

**REPORT TO THE PLANNING & PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2007**

---

**SUBJECT****2005/2006 REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY (RGS) MONITORING REPORT****PURPOSE**

To adopt the 2005/2006 RGS Monitoring Report.

**BACKGROUND**

The provincial legislation requires the regional district to develop a program for monitoring the progress of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and to report annually on its implementation. The monitoring program is designed to meet the requirements of provincial legislation, as well as provide feedback to the Regional Board and the member municipalities on the RGS.

The first monitoring report was approved by the Board at its meeting of June 15, 2005, and included data up until the end of 2004. This document is the second RGS monitoring report, and contains data updated to the end of 2005 (with some updates to 2006).

The intent was to release the 2005 Monitoring report by June 2006 (data is updated to end of the year – hence the reason for releasing a 05 report in 06), with a 2006 report due for release at this time. Due to staff resourcing constraints the development and release of the 2005 was delayed. As a result, the attached report is intended to cover the two year time frame, and a more detailed report which incorporates the new census data will be released in Spring 2008 (recognizing there is a 12 to 20 month delay in obtaining 2006 census data).

A *Key Facts* sheet will be maintained on the CRD web site, with updates incorporated as data becomes available.

**Summary of Results**

The indicators in the monitoring report are organized under the eight key policy directions of the RGS.

**1. Keep Urban Settlement Compact:**

- The population within the growth management planning area was 333,900 in 2005, an increase of 4.4% from 2001
- Approximately 90% of the new dwellings were built within the urban containment boundary (development in Sooke was not included in the calculations)
- The City of Victoria has exceeded its target of accommodating a minimum of 15% of the region's new dwelling units.

**2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities**

- Between 2001 and 2005, approximately 268 ha of land were removed from the ALR
- In 2004, the Province repealed the *Forest Land Reserve Act* and now permits land owners to voluntarily remove land from the former FLR lands, subject to an exit fee. This is contributing to development pressure on the Renewable Resource lands

3. Protect Regional Green and Blue Space

- Between 2001 and 2005, the total protected area within the Sea-to-Sea Green /Blue Belt increased from 6,388 to 8,210 hectares (~73% of the proposed 11,310 HA)
- Environment Canada reported a loss of 1,003 ha from the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory between 1992 and 2002

4. Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably

- Despite conservation efforts, disposal of solid waste has remained at ~400 kg/person/year since 1998
- Water consumption per capita has remained relatively constant over the last four years.
- Air quality in the region is high
- Greenhouse gas emissions decreased by 13% between 1995 and 2004, largely due to gas recovery at Hartland Landfill
- Energy consumption in the region increased by 5% (reflecting rate of population growth)

5. Build Complete Communities

- The cumulative share of higher-density housing forms constructed between 2001 and 2005 was 51% - moving towards the target value of 60% established in the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy
- There is an imbalance between population and employment growth in the areas outside the Urban Core

6. Improve Housing Affordability

- Housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable. The average price for a detached home in 2005 was \$464,400, which requires a household income of \$110,700 to carry. *(2007 data shows the median price for a detached home at \$527,000, requiring a household income of \$145,710 to qualify for a conventional mortgage)*
- The rental vacancy rate at 0.5% is the lowest in Canada *(it has been at this rate for the last three years)*
- The stock of rental units decreased by ~ 250 units between 2001 and 2005
- In 2005, the homelessness count was 700 and the average length of time people were without a home was 20 months. *(The 2007 count was 1,242 according to final tabulation of the homeless needs survey)*

7. Increasing Transportation Choice

- Transit ridership continues to increase. The total number of transit trips in the region in 2005 was ~ 19.6 million, or 59 transit trips per capita. *(2006/07 figures show an increase to 21.85 million transit trips, or 63.3 transit trips per capita)*
- Of all journey to work trips in 2001, approximately 25% were made by non-auto modes. *(This figure will be updated when new census data is available)*

8. Strengthen the Regional Economy

- The 2005 unemployment rate was 4.5%, the lowest in recorded history for this region and significantly lower than the national average of 7.2% *(2007 data shows an unemployment rate of 3.1% for the region, with the Canadian figure falling to 6.2%)*
- Approximately 14% of the region's residents were low income earners in 2001, spending more than 70% of their income on the necessities of food, clothing and shelter.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the RGS Monitoring Report as attached.

2. Direct staff to make further modifications to the RGS Monitoring Report to respond to any identified issues and concerns.

### **ECONOMIC / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Development of the monitoring report is funded through the Regional Growth Strategy planning budget.

### **GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The RGS monitoring report responds to the Provincial legislative requirements to track progress and trends pertaining to the growth strategy.

### **SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

The key findings in the 2005/2006 RGS monitoring report show that in many areas the region is on track with meeting the targets established in the RGS, particularly in the areas of growth within the Core, establishment of the sea-to-sea corridor, transit rider-ship, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. However, some areas, such as housing affordability, environmental protection and job-housing balance will require additional attention. The up-coming five-year review of the RGS provides an opportunity to examine these issues in more detail.

The monitoring report, in its present form, involves a significant commitment of staff resources to prepare and produce. Due to staff constraints experienced in the department over the last year, the report that should have been released in 2006 is only now being released.

To provide a more cost-effective and timely approach to the RGS monitoring, it is recommended that the more detailed indicator reports be produced every five years to reflect availability of census data and inform the RGS five-year reviews. In other years, the department would produce a less detailed progress report containing annual updates and key statistics, but would not involve the same number of indicators as the five-year reports.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Planning & Protective Services Committee recommend to the Board that the *2005/2006 RGS Monitoring Report* be adopted.

---

Tracy K. Corbett  
Senior Manager  
Regional Planning

---

Robert Lapham, MCIP  
General Manager  
Planning and Protective Services

---

Kelly Daniels  
CAO Concurrence

### **COMMENTS:**