

## Chapter 10 – Regional Context Statement

---

The Board of the Capital Regional District formally approved a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) in August 2003. The District of Highlands is a signatory to the RGS. As a partner, Highlands has established its commitment to the following:

- To plan and manage growth in a collaborative manner by participating in achieving the regional vision and the strategic initiatives
- To consider the cross-boundary impacts of all development-related decisions
- To work toward a more sustainable region by considering the environmental, economic and social implications of local government decisions.

The *Local Government Act* requires municipalities to adopt a “regional context statement.” This statement must identify the relationship between an OCP and the content of the RGS and, if applicable, must specify how the OCP will be made consistent with the RGS over time.

Regional context statements are a key implementation mechanism for the RGS. They also protect a municipal council’s authority to make local planning decisions while ensuring that the council and the regional board agree upon matters of legitimate regional interest. While the RGS is not binding on the member municipalities, the regional context statements are.

Table 10.1 shows how Highlands’ OCP coincides with the RGS. The Highlands OCP 2005 is generally consistent with the RGS.

### **Regional Context Statement - Objectives**

- To plan and manage growth in a collaborative manner by participating in achieving the regional vision and the strategic initiatives
- To consider the cross-boundary impacts of all development-related decisions
- To work toward a more sustainable region by considering the environmental, economic and social implications of local government decisions.

### **Regional Context Statement - Policies**

1. Map 2.1 shows the proposed Servicing Boundary for the District of Highlands. The intention is to expand the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area to match the District’s proposed Servicing Boundary.
2. Once this regional context statement is accepted by CRD Board, the District of Highlands will not permit amendments to expand its Servicing Boundary except to address pressing public health and environmental issues, to provide fire suppression or to service agriculture.
3. The District will review Policies 10.1 and 10.2 as part of the comprehensive 5-year review of the Regional Growth Strategy.

**Table 10.1 – District of Highlands and the Regional Growth Strategy**

RGS Strategic Directions	Consistencies	Inconsistencies	Resolution of Inconsistencies	Not Applicable
<p><b>1.1</b> Keep Urban Settlement Compact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This OCP establishes a Highlands Servicing Boundary shown in Map 2.1. The majority of this area is a comprehensive development, Bear Mountain, where residential build-out is established at a maximum of 150 dwelling units, in conjunction with commercial and park uses. Another significant portion of land within the Servicing Boundary is designated Commercial Industrial, and is subject to a development permit, “Highlands Commercial/Industrial Gateway Area.” The balance of the area: (a) has been built out, (b) is designated institutional and owned by the municipality (municipal office location), (c) is in the process of building to what its zone allows, or (d) is conservation land held by a three-party covenant. The land-locked parcel in the northwest is the only property that remains undeveloped under current zoning.</li> <li>Development Permit Area 5 – Intensive Residential guides development in this area. Guidelines promote: clustering and screening by native vegetation of housing; maintenance of natural drainage patterns; drought-resistant plantings; minimal alteration of natural features; maintaining or improving stormwater runoff in order to protect ground and surface water; enhancement of riparian areas; conservation and/or enhancement of identified green space areas; downward illumination; and design supporting transit.</li> <li>Section 2.2 describes growth within Highlands to occur slowly, at a rate of approximately 15 new homes per year.</li> <li>Policy 2.2 (13) states: “All land use and design decisions will seek to prevent unplanned growth.”</li> </ul>	<p>The RUCSPA be amended to match the proposed Highlands Servicing Boundary.</p>	<p>It is understood that technologically the area can be serviced by water and sewer. The District of Highlands intends to apply to the CRD to extend the RUCSPA.</p>	
<p><b>1.2</b> Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 2 describes OCP Land Use Designations. The Park, Rural Residential and Rural designations comprise the vast majority of the Highlands (approximately 90%), and all seek to protect the rural character.</li> <li>The Rural and Managed Forest designations allow for agriculture and forestry, while the Rural Residential and Institutional (where determined by zoning) designations allow for agriculture.</li> <li>Policy 2.2 (1) encourages development applicants to explore various means to develop land that minimizes impacts on the natural environment.</li> <li>Policy 2.2 (8) encourages the retention of the visual landscape, including retention of naturally vegetated buffer zones adjacent to parks and road rights-of-way.</li> <li>Policy 2.2 (10) generally allows for public amenity proposals through rezonings. Appendix A elaborates by explaining that the basic premise of an amenity proposal is that the value of the additional density gained by a developer through an amenity rezoning should be shared between the community and the developer. Highlands has gained significant greenspace and park over the years for the region through its public amenities policy.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>2.1</b> Protect Regional Green and Blue Space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 4 discusses Parks and Trails. There is a list of policies with respect to Provincial and Regional Parks and Trails. Policy 4.2 (1) indicates that the CRD Parks Master Plan and BC Parks should also be consulted.</li> <li>Unprotected Green Space Policy Areas as shown on Map 3 of the RGS fall under the jurisdiction of Highlands development permit areas (RGS Action 2.1.2).</li> </ul>	<p>Map 4.1 of this OCP shows park areas within Highlands.</p>	<p>Highlands proposes to include all park areas as shown on Map 4.1 of this OCP on RGS maps.</p>	

RGS Strategic Directions	Consistencies	Inconsistencies	Resolution of Inconsistencies	Not Applicable
<p><b>2.2</b> Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 2.1 draws attention to the importance of considering water in all land use decisions.</li> <li>• Section 2.10 discusses the Managed Forest land use designation. An objective is, “To encourage good forestry practices.” Policy 2.10 (2) states that the District will seek to ensure long term protection of lands designated Managed Forest.</li> <li>• Policies 3.1 (2) and (3) encourage environmental information sharing, stewardship, and responsibility-taking among the District, its residents and landowners, and environmental groups and agencies.</li> <li>• Section 3.2, Natural Hazard Conditions, discusses and provides policy direction for steep slopes. Section 3.3 discusses Environmental Protection Areas, and sets out detailed policies for sensitive vegetation, water features and riparian areas, and marine waters and shorelands. All of these policies are further supported by Development Permit Areas (Chapter 9) for Steep Slopes, Water and Riparian Areas, and Sensitive Vegetation, and are shown on Maps 9.1 and 9.2.</li> <li>• Section 6.2 discusses and sets policies for Water Supply and Well Protection.</li> <li>• Policy 6.2 (3) states, “In considering land use activity or change, the District of Highlands will consider the ability of surface water and groundwater to support human use without damaging ecosystems and aquifers...”</li> <li>• Policy 6.2 (5) encourages the use of drought-resistant native plant species in order to reduce irrigation need and to control potentially invasive species.</li> <li>• Policy 6.2 (11) states that Map 2.1 shows Highlands’ Servicing Boundary. It further states that the District intends to pursue an RGS amendment to this effect.</li> <li>• Policy 6.3 (6) provides for the servicing by public sewers or an alternative method of sewage disposal, which involves the use of reclaimed water, within the Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development Area.</li> <li>• Policy 6.4 (1) supports reduction of waste, reuse of materials, recycling, and backyard composting.</li> <li>• Policy 6.4 (3) states that the District will actively pursue ways to allow for the conversion, and rehabilitation of existing landfill, waste burning and demolition sites.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>3.1</b> Build Complete Communities</p>	<p>Lands designated as Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development meet criteria III in this section of the Regional Growth Strategy. The zoning for this area allows for a mix of housing, employment, services and recreation.</p>	<p>This area is outside the RUCSPA.</p>	<p>Highlands requests inclusion of this area within the RUCSPA.</p>	<p>The vast majority of Highlands is outside the RUCSPA.</p>
<p><b>3.2</b> Improve Housing Affordability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy 2.2. (6) states, “Housing for people with special needs by reason of age, income or disability is encouraged to meet the community’s anticipated needs.”</li> <li>• Policies 2.2 (17), (18) and (20) work together to allow for the possibility of secondary residences, with restrictions. This may only be considered once a reasonable understanding of the groundwater supply for the Highlands has been undertaken, and a plan for “legalizing” all illegal suites is developed.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>4.1</b> Increase Transportation Choice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 5.2 discusses Roadside Trails, the objective of which is, “To develop and maintain a network of roadside trails for a variety of means of non-motorized travel that is consistent with the character and activities of the Highlands.”</li> <li>• Considerations for transit with respect to land use are directed through policies 2.2 (21), 2.3 (5), 2.4 (3), 2.6 (3), and 2.7 (9). For the Commercial Industrial area, there is policy support to replace parking stalls with the provision of transit passes.</li> <li>• Policies in section 5.4 support public transit, and an arrangement with a private provider in order to provide additional options for Highlanders.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>5.1</b> Strengthen the Regional Economy</p>	<p>Uses allowed within Bear Mountain Comprehensive Development designated lands are intended for regional or greater market areas.</p>	<p>This area is outside the RUCSPA.</p>	<p>Highlands requests inclusion of this area within the RUCSPA.</p>	

