

Regional Growth Strategies in British Columbia – An Overview



Regional District of North Okanagan

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1.0 Introduction

A regional growth strategy is an agreement, developed and approved by the member municipalities and the regional district in partnership, on social, economic and environmental goals and priority actions. Its purpose, under Part 25 of the *Local Government Act*, is 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." A regional growth strategy expresses how communities have agreed to work together to enhance regional quality of life and social well-being.

In British Columbia, six (6) regional districts have adopted regional growth strategies and four (4) regional districts are in the process of developing regional growth strategies. This overview will provide a summary of process and selected goals and actions for the most relevant regional growth strategies that address similar situations that may apply within the North Okanagan context. The approach taken, level of detail within the regional growth strategies and core issues explored are a result of agreement between local governments and the regional district in question. Each growth strategy is a reflection of the needs of the local governments within a regional district and agreed upon approaches to manage growth. These range from very detailed and prescriptive approaches in the case of the Regional District of Nanaimo and Capital Regional District, to a more strategic policy direction with recommendations for action in the case of Fraser Valley Regional District and Regional District of Central Okanagan.

2.0 Adopted Regional Growth Strategies

2.1 Regional District of Nanaimo

2.1.1 Process

The Regional District of Nanaimo regional growth strategy was mostly undertaken as a technical exercise, with public involvement and elected official input at key points in the process.

During the summer of 1993, the Regional District of Nanaimo staff prepared the terms of reference for the regional growth management program. The majority of the technical background work was undertaken in 1994 and the advisory committees were convened during that time. The public and elected officials were actively consulted in late 1994 and throughout 1995 on values, goals, vision, and priority growth issues and preferred scenarios. The result was the adoption of the regional growth strategy early in 1997. The regional growth strategy for the Regional District of Nanaimo is comprised of a vision statement, eight goals, 40 policies, and two land use designation maps. The regional growth strategy is almost entirely devoted to urban containment policies and supporting the established urban containment boundary, which resulted in a more prescriptive approach than most other regional growth strategies. The vision statement is:

*“The region will be recognized for its **outstanding quality of urban and rural life** and for its commitment to **environmental protection**. We have committed to working with interested organizations, together achieving:*

- **quality residential development** – in safe neighbourhoods with well planned access to nearby workplaces, services, recreation opportunities, and natural areas;
 - **a strong and sustainable economy** based on our resource assets, our natural appeal to tourists, and the footloose industries and activities of the information age;
 - **contained urban development**, surrounded by contiguous corridors of open space, protected rural integrity and an end to sprawl;
 - reduced dependency on the automobile as **mobility options** expand;
 - **high standards of environmental protection** – that preserves habitat, enhances ecological diversity, and maintains air and water quality;
 - **efficient, state-of-the-art servicing**, infrastructure and resource utilization;
- . . . vibrant rural and urban communities in a natural paradise!”*

2.1.2 Examples of Goals and Actions

Goal 1: Strong Urban Containment: To limit sprawl and focus development within well defined urban containment boundaries.

Policy 1A: The RDN and member municipalities agree to designate Urban Containment Boundaries (UCBs) consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy in their official community plans for the purpose of defining urban and rural areas.

Policy 1B: The RDN and member municipalities agree to approve new urban development only on land designated Urban Area inside Urban Containment Boundaries or on land designated as Sub-

Urban Area. Urban development on land designated Urban Area inside Urban Containment Boundaries includes residential development at a density greater than 1 unit per hectare, commercial uses, and institutional uses. Land that is designated as Sub-Urban Area may only be used for residential development to a maximum density of 7.5 units per hectare, consistent with the official community plan in place at the date of adoption of this Regional Growth Strategy.

Policy 1D: The RDN and member municipalities agree to review the Urban Containment and Fringe Area Management Implementation Agreement to address issues regarding the level and type of development that warrants consideration as an urban development on land inside the UCB and to better coordinate between jurisdictions urban land use and development on land within the UCB.

Goal 7: Efficient Services: *To provide cost efficient services and infrastructure where urban development is intended, and to provide services in other areas where the service is needed to address environmental or public health issues and the provision of the service will not result in additional development.*

Policy 7A: The RDN and member municipalities support the provision of community water and community sewer services to land designated as Urban Area inside Urban Containment Boundaries and to land designated as Sub-Urban Area to accommodate future growth and development. The RDN will develop a strategy to provide services to land designated Urban Area inside Urban Containment Boundaries and to land designated Sub-Urban Area to accommodate future growth and development, consistent with official community plans.

Policy 7B: The RDN and member municipalities do not support the provision of community water or community sewer services to land designated as Rural Residential or to land designated Resource Lands and Open Spaces to accommodate future growth and development. However, the RDN and member municipalities recognize that public health or the environment may be threatened by the present domestic water supply or wastewater management method used on land in these designations. Consequently, the RDN and member municipalities permit the provision of community water and community sewer services to land in these designations, provided the service provision does not result in a higher level of development than supported on the land by Policy 3A of this Regional Growth Strategy and the full cost is paid by the landowners. The RDN and member municipalities will, in partnership, develop criteria to use in the identification of these lands as well as a strategy to assess the financial impacts of providing services to these lands (i.e., capital planning implications, proximity of property to existing service lines, etc.).

Policy 7D: The RDN and member municipalities recognize the potential environmental and public health risks posed by industrial uses on land designated as Industrial Areas by the Regional Growth Strategy. Consequently, the RDN and member municipalities may support the provision of services to these lands, at the landowner's cost, to help reduce some of these risks.

Goal 8: Cooperation Among Jurisdictions: *To facilitate an understanding of and commitment to the goals of growth management among all levels of government, the public and key private and voluntary sector partners.*

Policy 8A: The RDN and member municipalities agree that every municipality and electoral area in the region will have in place an official community plan and all necessary land use and other regulations to fully implement the Regional Growth Strategy.

Policy 8B: The RDN and member municipalities agree to pursue the development and signature of Implementation Agreements to commit the RDN, member municipalities and the Province (including its crown corporations and agencies) to respect the vision, goals, and policies of the Regional Growth Strategy as decisions are made and future plans or regulations are developed.

Policy 8D: The RDN and member municipalities recognize the key, and often primary roles, played by the private and voluntary sectors in such areas as development, tourism and environmental protection and are willing to consider partnerships and strategic alliances with groups and organizations prepared to invest in and/or support the goals and policies of the Regional Growth Strategy.

2.2 Capital Regional District

2.2.1 Process

The Regional Growth Strategy is the result of six years of public and intergovernmental discussion and consultation, undertaken through the *Foundations for Our Future* process, initiated by the CRD Board in 1996 in partnership with its member municipalities. At the present time, the Capital Region's nine First Nations are not partners in the regional growth strategy, nor does it apply to Saltspring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Areas, which fall under the planning jurisdiction of the Islands Trust.

Elected representatives from throughout the region were involved in the strategy's development through a process of political summits and council review, where agreement was sought at key decision points along the way. These included: the initial identification, at *Capital Summit 1* in 1997, of a regional vision and priority issues; the development and adoption of the Framework Agreement, in 1998; the identification of the growth strategy alternatives in 1999; the final selection of a preferred growth strategy direction at *Capital Summit 2*, in 2000; and, the pre-by-law review of *A Proposed Regional Growth Strategy for BC's Capital Region*, in 2001. The RGS was adopted in 2003 after a brief arbitration process that was not concluded due to local governments and the Regional District resolving the issue themselves. The parallel *Capital Ideas/Capital Choices* process informed elected decision-makers with the perspectives of citizens at every stage.

The Regional Growth Strategy includes eight integrated strategic initiatives, incorporating actions, targets, maps and guidelines that together express a 25-year program of joint action by the Capital Regional District and its member municipalities to achieve the regional vision.

The initial direction and resulting RGS document responded to a similar set of growth issues, with the top priority that of urban containment. As with the RDN RGS, detailed urban containment boundaries and policies were developed and a comprehensive and prescriptive set of goals and actions were included. Local government, in partnership with CRD, set this direction, assisted in the development of the content and adopted the resulting document.

2.2.2 Examples of Goals and Actions

Goal 1.1: Keep Urban Settlement Compact

Actions:

1. The CRD and member municipalities agree to designate in their Official Community Plans, Urban Containment and Servicing Areas consistent with the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area and to further adopt associated policies regarding the protection, buffering and long term maintenance of its boundary.
2. The CRD and member municipalities, agree to include policies in their Official Community Plans to permit amendment to the Urban Containment and Servicing Area designation generally, only as an outcome of a comprehensive 5-year review of the Regional Growth

Strategy, recognizing that municipal councils and the CRD Board are free to initiate at any time amendments to official community plans and the regional growth strategy they deem necessary, through statutory processes established in the *Local Government Act*.

Goal 1.2: Protect to Integrity of Rural Communities

Actions:

1. The CRD, member municipalities and the Province agree to establish or strengthen policies within Official Community Plans that ensure the long-term protection of Capital Green Lands (natural lands). This would include policies aimed at buffering Capital Green Lands from activities in adjacent urban areas.
2. The CRD and member municipalities with lands identified as Capital Green Lands, Renewable Resource Lands, or Rural/Rural Residential, agree to establish or strengthen policies within Official Community Plans, through a regional context statement, that generally limit rural subdivision and development to the designated Official Community Plan capacity levels as determined at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw. Regional context statements would reference specific mechanisms (for example, density bonusing provisions) that could be used to achieve this overall goal.

Goal 5.1: Strengthen the Regional Economy

Actions

1. The CRD agrees to participate with a broad cross-section of business and community interests, member municipalities, the Province, and the Federal Government in establishing, through a written agreement, a regional economic development partnership. The partnership would oversee preparation and maintenance of a Regional Economic Development Strategy and coordinate actions, programs, investments and initiatives in its implementation.

2.3 Fraser Valley Regional District

2.3.1 Process

After incorporation of the Fraser Valley Regional District in December 1995, the municipalities and unincorporated areas mutually agreed to develop a growth strategy to guide land use, transportation, economic development, and other decisions that would shaped the future of the Fraser Valley.

Beginning in 1996, the first phase of the strategy was a technical program to collect and produce background information relevant to the region over a 20 to 30 year horizon. This process brought together all stakeholders to address the region's growth management challenges and to acquire, collate, and analyze data at a regional level. The scope of the technical program included public opinion surveys, population forecasts, employment projections, and housing, environment, agriculture, infrastructure and transportation studies. A picture emerged from this process about how this region can grow over the next 20 to 30 years if appropriate growth management policies, built on sustainable planning principles, are put in place and implemented.

The RGS goals and policies are suggestions to local governments, with a great deal of flexibility in approach, tools and policies to achieve the overall vision and direction of the RGS. As a result, the document is much less prescriptive than the CRD and RDN documents, though it must be recognized that the FVRD RGS has a different focus – agricultural lands and sustainable communities.

The Regional Growth Strategy was finalized in 2004 and identifies a vision and eight growth management goals that the FVRD will focus on over the next 20 to 30 years.

Vision: The Fraser Valley Regional District will be a network of vibrant, distinct, and sustainable communities that accept responsibly managed growth while being committed to protecting the land resources and the natural environment to ensure that a high quality of life is accessible to all.

1. Increase transportation choice and efficiency
2. Support and enhance the agricultural sector
3. Manage urban land responsibly
4. Develop a network of sustainable communities
5. Protect the natural environment and promote environmental stewardship
6. Protect and manage rural and recreational lands
7. Achieve sustainable economic growth
8. Manage water, energy resources and waste responsibly

2.3.2 Examples of Goals and Actions

Goal 1: Transportation choices and efficiency will be increased by:

- supporting the provision of specific road and regional infrastructure improvements;
- promoting transportation choice and reducing dependency on the single-occupancy vehicle;

- increasing the efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure;
- increasing and developing a broader range of transit services; and
- improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Actions

- 1.1 Seek the timely implementation of the Regional Transportation Improvement Priorities.
- 1.3 Support, in partnership with local governments, neighbouring regional districts, the Province, and other stakeholders, an integrated approach to planning and investment in transportation infrastructure by supporting the development of regional transportation modeling and other programs.
- 1.4 Investigate and promote the potential for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs with major employers.
- 1.5 Respond, as resources permit, to inter- and intra-community public transit, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure deficiencies identified by the University College of the Fraser Valley, Regional Health Authorities, local governments, transit operators, and the public.
- 1.6 Encourage the integration of existing railway infrastructure and waterway transportation systems into regional and local transportation plans.
- 1.8 Protect and provide superior access to future industrial and business park lands and the Abbotsford Airport.
- 1.9 Plan for settlement patterns that minimize the use of automobiles and encourage walking, bicycling, and the efficient use of public transit, where practical.

Goal 2: Support and Enhance the Agricultural Sector

The region's agricultural lands will be managed responsibly by:

- minimizing land use conflicts between agricultural, recreational and urban uses;
- addressing the intensification of agriculture
- promoting the agricultural sector; and
- promoting the reclamation of lands back to agricultural use, where appropriate.

Actions

- 3.1 Support Official Community Plans policies that encourage infill, redevelopment, densification and mixed use as a means of creating more compact development patterns.
- 3.2 Require that amendments to the Urban Growth Boundaries be referred to the Regional Board for notification.

- 3.3 Consider the use of threshold analysis, or other trigger mechanisms, as a method of determining the timing and location of new development in areas located within the Urban Growth Boundaries.
- 3.6 Support settlement patterns that minimize development costs to communities and the risks associated with geotechnical and environmental constraints.
- 3.7 Support actions that reduce conflict along the urban/agriculture interface.

2.4 Regional District of Central Okanagan

2.4.1 Process

The Regional District of Central Okanagan commenced their regional growth strategy in 1996 and the strategy was adopted in 2000. The planning process was undertaken by municipal and Regional District staff and elected officials. This RGS does not include growth scenarios or any growth modeling work within the regional growth strategy bylaw, instead relying on broad policy statements in the place of goals and objectives. The majority of the commissioned technical studies were undertaken after the adoption of the RGS.

The purpose of the RGS (Page 2 of the RGS) contains this excerpt, which suggests that the RGS broad policy goals are suggestions and considerations when making land use and broader planning decisions:

“The Strategy is not intended to usurp any other planning process. Community land use decisions will be based on the Official Community Plans, Rural Land Use Bylaws, and associated infrastructure plans. The Strategy establishes a regional vision and a set of common regional statements (goals), growth management objectives, and general growth management policies to be considered and reflected in these plans and in the decisions made by the Municipal Councils and the Regional Board.”

2.4.2 Examples of Goals and Actions

The Regional District of Central Okanagan, in partnership with their member municipalities and electoral areas, did not develop any goals and actions for the regional growth strategy. Instead, 10 broad policy statements were developed:

1. All local governments shall use appropriate tools to place greater emphasis on containing urban growth to Town Centres and those areas already fully serviced, toward realization of Official Community Plan objectives. Growth and redevelopment in existing settlement areas with full services will be supported prior to supporting growth and development elsewhere.
2. Residential development in existing or new urban areas should include a range of housing type, density, and affordability options.
3. Urban services, including an adequate supply of potable water, an appropriate means of sewage treatment and solid waste disposal, and an appropriate means of access must be available before development is permitted to occur.
4. Proposals for new growth areas, major OCP Amendments and major infrastructure projects shall assess the following:
 - The impact on existing services and facilities, and the ability of local governments and agencies to provide services in a timely, affordable, and effective manner;
 - The short and long-term fiscal impact of the development on the community.

5. Require an environmental review of developments deemed to impact the ability of the land, watershed, and other natural resources to accommodate the proposed development.
6. Urban development is to be directed away from hazardous areas, sensitive environmental areas, resource extraction areas, and farmlands, to reduce land use conflicts and development encroachments.
7. The efficiency of the transportation system is to be maximized by:
 - integrating land use and transportation planning;
 - making more efficient use of the existing infrastructure;
 - investing in transit and other travel demand management programs;
 - providing safe and convenient places to walk, cycle, and access transit;
 - supporting initiatives which reduce the need to travel and support other modes of travel (e.g. telecommuting, pedestrian-friendly communities, mixed-use developments);
 - considering needed and effective capital improvements to the regional transportation infrastructure.
8. Support a coordinated approach to the expansion and diversification of the economic base that provides for a healthy and dynamic business community and includes consideration of:
 - Distribution;
 - Sustainability;
 - Compatibility.
9. Consideration is to be given to the social and economic benefits of arts, culture, tourism, and recreation amenities in public sector decision making.
10. Work cooperatively to establish Regional Governance that will:
 - Provide a meaningful and equitable role in decision making for all local governments;
 - Recognize that the impact and importance of specific regional issues may be different in the various governments within the Region;
 - Recognize that each local government's ability to pay its share of the cost of addressing regional issues will be limited by the size and makeup of its tax base;
 - Recognize the regional implications of commercial, industrial, residential and institutional activity, and determine the impacts of the distribution of those activities throughout the Region;
 - Explore new revenue sources for regional service delivery, including Provincial legislation to provide secure sources other than property taxation.

3.0 Regional Growth Strategies under Development

3.1 Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

3.1.1 Process

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen initiated their regional growth strategy process in early 2004. The RDOS RGS represents five years' work developed in phases by citizens and committees, senior government agencies, local elected officials, the Regional Board and RDOS staff. This was a three phase process, where Phase I addressed specific issues and related values, developed guiding principles and a vision expressed by the community and elected officials. Six key growth issues emerged: the economy, the environment, governance, human settlement, infrastructure and social needs.

The second phase engaged the public and elected officials in examining current trends and future growth scenarios. With extensive community consultation and RGS advisory committee input, goals, policy and strategic actions were developed based on further exploration of the growth issues. Phase III focused on selecting indicators to monitor future performance and developed an implementation strategy to reflect policy. The Implementation Plan summarizes key strategic actions and proposed time frames. An Implementation Agreement commitment was signed by the south Okanagan municipalities, electoral areas and the Province, outlines joint work on growth management for the future of the region.

The RGS provides a policy framework that is much less detailed at the land use level than either the RDN or CRD RGSs. The broad policy direction focuses on collaboration, coordination, and agreement on approach. This RGS process and direction is the closest process and anticipated document outcome to the one undertaken by the Regional District of North Okanagan.

The RDOS has not been adopted as of February 24, 2009 due to the earlier withdraw of some of the electoral areas in the Similkameen Valley. The primary issue that occurred in this case was the desired inclusion by several EA Directors of secondary growth areas within the un-serviced electoral areas. The issues are currently under discussion and a resolution is anticipated to be forthcoming, without provincial involvement in conflict resolution.

3.1.2 Examples of Goals and Actions

Goal 4: Carefully Direct Human Settlement: Direct development to serviced areas and strengthen the distinct identity of each south Okanagan community.

Policy H1: Dialogue between rural and urban communities to direct development to primary growth areas and, where appropriate, to existing developed areas, and to coordinate and collaborate on human settlement

The south Okanagan municipalities and electoral areas agree to:

1. Set growth management boundaries, which may or may not coincide with current municipal boundaries, around primary growth areas and consider using the Agricultural Land Reserve boundary as the growth management boundary where appropriate, as part of the process of creating the required Regional Context Statement for the Official Community Plans, and according to the Implementation Agreement.
2. Collaborate on fringe planning decisions on major development in the vicinity of rural / municipal boundaries.
3. Consider entering into a memorandum of understanding on the process of determining municipal boundary extensions.
4. Respect and protect the ecosystem and environment by directing growth of an urban density and commercial, industrial and institutional uses within the boundaries of south Okanagan primary growth areas, where there is accessibility to services, amenities and employment opportunities.
5. Respect and protect the unique advantages in location, facilities and functional requirements of the DRAO by continuing to minimize development and maximize rural landscape protection within the electromagnetic interference area surrounding the Observatory.

Policy H4: Protect the agricultural land base and encourage agricultural enterprise

The south Okanagan municipalities and electoral areas and Ministry of Agriculture and Lands agree to:

1. Support the establishment of a South Okanagan Agricultural Advisory Committee.
2. Work collaboratively to develop, set priorities and implement a regional approach to agriculture to strengthen farming and encourage agriculture.
3. Discourage further subdivision of farm parcels.
4. Encourage value-added agricultural activities and agri-tourism which improve farm economic viability while maintaining farming as the primary farming activity.
5. Undertake edge planning to plan for and mitigate the impacts of non-farm uses on farming activities when considering development adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve boundary.
6. Support urban growth boundaries that are co-incident with the Agricultural Reserve boundary, and not growth boundaries that encompass land within the ALR.

Goal 5: Maximize the Efficient Use of Infrastructure: Coordinate efforts throughout the south Okanagan that maximize efficient and effective delivery of infrastructure and services, reduce environmental impact and recognize the scarcity of resources.

Policy I1: Promote ongoing dialogue between rural and urban communities to coordinate and collaborate on infrastructure

Policy I2: Preferentially direct development where public cost-efficient service and infrastructure is possible

The south Okanagan municipalities and electoral areas agree to:

1. In already serviced developed areas, guide new development to take full advantage of existing physical infrastructure, including roads, sewer systems, schools, parks and recreation and cultural facilities.
2. Direct development to primary growth areas and, where appropriate, to existing developed areas – new development should occur only in a manner that ensures a cost-effective ability to deliver infrastructure and institutional services such as underground utilities, health facilities, transit, emergency services, schools, and recreation and cultural facilities.
3. Encourage public use of utilities and discourage the establishment of private utilities and services.

Policy I3: Recognize the critical link between water resource management, human settlement and effective growth management

3.2 Regional District of Squamish-Lillooet

3.2.1 Process

The SLRD RGS is a very detailed approach to land use at the regional level, although each jurisdiction had undertaken detailed planning work at the Official Community Plan and neighbourhood planning level early within the RGS process. When the municipalities entered into the process, it was agreed that the jurisdictional plans would provide the detailed basis for the Regional Growth Strategy. As a result, no alternative growth scenarios were developed as all jurisdictions had agreed upon the desired growth strategy outcome. This is a unique case where the planning work was undertaken early within the RGS process, with a defined outcome after initial visioning.

The Regional District of Squamish-Lillooet initiated the regional growth strategy process in 2004, with the support, cooperation, and collaboration of their member municipalities and electoral areas. The RGS process began with initial regional issue identification and the development of a shared vision and goal statements. Early on, member municipalities requested the flexibility to design their own approaches to achieving the vision and goals of this strategy through Official Community Plans and other means of local decision making. In 2005, the SLRD and its members developed a Regional Growth Strategy Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a “bridging” document based on the principles of smart growth, in order to guide decision-making on key regional issues until the RGS was adopted. Following this, a draft RGS was created based on earlier consultation results and the principles contained in the MOU.

There was extensive consultation at key points in the process. Provincial agencies and neighbouring regional districts were consulted and their interests were taken into account in the development of the strategy. Significant efforts were also made to involve First Nations communities in the development of this framework. It is important to acknowledge that First Nations Land Use Plans and Provincial Land and Resource Management Plans exist alongside the RGS. A key focus has been to encourage coordination and cooperation between local, senior and First Nations governments in providing greater economic certainty and balancing community development, recreation and tourism, and environmental protection in the region.

While the growth strategy will guide the SLRD and its member municipalities with respect to land use decisions in accordance with their legislative authority, it does not alter the role of senior governments to manage crown land uses in the public interest, nor does it commit their agencies to a particular course of action. Its intention is to guide development and encourage collaborative approaches with the implementation of the RGS.

As of February 24, 2009, the RGS has not been adopted and the District of Squamish has decided not to accept the RGS. Since this decision was made between second and third reading, the Regional District of Squamish-Lillooet has asked to province to initiate the arbitration process, with the desire to resolve this issue prior to the outcome of arbitration.

3.2.2 Examples of Goals and Actions

Goal 3: Support a Range of Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is recognized as a regional issue, needing cooperative approaches that build upon a common strategy to support a range of quality affordable housing across the region.

The Regional Growth Strategy:

(i) Supports a regional forum for affordable housing that will serve to strengthen communication and coordination of local efforts by municipalities, housing authorities and community organizations.

(ii) Encourages higher-density and mixed use neighbourhoods with housing close to where residents live, work and play as part of the solution to the affordability issue. This strategy could involve incentives for targeted affordable units, infill housing, units above commercial space and mixed use developments that address the needs of families, singles, seniors and low-income earners.

Policy 3.1(a): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to establish a regional Affordable Housing Strategy that encourages innovative and alternative methods for the provision of affordable housing, such as regional housing trust funds, partnerships with non-profit organizations, and exchange of experiences. This will be pursued in discussions between member municipalities and electoral areas, and through the creation of an affordable housing committee within the regional district.

Policy 3.1(b): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to adopt policies and regulations that support live-work studio space, mixed-use neighbourhoods, and a variety of residential intensification strategies such as allowing secondary suites, providing for 'flex-housing' (a multi-unit built form designed for adaptability of units to accommodate changing family size and needs over time), encouraging infill housing and small lot development, density bonusing and other tools that will support housing affordability. This will be pursued in the review and updating of Official Community Plans and the overall development of an affordable housing strategy within the region.

Policy 3.1(f): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to Encourage cooperation with community service groups and private developers to supply low-cost housing options for seniors with the aim of maximizing independence and self reliance and promoting continued socialization and the ability to age in place. This will be pursued in the review of residential and commercial development proposals and in the review and updating of Official Community Plans in regard to congregate care and independent living developments for seniors.

Goal 5: Protect Natural Eco-system Functioning

The Regional Growth Strategy:

(i) Supports minimizing adverse impacts by carefully managing where and how development occurs, how wastes are reduced and how resources are managed; and

(ii) Supports promoting ecological restoration and enhancement opportunities.

Policy 5.1 (a): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to consolidate existing information into an inventory (data set) of regional ecologically sensitive areas and biodiversity values, and further develop the Sea to Sky Sensitive Habitat Atlas as a planning tool (or coarse filter) for determining significant ecologically sensitive areas (ESA's) and natural biodiversity of the region that will assist in land use decision-making. This will be pursued through collaboration with federal and provincial agencies, regional districts and local conservation organizations.

Policy 5.1 (b): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to promote Best Management Practices, including bylaws that encourage development design that limits environmental impact and promotes integrated stormwater management, to manage surface water, drainage and groundwater to protect the supply and quality of water resources. This will be pursued by incorporating appropriate measures in OCPs, regulatory bylaws and public works programs.

Policy 5.1 (f): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to take an active approach to responsible vegetation management, including, where appropriate, consideration of alternatives to herbicides in rights-of-way maintenance, and cost-effective measures to control the spread of noxious weeds and alien invasive species. This will be pursued by promoting alternatives to chemical treatments, and investigating introduction of a noxious weed bylaw and awareness program (e.g., restricting fill movements, etc.).

Goal 9: Improve Collaboration among Jurisdictions

The Regional Growth Strategy supports *expanding the opportunities for participation and communication in Regional District decision making.*

Policy 9.1 (a): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to continue using the round table format (i.e., RGS Elected Officials Forums) on a regular basis as a means for continued cross-regional communication and coordination. This will be pursued through consultation activities related to a variety of regional issues.

Policy 9.1 (b): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to encourage our staff (administrators, planners, finance, engineering, etc.) to develop mechanisms by which they may share information, collaborate and co-operate with their respective peers across the jurisdictions including, but not limited to: regular staff meetings, referral systems, working committees, etc. This will be pursued by through collaborative approaches to regional and trans-boundary issues.

Policy 9.1 (c): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to establish MOU's, protocol agreements and working committees between various jurisdictions (i.e., local, regional, First Nation, provincial and federal) to improve collaboration and coordination. This will be pursued through consultation activities related to a variety of regional issues.

Policy 9.1 (d): The SLRD and member municipalities agree to utilize ground rules and other protocol measures established in advance to assist with inter-jurisdictional disputes and conflict resolution. This will be pursued through consultation activities related to a variety of regional issues.

4.0 Summary

Examples from selected regional growth strategies demonstrate a variety of approaches to growth management, with each strategy responding to unique local challenges, situations, and concerns. As a result, a regional growth strategy can be more detailed in goals, strategies and land use designations if that is the desire of all partners. Other regions take a broad policy perspective, such as the Central Okanagan; the flexible action approach of Fraser Valley; or the local land use planning approach of Squamish-Lillooet. Each regional growth strategy is very different in approach, policy direction, focus, and content. In summary, a regional growth strategy is ultimately what the regional district and local governments want it to be

Appendix A: Summary Table of B.C. Regional Growth Strategies

Selected Regional Growth Strategies within British Columbia								
Regional District	Adopted?	Timeframe	Detailed Land Use Plan	MOU	Alternative Scenarios	Local Gov't Partnership	Conflict Resolution	Brief Description of Process
<i>Capital Regional District</i>	Yes	1996-2003	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	The process focused on urban containment early in the process, with local governments indicating that it was the priority issue. As a result, the resulting plan was more detailed with regard to land use than all but the RDN RGS. The process included a robust and comprehensive consultation program, ensuring the direction set and the resulting strategy were appropriate for the Region.
<i>Fraser Valley Regional District</i>	Yes	1996-2004	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	The planning process when developing the RGS explored the trends and resulted in regional scale land use plans with actions that were suggestions to local governments when implementing the vision statement and principles. A great deal of flexibility in both the tools employed by local governments and the appropriate strategies to be explored are included in the RGS Bylaw.
<i>Regional District of Nanaimo</i>	Yes	1993-1997	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	The process was a technical exercise with public input at key points, with local governments agreeing to pursue a more detailed RGS to address urban containment issues. The direction was agreed upon early in the process.

Selected Regional Growth Strategies within British Columbia								
Regional District	Adopted?	Timeframe	Detailed Land Use Plan	MOU	Alternative Scenarios	Local Gov't Partnership	Conflict Resolution	Brief Description of Process
<i>Regional District of Central Okanagan</i>	Yes	1996-2000	No	No	No	Yes	No	The process was a technical exercise that did not result in growth scenario inclusion. Instead, local governments agreed upon a series of broad policies that would be considered when undertaking OCP review or bylaw development. Mapping was not included in the resultant bylaw.
<i>Squamish-Lillooet Regional District</i>	No	2004-?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Local governments, early in the process, agreed to undertake local planning initiatives that would form the basis of the RGS. These local plans and initiatives were used to develop the RGS growth scenario. The public and elected officials were consulted at key points in the process. Due to the extensive planning work undertaken at the local level, the resulting plan appears to be very detailed.
<i>Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen</i>	No	2004-?	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	The process was based upon collaborative and cooperative RGS development, with an aggressive public consultation program. The resulting RGS set a policy direction and series of actions that were between the detailed nature of RDN and CRD, and the broad policy statements of RDCO.