



**REGIONAL DISTRICT
of
NORTH OKANAGAN**

REPORT

File No.: 3045.06

TO: Regional Growth Management Advisory Committee
FROM: Anthony Kittel, Regional Growth Strategy Coordinator
DATE: March 31, 2010
**SUBJECT: Regional Growth Strategy Goals, Strategies and Actions
Recommendations: Environment and Natural Lands, Affordable
Housing, Transportation and Infrastructure**

RECOMMENDATION:

That it be recommended to the Board of Directors that the draft Goals, Strategies and Actions recommended by the Environment and Natural Lands, Affordable Housing and Transportation and Infrastructure Growth Issues Working Groups and contained in the report dated March 31, 2010 from the Regional Growth Strategy Coordinator, be included within the draft Regional Growth Strategy;

And further, that the Regional Growth Strategy Goals, Strategies and Actions results be referred to member municipalities and First Nations to provide comment prior to June 15, 2010.

PURPOSE:

The above recommendation reflects the changes to the original recommendation brought forward at the March 24, 2010 Regional Growth Management Advisory Committee meeting regarding the results of the Water Stewardship, Agriculture and Food Systems and Economic Development Growth Issues Working Groups.

This report includes draft policy recommendations that have been developed by the Environment and Natural Lands, Affordable Housing and Transportation and Infrastructure Growth Issues Working Groups and refined by the Community Advisory Committee and Regional Growth Strategy Support Team. It outlines the policy options, arrived at by consensus that may be included within the North Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy. Additional Working Group recommendations will be presented in separate reports further in the process.

The selection of growth issues goals, strategies and actions will provide the framework upon which the Regional Growth Strategy will be constructed. The Working Groups, Community Advisory Committee and Regional Growth Strategy Support Team have endeavored to develop policy recommendations that take into consideration public and municipal council input and respond to the direction of the Regional Growth Management Advisory Committee and Board of Directors, as provided within the Regional Growth Strategy Terms of Reference, Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Elected Officials Forum and meeting minutes.

The recommendations that are contained within this report are intended for consideration by the Regional Growth Management Advisory Committee for inclusion within the draft Regional Growth Strategy. All recommendations that have been considered by the Board of Directors should be forwarded to member municipalities and First Nations for comment.

DISCUSSION:

In simple terms, a compact, complete community provides opportunities for people at all life stages to live, work, and play close to home. In doing so, the approach focuses on sustainability in all of its major dimensions. Compact, complete communities help promote *environmental sustainability* through broader goals of preventing regional urban sprawl and the preservation of selected open spaces and natural lands. They promote *economic sustainability* by: avoiding the costs of unnecessary infrastructure and service duplication; ensuring the critical number of people close enough to warrant improved levels of transit; and providing job opportunities close to home. Finally, complete communities foster *societal sustainability* in providing services and functions to meet daily needs and help strengthen individuals' ties to local places.

The specific challenges facing the planning, development and management of sustainable communities in the Region are:

1. The impact of urban development on the quality of the wider natural environment, in particular the quality of ground and surface water in the Okanagan and Shuswap Watersheds and land use impacts on surrounding agricultural and natural areas;
2. The need to consider the longer-term costs of growth and adequately plan for social, economic and environmental sustainability;
3. The need for ongoing coordination and delivery of infrastructure and services beyond the initial planning phases; and
4. The need to provide certainty to landowners and encourage innovative approaches that build on the unique qualities and opportunities within North Okanagan communities.

“Compact development” is a term generally used to refer to urban development at higher densities, applied in selected areas and coupled with increased emphasis on innovative urban design to enhance the liveability of these areas. “Mixed use developments” are those which combine in varying proportions residential, commercial, retail, services, office, or even institutional land uses in a single development project. “Compact development” then, is but one of several means of achieving compact urban form for the region as a whole, in addition to policies that encourage infill development and denser community centres, channelling growth into existing urban areas reduce the need for continuous outward expansion in our agricultural and rural lands.

BACKGROUND:

The development of the Environment and Natural Lands, Affordable Housing and Transportation and Infrastructure draft policy framework was guided by the Regional Growth Strategy Terms of Reference, endorsed on May 6, 2009 by the Board of Directors, the outcomes of the April 24, 2009 Elected Officials' Forum and the results of Phase I public engagement. The eight Working Groups, during their deliberations, identified the protection of our rural lands and focusing development within existing communities as critical elements for successful implementation of their recommendations. As a result, the core focus of the Regional Growth Strategy will be creating compact, complete communities that will protect our rural lands.

At their February 20, 2007 meeting, the Regional Growth Management Committee resolved to incorporate the 10 Smart Growth Principles into the Terms of Reference as guiding principles for the RGS process.

1. **Mix land uses.** Each neighbourhood has a mixture of homes, retail, business, and recreational opportunities.
2. **Build well-designed compact neighbourhoods.** Residents can choose to live, work, shop and play in close proximity. People can easily access daily activities, transit is viable, and local businesses are supported.
3. **Provide a variety of transportation choices.** Neighbourhoods are attractive and have safe infrastructure for walking, cycling and transit, in addition to driving.
4. **Create diverse housing opportunities.** People in different family types, life stages and income levels can afford a home in the neighbourhood of their choice.
5. **Encourage growth in existing communities.** Investments in infrastructure (such as roads and schools) are used efficiently, and developments do not take up new land.
6. **Preserve open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas.** Development respects natural landscape features and has higher aesthetic, environmental, and financial value.
7. **Protect and enhance agricultural lands.** A secure and productive land base, such as BC's Agricultural Land Reserve, provides food security, employment, and habitat, and is maintained as an urban containment boundary.
8. **Utilize smarter and cheaper infrastructure and green buildings.** Green buildings and other systems can save both money and the environment in the long run.
9. **Foster a unique neighbourhood identity.** Each community is unique, vibrant, diverse, and inclusive.
10. **Nurture engaged citizens.** Places belong to those who live, work, and play there. Engaged citizens participate in community life and decision-making.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL LANDS

With the region's sensitive airshed, grasslands, environmentally sensitive areas, limited valley land base, and river and stream corridors, there are challenges in mitigating the environmental impacts of urban and rural development. Furthermore, large numbers of recreational vacationers place additional pressure on the region's natural areas and waterways. A sustainable approach to development could limit further degradation of the region's land base and natural assets, and could help mitigate the potential negative impacts of growth on air quality, water quality and quantity, and wildlife habitat.

Protection of the environment and natural areas is a shared responsibility. Many environmental issues do not follow administrative or political boundaries; hence, any effort to protect the natural environment must be addressed at all levels of government in collaboration and coordination. The Regional Growth Strategy provides a vehicle for working toward solutions for regional environmental issues.

GOAL ENV-1: Protect and Manage Watershed Function

Upstream affects downstream. All activities that have an impact on water quality, quantity, or rate of flow at locations upstream have impacts downstream. Because of this, watersheds are logically the most appropriate units for managing water quality and quantity. The coordinated watershed planning provides a way to consider a wide range of issues along with the communities' vision for the future of watersheds. Coordinating watershed level planning initiatives across jurisdictional boundaries can

address water quality, quantity, community, wildlife habitat and ecological health issues beyond the scope of single jurisdiction.

Taking a coordinated and cooperative watershed planning approach provides benefits that include: understanding how activities on the landscape influence water quality and quantity, fostering a connection to the landscape we live in, and ensuring activities upstream are respectful of downstream residents and preserve to ecological function.

Any activity that affects water quality, quantity, or flow rate in one part of the watershed may affect locations downstream. Understanding this connectivity within a watershed is helpful when planning or managing land use activities in the future. For this reason, to protect our water it makes sense to protect our watersheds. Effective collaborative watershed management planning is important in managing water and land development and maintaining a healthy and sustainable watershed environment.

The Regional District of North Okanagan and member municipalities, in collaboration and cooperation with appropriate provincial and federal government agencies, agree to:

Strategy ENV-1.1: Develop consistent, integrated environmental policy that will protect water ecosystem function and conserve and enhance biodiversity and ecological services through the protection of ecological features and corridors, including floodplains, shorelines, stream and river systems, aquifers, wetlands and forested watersheds. The RDNO and member municipalities encourage the federal and provincial government to support the development and implementation of measures to protect streams and streamside areas at the local government level.

Strategy ENV-1.2: Identify and establish a database of stream and river base flows necessary to maintain ecological functioning of North Okanagan waterways.

Strategy ENV-1.3: Development of a Regional Foreshore Strategy, using foreshore inventory mapping, that will be incorporated into the application and permitting process for new and existing developments.

GOAL ENV-2 Protect Ecologically Sensitive Areas, Natural Lands and Open Spaces

Lands in the lower elevations of the valley are under intense pressure. Land that is potentially developable is at a premium due the area's large lakes, a substantial proportion of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve, and abundance of natural, environmentally sensitive and park lands. Most of the most endangered habitat occurs in the valleys, grasslands, riparian areas and associated lands. Competition for this limited land base will only continue to increase as growth continues to encroach on rural lands, thus intensifying the pressure on important habitat.

The Regional District of North Okanagan and member municipalities agree to work individually and collectively to:

Strategy ENV-2.1: Identify, prioritize and map all ecosystems in the North Okanagan and ensure they are utilized in local government land planning processes.

ACTION ENV-2.1.1 Expand sensitive ecosystem mapping to complete a regionally consistent North Okanagan ecosystem inventory.

ACTION ENV-2.1.2: Support data sharing, mapping, and consolidation of existing information into an inventory of Southern Interior ecologically sensitive areas and biodiversity values.

ACTION ENV-2.1.3: In collaboration with local and provincial governments, identify a system of linked wildlife corridors and areas of habitat connectivity that will inform planning decisions, with the goal of avoiding further fragmentation.

Strategy ENV-2.2: Develop a regionally consistent policy approach to ecosystem and species protection.

ACTION ENV-2.2.1: Review existing bylaws and environmental policies to work toward the incorporation and implementation of complementary environmental management and planning policies and incorporating suggestions and the intent of the Green bylaws toolkit into Official Community Plans, policies and bylaws.

ACTION-ENV-2.2.2: Protect environmentally sensitive lands when making land and resource use decisions. To that end, the Regional District and member municipalities agree to require an environmental review for projects and developments with the potential to negatively affect environmentally sensitive areas identified sensitive lands, environmental management areas and/or Environmental Development Permit Areas, including follow up studies after development to ensure that ecological health has remained intact.

ACTION-ENV-2.2.3: Cooperate with all levels of government, First Nations and other stakeholders to implement consistent, region-wide, best management practices to protect and enhance the region's biodiversity, environment, and ecology, including consistent provincial ecosystem protection for Crown Lands adjacent to regionally significant environmental lands.

Strategy ENV-2.3: Encourage the Sustainable Management of Parks and Natural Areas

ACTION ENV-2.3.1: Protect open space, natural lands and environmentally sensitive areas that reflects the region's landscape character and ecological integrity, and forms a system of interconnected areas and natural corridors capable of, ensuring proper connectivity and the protection of natural ecosystems at a scale where the ecosystems can maintain themselves.

ACTION ENV-2.3.2: Collaborate on the creation and management of an inter-connected network of regional green spaces and corridors and establish links with federal, provincial, municipal and Regional District park systems and greenway initiatives. To that end, the Regional District and member municipalities agree to develop designations that establish natural areas, recreational lands and trails with specific associated activities and urban green space.

ACTION ENV-2.3.3: Within parks and natural areas planning, develop an inventory of priority assets, a dedicated budget and a Parks and Natural Lands Acquisition Plan.

ACTION ENV-2.3.4: Establish a dedicated Parks and Natural Lands Legacy Fund to assist in accessing additional innovative and cooperative funding opportunities.

ACTION ENV-2.3.5: Develop a regional foreshore and lakefront public access lands acquisition program, as a component of tourism development, parks and trails development and environmental strategies that focuses on lands identification and innovative and cooperative funding opportunities

Strategy ENV-2.4: Engage the community through stewardship and education to improve environmental awareness.

ACTION ENV-2.4.1: Encourage community education on the importance, value and cost of losing the ecosystems of the North Okanagan, including the development of a regional community education and stewardship program that encourages community and individual involvement in habitat protection. To that end, the Regional District and member municipalities, both individually and collectively, agree to continue establishing and supporting environmental partnerships that focus on outreach, cooperation and collaboration, as well as the stewardship of recreational areas and natural assets. This will be pursued in conjunction with federal, provincial and private sector environmental conservation and restoration programs.

ACTION ENV-2.4.2: Support education programs for private land owners about the importance of sensitive ecosystems, including the creation of educational materials describing each sensitive ecosystem type found in the North Okanagan and their importance to the economy and health of the region.

GOAL ENV-3: Reduce and prevent pollution of air, land and water

The continued urban growth within the North Okanagan and through the entire Okanagan Valley has presented challenges to maintaining air, water, and land quality. As a result of its geographic setting, the North Okanagan's airshed is vulnerable to air pollution generated not only from activities within the region but also from communities within the Okanagan Valley. Poor ventilation conditions, especially in the summer, restrict the dispersion of pollutants, which often result in air quality episodes. The air quality is also affected by internal factors such as increased motor vehicle use, open burning and dust from the landscape in the summer months.

The Regional District of North Okanagan and member municipalities, both individually and collectively, agree to:

Strategy ENV-3.1: Encourage the development and adoption of policies that contribute to the reduction or prevention of air, land and water pollution. To that end, The Regional District and member municipalities agree to support the use of innovative approaches and technologies (i.e. green infrastructure) for water, energy, and waste and emissions management through the use of best management practices, local bylaws and incentives.

Strategy ENV-3.2: Support innovative energy development that results in reduced community greenhouse gas production.

Strategy ENV-3.3 Explore opportunities to collaborate on preparing a southern interior climate change strategy that would examine the potential consequences of global warming on the region and identify opportunities and strategies for taking local action on climate change, with a focus on water, agricultural and environmental vulnerabilities.

Strategy ENV-3.4: Pursue an solid waste management approach that concentrates on creating less waste, with the ultimate long term goal of eliminating the need for waste disposal (i.e., a "Zero Waste" approach).

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing is a critical community asset and an important local economic driver. Well-balanced communities provide housing opportunities for people in all stages of life, different family types, a range of financial situations, and for individuals and families with special needs. A diversity of safe and secure housing opportunities can help a community retain working families and attract new businesses. Strategic decisions around housing development also helps communities plan for, build

and maintain services and amenities. The economic, social, and environmental impacts of housing development should enhance and complete the community. Housing policy should seek to encourage this balance rather than simply accommodate current market trends.

There are numerous opportunities through the Regional Growth Strategy to encourage the development of housing opportunities for people in all stages of life, different family types, a range of financial situations, and for individuals and families with special needs. There also needs to be recognition that solutions and responses to housing affordability will vary from the more urban areas to the rural areas. Each area needs to be addressed within its unique context. Ensuring this diversity of safe and secure housing opportunities will help the North Okanagan retain working families, attract new businesses and help local communities to build and maintain services and amenities.

Complete and more sustainable communities include a wide range of housing options and choices for rural and more urban areas. In both cases, housing should be located in close proximity to employment, services and amenities and recreation opportunities to encourage walking between destinations. In more urban areas, consideration should be given to creating housing that will accommodate densities high enough to support local commercial services and public transportation. In more rural areas this means preserving land and permitting more affordable housing choices.

GOAL AH-1: A Regional Approach to the Development of Affordable Housing

The Regional District of North Okanagan and member municipalities agree to:

Strategy AH-1.1: Develop a Regional Affordable Housing Strategy that addresses community issues and meets the needs of a variety of residents in order to maintain the social sustainability of the North Okanagan. There is a full spectrum of housing needs to be met by a range of housing options, including:

- **Entry-level ownership housing** that is affordable for working individuals, professionals, young families, and seniors who have a variety of income levels.
- **Ownership housing appropriate for a growing senior population** – i.e. Smaller, one-level, wheelchair accessible units.
- **Affordable rental housing for families.**
- **Employee housing** for businesses coming into the region.
- **Rental housing for seasonal workers** like those in the resort industry and agricultural sector.
- **Affordable, suitable rental housing** for residents who do not wish to become homeowners.
- **Transitional housing and/or emergency shelter** for a variety of residents, including those at risk of homelessness and young people coming into the community and looking for work.

Strategy AH-1.2: Encourage the creation of new affordable housing units through regional and municipal policy, including:

- Amending existing bylaws to increase density in areas appropriate for affordable ownership and rental housing;
- Incorporating smaller, more affordable housing design into neighbourhood planning, including suites, smaller lots, row housing, townhouses and higher density developments;
- Adopting inclusionary housing policies or density bonus provisions as a means of expanding affordable rental and ownership residential stock; and
- Identifying local government owned sites which are appropriate for affordable housing that could be developed in partnership with non-profit organizations.

Strategy AH-1.3: Explore regional and local options for maintaining housing choice within communities using innovative tools, techniques and partnerships.

Strategy AH-1.4: Explore options, beyond government subsidies, that provide affordable housing opportunities, including employer-subsidized housing and the development of principles of private-public partnerships.

Strategy AH-1.5: Creative use of Development Cost Charges (DCCs) and other local government policy options, with an emphasis on removing barriers to affordable housing development.

Strategy AH-1.6: Integrate transportation and transit planning with land use planning and densification strategies to support a diversity of housing options.

Strategy AH-1.7: Support affordable housing options through complete community planning, including the provision of urban gardens, parks and play areas and local services and businesses.

Strategy AH-1.8: Affordable housing must be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. Municipalities will explore policy and planning tools that would ensure that the life-cycle cost of affordable housing projects are incorporated into decision-making.

Strategy AH-1.9: Investigate the development of a business case to encourage private sector involvement and partnership in the provision of affordable housing options.

Strategy AH-1.10: In partnership with University of British Columbia Okanagan and Okanagan College, support research into North Okanagan affordable housing barriers, opportunities and feasible business cases.

Strategy AH-1.11: Develop a community outreach initiative to improve understanding of affordable housing issues and demonstrate the benefits and opportunities of promoting increased residential density and diversity to create affordable housing, including an annual presentation to the Board of Directors and member municipal councils on the status of housing affordability within the North Okanagan.

GOAL AH-2: Encourage senior levels of government to create additional policies that support the development of affordable housing options to meet community and regional objectives.

The Regional District of North Okanagan and member municipalities agree to:

Strategy AH-2.1: Secure additional stable senior government funding for social housing, rental subsidies, seniors' housings and necessary support services.

Strategy AH-2.2: Facilitate innovative partnerships with senior government, the development industry and non-profit organizations to provide affordable housing options.

Strategy AH-2.3: Advocate to senior government, through the UBCM and FCM, for increased resources for member municipalities to meet affordable housing needs.

Strategy AH-2.4: Encourage the provincial government to support affordable housing options through financial incentives and policies, including:

- Identify opportunities within Community Charter that support housing affordability initiatives and options;
- exempt affordable housing from the HST; and
- provide enabling legislation for municipalities and the RDNO to allocate some portion of municipal development cost charges/levies to an affordable housing fund.

Strategy AH-2.5: Encourage the federal government, through the UBCM and FCM, to:

- develop a National Affordable Housing Strategy; and
- identify opportunities to provide tax incentives for the construction of new purpose-built rental housing.

Strategy AH-2.6: Encourage senior levels of government, through the UBCM and FCM, to identify opportunities that reduce the income tax burden on the owner of rental, supportive or affordable housing units.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The regional transportation systems are vital to the sustainable growth of the North Okanagan. Residents and the local economy depend on transportation infrastructure, including regional highways, roads, public transit, active transportation options and rail. Getting regional transportation decisions right is also critical for environmental and community health, public safety and regional accessibility.

Strong public transit systems and proper land use planning make for places where opportunities to live, work, shop and play are accessible to all residents. In addition to providing a strategy for where and how to grow, the Regional Growth Strategy will be a vehicle for guiding provincial transportation infrastructure and transit decisions. As such, the Regional Growth Strategy provides an opportunity, as a Region, to work out common priorities for investment in a sustainable, efficient and accessible transportation system.

Infrastructure that supports active modes of transportation includes the transportation network infrastructure such as routes, lanes, paths, and sidewalks, as well as equipment that supports the activity, such as bicycle racks and benches. While sidewalks are a relatively common feature in town centres, they are less common in more rural areas. There are few dedicated cycling lanes and there is no integrated network between the town centres which makes commuting by bicycle difficult.

In planning for regional and municipal infrastructure, there are two crucial points to keep in mind:

1. The ability to provide infrastructure is directly tied to the ability of the valley to absorb growth. The region's water operators can only provide so much water without taking necessary flow away from the fisheries or farmers or BC Hydro. Likewise there are limits on the valley's capacity for the disposal of sewage.
2. Infrastructure has high associated costs in terms of construction, operation and maintenance. Every additional meter of water main or sewer pipe entails higher initial costs of construction, and higher annual costs of service and repair, and the eventual replacement cost.

The planning for infrastructure is directly linked to land use planning. The more dispersed our settlement patterns, the more our infrastructure must be extended, the more expensive it is, and the greater impact it will have. Due to their potential impact and cost, extensions of infrastructure must be carefully considered. Proper land use planning must, therefore, be the driver of infrastructure investment. The Regional Growth Strategy provides a key opportunity to come together as a region and discuss our priorities and objectives for land use patterns and infrastructure planning.

GOAL TI-1: Manage Regional Transportation Corridors

The North Okanagan has very few potential future transportation corridors available due to the abundance of land within the Agricultural Land Reserve, the mountainous topography, the location of settlement lands and environmental constraints such as floodplains and environmentally sensitive

areas. The management of transportation corridors is essential to the long term prosperity of the Region and will provide transportation options in the future to respond to changing circumstances and demand. Transportation corridor management includes more than highway or road potential routing, such as trails, walking and cycling paths between communities, rapid transit options and rail corridors.

The Regional District of North Okanagan and member municipalities agree to:

Strategy TI-1.1: In collaboration and coordination with the provincial government, local governments and First Nations, develop, identify and enhance potential and existing transportation corridors at a regional level to ensure that planning for major transportation corridors preserves choices for the future, including active transportation options.

Strategy TI-1.2: In partnership with senior levels of government, develop a long-range corridor protection and/or acquisition strategy to accommodate future needs for active transportation, transit, roads, highways and goods movement.

Strategy TI-1.3: Coordinate local transportation network planning across jurisdictions to assist in regional transportation planning and corridor management.

GOAL TI-2: Integrated Regional Modal Transportation Planning

The key to low cost transportation infrastructure and economically efficient public transportation is appropriate land use planning. Separating services from the communities that need them, isolating employment areas from residential areas, and segregating residential areas from retail areas makes accessing them more difficult and can limit transportation options. Conversely, ensuring that homes are located within walking or cycling distance of workplaces and the services opens up transportation choices for everyone, including those who cannot drive or cannot afford to drive. It shortens the distance that transit infrastructure and transit must cover and reduces the associated cost burden on taxpayers. The provision of cost effective active and public transit lessens the need for cars and reduces traffic, creating positive environmental, social and economic spinoffs.

The Regional District of North Okanagan and member municipalities agree to:

Strategy TI-2.1: Develop an Integrated Regional Transportation Plan and Implementation Agreement between all levels of government using a multimodal approach that creates attractive, integrated and effective transportation choices to provide a broad range of mobility options.

Strategy TI-2.2: Encourage transit-oriented development and provide transportation alternatives by linking land use decisions with transit, bikeway, pedestrian, and park-and-ride investments, including the establishment of a regional network of park and ride facilities at key transit nodes.

Strategy TI-2.3: In partnership with local and provincial governments, implement the recommendations identified within the Transportation Options for Rural Residents Study where feasible.

Strategy TI-2.4: In collaboration with senior levels of government, agree to reduce the greenhouse gas contribution attributed to transportation using a variety of techniques and methods, including traffic demand management and public education and outreach.

Strategy TI-2.5: Explore innovative financing options and opportunities to meet transportation and infrastructure goals, in addition to the efficient use of financial resources through timing and phasing of transportation and infrastructure projects and expansions.

Strategy TI-2.6: Ensure that land use decision-making is informed by a full and complete understanding of the impacts on all aspects of the transportation system, including transit, walking and cycling.

Strategy TI-2.7: Support efficient connections among all transportation modes, including:

- a) Initiate and support expansion of cycling infrastructure, facilities and programs at both local and regional levels;
- b) Improve integration of cycling and transit;
- c) Improve walking and pedestrian facilities to destinations within major road networks; and
- d) Upgrade access to key transit stations and facilities.

Strategy TI-2.8: Assist BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure in the development of a North Okanagan Transit Master Plan.

Strategy TI-2.9: Ensure that all major corridors provide a choice of transportation modes and are designed with multi-modal amenities such as bus stops, turnouts and shelters, bike lanes and sidewalks.

Strategy TI-2.10: In partnership with the provincial and federal government, provide a safe and secure transportation environment for the traveling public, addressing roadway hazards, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and transit security.

Strategy TI-2.11: Through collaboration, cooperation and partnership with the provincial and federal government, provide the people of the region with transportation modal options necessary to carry out their essential daily activities and support equitable access to the region's opportunities, including addressing the needs of the elderly and other population groups that may have special transportation needs, such as non-drivers or those with disabilities.

Strategy TI-2.12: Ensure that new development pays for the costs of all transportation-related infrastructure, including transit, pedestrian and cycling facilities.

Strategy TI-2.13: Provide appropriate transportation networks, through collaboration with, and support from, senior levels of government, that encourage the expansion of economic development activity.

Strategy TI-2.14: Develop sustainable commercial transportation options that reduce the greenhouse gas footprint of goods and services available at the regional and local level.

GOAL TI-3: Create Effective, Efficient and Sustainable Infrastructure

The Canadian Waterworks Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) recognize a growing gap in infrastructure spending in British Columbia. This means a growing backlog in infrastructure in need of repair or replacement. According to the FCM, over 33 percent of water distribution infrastructure in Canada's older cities reached the end of its service life in 2002, with another 34 percent set to reach that state by 2020. Governments at all levels will have to develop new means of financing the replacement of these ageing pipes, pumps, reservoirs and treatment plants.

The extension of regional and municipal infrastructure to development in new locations can absorb funds more prudently spent renovating existing infrastructure and adds an additional burden on taxpayers to cover long term capital and operational costs. Additionally, the capital and operational costs of infrastructure vary directly with proximity to existing development. For every kilometre a building or neighbourhood is from a central pumping facility, the more expensive its services will be.

Development that occurs within the existing service area, can often take advantage of existing excess water system capacity; distributing the system's capital costs over an enlarged tax base, and reducing the costs per resident. Where development within a water service area must add capacity, or requires additional or upgraded infrastructure, it can provide an invaluable source of funding to alleviate municipal infrastructure deficits. Development within or immediately adjacent to existing urban areas can thus be an effective means of financing the replacement of ageing water and sewer infrastructure while reducing the overall costs of water and sewer provision.

The Regional District of North Okanagan and member municipalities agree to:

Strategy TI-3.1: Develop supportive policies that will focus growth toward areas with existing infrastructure.

Strategy TI-3.2: Develop regional cooperation on utility planning.

Strategy TI-3.3: Develop consistent infrastructure lifecycle full accounting policies and tools at the local and regional levels to ensure that the full cost of development is incorporated into the permitting process.

Strategy TI-3.4: Adopt a phased approach to service expansion at the local government level, based upon a 20 year projected build-out.

Strategy TI-3.5: Adopt best management practices and innovative green infrastructure technologies and techniques to address stormwater challenges.

Strategy TI-3.6: Identify innovative options that will assist in maintaining appropriate levels of infrastructure and service delivery that address community needs in a fiscally responsible manner.

Strategy TI-3.7: Support the development of innovative energy sources that result in reduced community greenhouse gas production.

Strategy TI-3.8: Conduct an Infrastructure Inventory and Needs Assessment for the North Okanagan that provides an accurate inventory of all infrastructure asset condition, use, maintenance and replacement cost. This information is a vital aid in the local decision-making and budgeting priority process.

Strategy TI-3.9: Develop a Regional Serviced Industrial Lands Initiative that will facilitate industrial infrastructure servicing arrangements, with an emphasis on recovering infrastructure development costs from industrial development applications.

REFERRAL:

The Board of Directors is encouraged to forward the draft Environment and Natural Lands, Affordable Housing and Transportation and Infrastructure Working Group policy recommendations to member municipal councils for their comments. Referral of draft goals, strategies and actions would enable the Board of Directors to hear the views of municipal councils and make any changes to the draft policies prior to consideration for endorsement, public review and draft Regional Growth Strategy development. Since the opportunity would be available, the public may choose to provide their comments to councils rather than the Board of Directors at this stage of the process. It is suggested that municipalities be requested to reply within one month on any major concerns, recognizing that further opportunities will be available for detailed review during broad municipal and public consultation prior to the creation of a draft Regional Growth Strategy.


The Regional Growth Management Advisory Committee may refer any recommendation to staff with direction on further development of the policies. This option allows RDNO staff and staff from the member municipalities to work on refinement of the draft policies, but will add more time to the process. The RGMAC would need to provide staff with clear direction as to the policy areas that must be revised.

SUMMARY:

The draft Environment and Natural Lands, Affordable Housing and Transportation and Infrastructure recommended goals, strategies and actions are the product of many discussions within the Growth Issues Working Groups, Community Advisory Committee and Regional Growth Strategy Support Team. In addition, discussion and input at open houses, public forums such as the meetings held throughout the process, the Elected Officials Forum, held on April 24, 2009, municipal council discussions, public survey responses, and Board of Directors and municipal council endorsement of the Regional Growth Strategy Terms of Reference have informed the Board of Directors direction on the development of draft growth issues policy options.

The completion of the Regional Growth Strategy is the top Board of Directors priority. It is recommended that the Regional Growth Management Advisory Committee consider the Environment and Natural Lands, Affordable Housing and Transportation and Infrastructure policy recommendations for inclusion within the Regional Growth Strategy and refer those draft policy options to member municipalities and First Nations for comment on any major concern. Due to the accelerated timeline established by the Board of Directors on January 9, 2009, it is recommended that the closing date for comment on major concerns be June 15, 2010. Additional opportunities for municipal council input and comment into the development of the draft policy framework of the Regional Growth Strategy will be available throughout the process.

Submitted by:



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Approved For Inclusion:

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