of the Basin Indicator Project: Process Summary Report, which will be available from the Regional District of North Okanagan or online at rdno.ca. This Process Summary Report provides information on the approach and process taken in developing the State of the Basin Report, as well as project challenges and recommendations.

With the exception of 2016 population data, the most recent Census data available for this Monitoring & Evaluation framework was from 2011. Given that the release of 2016 Canada Census data is occurring periodically until late 2017, consideration should be given to updating the State of the Basin Report in 2018. Looking ahead, the next comprehensive update of the State of the Basin Report should be initiated in 2022-23 in order to access 2021 Census data

Without the use of indicators, Policy Area 10 - Governance and Shared Services provides an overview of the many, and diverse, collaborative efforts currently undertaken by multiple local governments and other partners throughout the Okanagan Valley.

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It is hoped that the collaborative process by which this work was conducted will be maintained in the future and will encourage continued cooperation between local and regional governments across the Okanagan Valley.