Urban containment and rural protection refers to the principle of encouraging new development to occur within serviced areas of our communities. There are multiple, interrelated benefits to upholding the principle of urban containment and rural protection, including:

- Reducing reliance on automobiles by encouraging the majority of population growth in core areas, within proximity to work, shopping, services and amenities.
- Enhancing the viability of public transit as the number of potential riders along transit routes increases.
- More efficient use of existing infrastructure and longer timeframes before extensions to roads, sewers and water lines become necessary.

Efforts to contain urban areas and protect rural areas will also help conserve agricultural lands and natural areas and help make the region a desirable place to live.
1.1 Change in percent of new housing located inside designated areas

Part of managing growth and protecting rural and natural land from encroachment is directing new development to preferred locations. This indicator uses the number of building permits for new dwelling units each year to show where residential growth is occurring and whether or not growth is happening in designated areas. As designated growth areas have not been established equally across all three regions, incorporated municipal boundaries are being used here as provisional “designated areas”. To measure progress, the proportion of new building permits inside designated areas is compared to the proportion of the existing housing as of 2011 (i.e. the historic average).

RDNO: Increased. From 2011 - 2015, approximately 84% of residential building permits were for housing inside designated areas, which is higher than the historic average, at 82%. However, the trend in recent years shows this number decreasing – in 2015 only 82% of new residential building permits were for locations within designated areas.

RDCO: Stable. In 2011 and 2015, approximately 96% of residential building permits were for housing inside designated areas, which is the same as the historic average. This percentage remained relatively stable during that period.

RDOS: Decreased. Compared to the historic average (69%), the percentage of residential permits issued inside designated areas is somewhat lower, at 66%. However, this number has steadily increased over the past five years reaching 71% in 2015.

1.2 Hectares of land redesignated through official community plan (OCP) amendment from rural to more urban designations (defined by each RD)

OCP amendments that change rural land to more urban designations represent urban encroachment and potentially a loss of agricultural and natural lands. In tracking the hectares (ha) of land that are changed through such amendments, regional districts will be able to monitor trends in the redesignation of rural land, important for containing sprawl and protecting rural and urban lifestyles.

RDNO: Decreased. Between 2011 - 2015, only 17.71 ha were changed to more urban OCP designations. This is compared to 177.9 ha between 2006 – 2010.

RDCO: Baseline. Between 2011- 2015, 24.3 ha were changed from rural to more urban OCP designations. 2.41 ha were changed from urban to more rural designations, leading to a total change of 21.89 ha of land.

SOUTH OK: Baseline. Between 2011- 2015, 21.64 ha were changed from rural to more urban designations in the South OK.