



**REPORT TO PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2013**

**SUBJECT REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (RSS) – RSS FRAMEWORK AND
REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY (RGS) REVIEW**

PURPOSE

To request the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee (PT&PSC) to adopt the RSS Framework (Attachment 1) and to have a discussion with Committee regarding the RGS Review (Attachment 2).

BACKGROUND

In February, the Committee received an update report on the progress of the RSS project. The report identified the intention for staff to undertake meetings with Committee and individual municipal councils during Phase 1 (RSS drafting) in order to:

- present the results of consultant analysis and Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC)/Development Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC)/Sustainability Resource Team (SRT) input and discussion to date;
- provide an opportunity for local decision-maker discussion and input to the RSS as it is being drafted;
- identify local interests and priorities and raise questions regarding content or process.

Input and comments received from municipal councils and direction from Committee will be recorded and considered during future IAC/DPAC/SRT workshops.

COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

A workshop format has been chosen for this meeting in order to allow sufficient time for Committee to provide direction on the proposed RSS framework and to discuss the RGS Review report prepared by Golder Associates. A short video will be presented as an introduction to the workshop.

Comments made during the Committee workshop will be used to refine the RSS framework, if necessary, and obtain Committee approval to adopt this framework for policy development and communications about the RSS.

An Executive Summary of the RGS Review Report is attached to this report (Attachment 2). This RGS Review report documents the successes and challenges of the RGS and presents recommendations for strengthening regional policy as the CRD transitions from the RGS to the RSS. The full RGS Review Report has been provided in electronic format via email. The workshop will focus on the Review Report recommendations summarized in the attached Executive Summary, and reflected in the key questions set out in Section 13 of the full report. Discussion on these questions will assist staff in understanding Committee's perspectives for consideration during drafting of the RSS.

For Committee's information, the RGS Review report has been provided to IAC/DPAC/SRT for review and comment over the three-week period during which Committee and Council engagement will occur.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the workshop is to consider adoption of the RSS Framework (Attachment 1) and to create an opportunity for the Committee to engage in an in-depth discussion regarding the RGS Review (Attachment 2).

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee:

- 1) receive Report PPS/RSP 2013-04 Regional Sustainability Strategy – RSS Framework and RGS Review for information; and
- 2) adopt the RSS Framework (Attachment 1) for the purpose of developing RSS policy and communications and engagement materials to support Phase 2 of the process.

Per: 

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Attachment 1: RSS Framework

Attachment 2: Executive Summary of the Regional Growth Strategy Review Report



February 28, 2013

Proposed RSS Framework

Submitted to:
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REPORT



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1 Copy - Capital Regional District
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PROPOSED RSS FRAMEWORK

This document provides a recommended framework for structuring the key information in the Regional Sustainability Strategy. It is intended to form the basic structure and content overview for the RSS document as well as illustrate the integrated nature of the topics. The diagram on the following page illustrates the core elements and linkages of the framework. The remainder of the document provides more detail and early suggestions for core content for each of the key components.

NOTE: The material below has been adapted from previous CRD material including the 9 policy areas, 6 strategic area "straw models" and recent "Strategic Plan."



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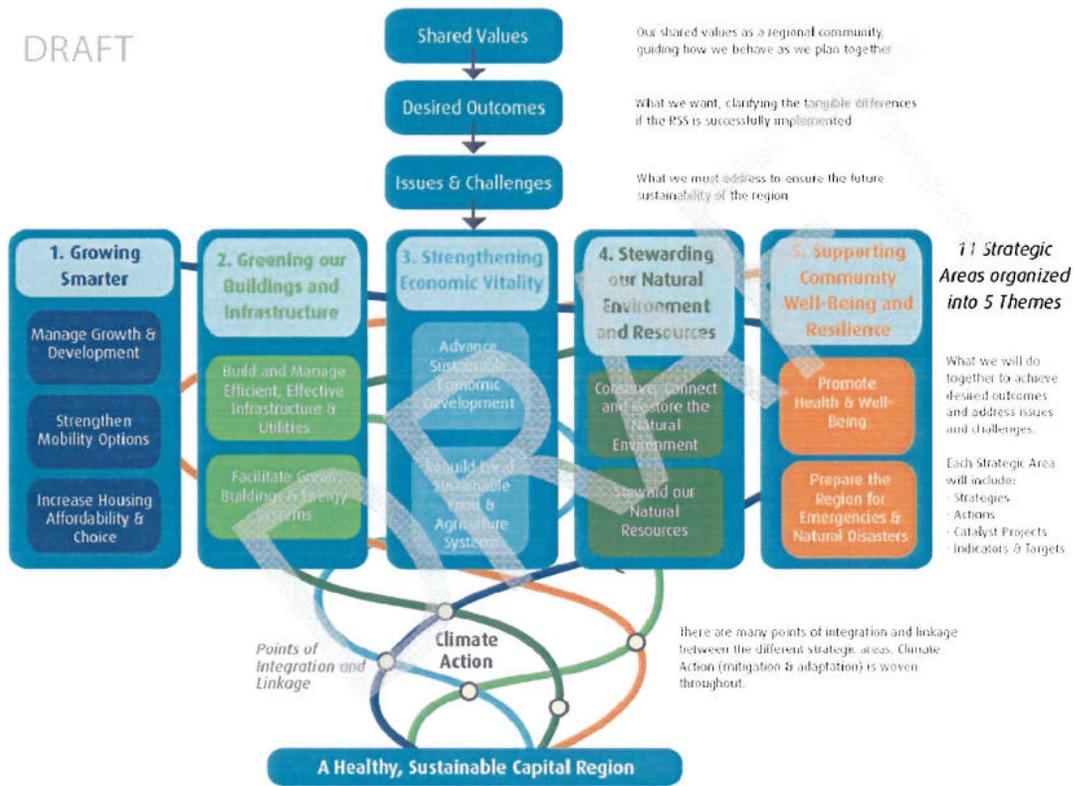


Figure 1: Strategic Areas



1.0 SHARED VALUES

Our starting point, the foundation for all the work we will do together, is the values we share in the region. These serve as a compass, keeping us on the right track, helping us determine how to act as we address the issues, challenges and opportunities in the region.

- **Collaboration** - recognizing that the foundation for a successful region is partnership and high levels of cooperation between many different governments and organizations.
- **Diversity** – appreciating the value of differences, mutual respect and diverse opinions.
- **Caring** - recognizing our capacity and need to care for one another, the environment and ourselves.
- **Fairness** - acknowledging our fundamental human need to see individuals and organizations treated respectfully and with reasonable equity. Sharing the burden of responsibility across the region.
- **Accountability** - recognizing that everyone has a role and a responsibility to contribute to the region's success, and the importance of following through on what we commit to do to achieve the desired outcomes.
- **Efficiency** - acknowledging the scarcity of many of our resources, the need to do more with less and not squander our assets.
- **Being Proactive** – with important challenges and changes ahead, it is important that we are always keeping an eye on the horizon while acting today to address problems in a proactive manner.



2.0 DESIRED OUTCOMES

Outcomes describe the kind of region we want at the broadest level. They are the ultimate “ends” we are striving towards rather than “means”. Another way of saying this is “our expectations for the plan are...:” These broad outcomes cannot be achieved by the CRD or regional players alone but the RSS can make a significant contribution to all of them.

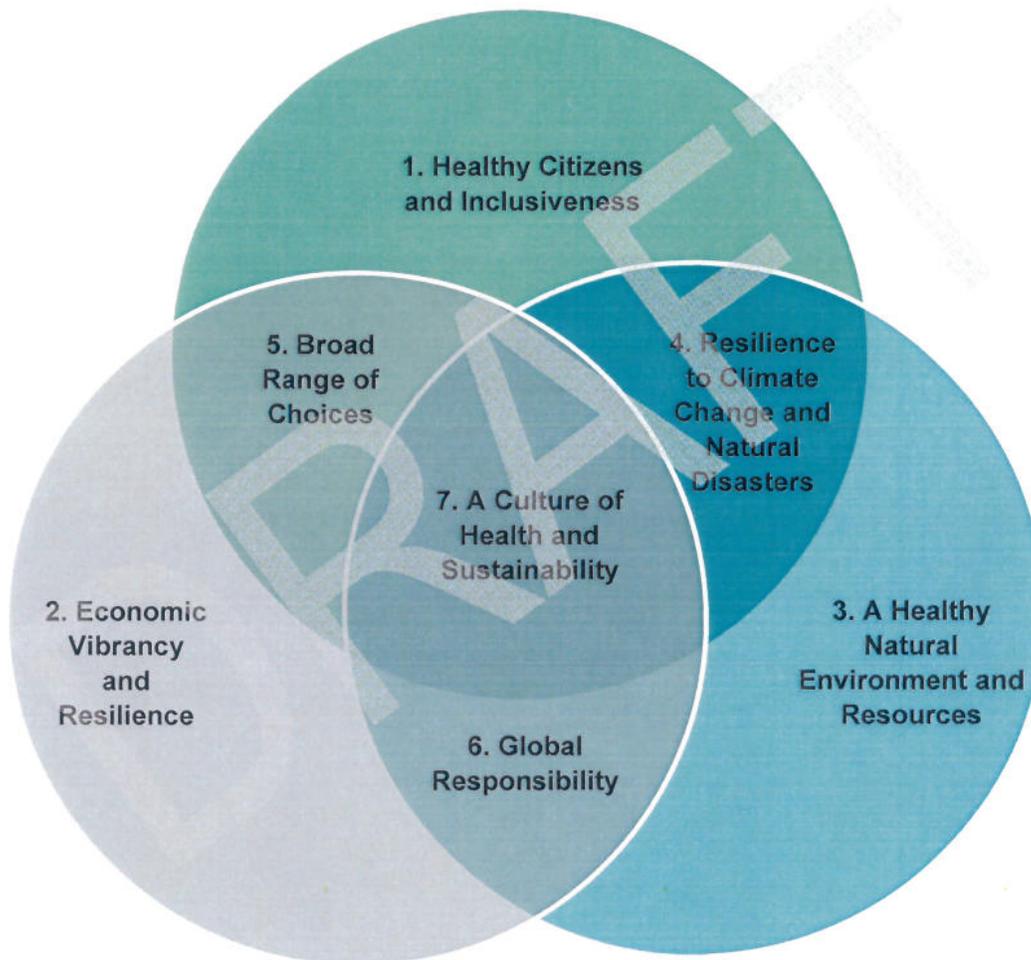


Figure 2: Desired Outcomes



- 1) **Healthy Citizens and Inclusiveness** - a healthy (physically, mentally, spiritually) population with everyone having at least the basics of shelter, food and warmth; citizens are safe, secure and fulfilled; there is a sense of mutual respect, and inclusiveness; and people are actively engaged with their community, connected to and caring for one another.
- 2) **Economic Vibrancy and Resilience** - an overall sense that the region is thriving, people are able to make a reasonable income to meet basic needs and have the sense that things are improving and the economy is resilient, even in the face of global economic uncertainty.
- 3) **A Healthy Natural Environment and Resources** - an on-going (sustainable) supply of resources; access to nature; healthy ecosystems (healthy air, water, soils, forests); and high levels of biodiversity in the region.
- 4) **Resilience to Climate Change and Natural Disasters** - reduced reliance on fossil fuel-based energy; communities that have adapted and planned for climate change and the associated impacts (extreme weather, flooding, sea level rise, food shortage, price shocks etc.); and communities that are prepared for and able to withstand and adjust to natural disasters (flooding, earthquakes, tsunamis, wildfires etc.).
- 5) **A Broad Range of Choices** – a broad range of choices in housing, transportation, jobs, , and recreation that meet the diverse, changing needs and means of the region's residents.
- 6) **Global Responsibility** – a reduced contribution to global environmental problems and significant contributions to solutions.
- 7) **A Culture of Health and Sustainability** - a shared regional culture that recognizes the rights and needs of future generations, works towards mutually beneficial goals and understands and supports health and sustainability initiatives.



3.0 GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND LOCAL ISSUES

There are a number of issues and challenges that may threaten the region’s future success and are driving the need for a regional response. These include:

Table 1: Issues and Challenges

Global Challenges	Local Issues and Implications
<p>Economic Uncertainty - the on-going global financial and related recessions in many parts of the world have illustrated just how interconnected and vulnerable the global economy is.</p>	<p>The region’s economy is highly integrated with the global economy which makes us vulnerable to these economic uncertainties and downturns.</p>
<p>Climate Change - it now appears certain (even if we substantially reduce emissions in the next few decades) that the world will see significant impacts from climate change (sea level rise, extreme weather events, droughts etc.); indeed we are seeing many of them already.</p>	<p>With a large coastal area the region is vulnerable to sea level rise and extreme weather events. The CRD has, like many local governments, made commitments to reduce its own emissions and to work on reducing those of the community.</p>
<p>Energy - energy prices are expected to rise in the future despite price fluctuations due to economic conditions.</p>	<p>Energy price increases/fluctuations impact regional competitiveness, household affordability and the cost of goods and services.</p>
<p>Population Growth and Demographic Change – the global population continues to grow. This drives immigration and expanded resource consumption.</p>	<p>By 2040, the region expects to reach almost half a million residents. At the same time, we have one of the oldest populations in Canada which poses challenges for mobility, appropriate housing and the labour force.</p>
<p>Natural Systems - human settlements and activity are exerting enormous pressure on ecosystems, driving an unprecedented loss of global biodiversity.</p>	<p>Our local ecosystems are under some pressure from expanding human activity. The region has some great natural assets and reservoirs of biodiversity.</p>
<p>Health - increasing health care costs are a challenge for all of us because of the amount of tax dollars absorbed.</p>	<p>The most relevant challenges for the CRD are the lifestyle-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease that are related to diet and exercise (including links to the form of the built environment).</p>
<p>Ecological Footprint – the world’s consumption of goods and associated waste has overshoot the ecosphere’s capacity to provide resources sustainably and absorb wastes.</p>	<p>Our region has a fairly large ecological footprint with a corresponding large impact on global ecosystems and resources.</p>



Global Challenges	Local Issues and Implications
<p>Natural Disasters – several countries (Japan, New Zealand, Indonesia, China, Haiti, UK, US etc.) have been rocked by severe natural disasters in recent years. Some of these (storms, flooding, drought) are exacerbated by climate change.</p>	<p>A number of potential natural disasters threaten the region including earthquakes and tsunamis as well as the greater risk of storms, floods and reduced summer precipitation associated with a changing climate.</p>
<p>Food Security and Access - drought, loss of farmland, soil erosion, water shortages, commodity speculation and growing global populations may threaten the reliability and stability of prices for imported foods.</p>	<p>The region is highly dependent on imported food. This makes us vulnerable to food price shocks and interruptions to the supply chain.</p>
<p>Technological Changes – some trends include on-going miniaturization of computer technology, renewable energy, electrification of vehicles, the proliferation of communications technology and some trends towards the decentralization of infrastructure.</p>	<p>The region has the opportunity to benefit from new technology to create efficiencies, reduce environmental impact, expand citizen participation and strengthen the regional economy. Some, for example electric vehicles, require some planning and investment of charging infrastructure.</p>
	<p>Traffic congestion, safety, noise, pollution - despite success in focusing urban growth in the region, driving distances and related emissions continue to rise. This has implications for livability, environmental performance and household spending.</p>
	<p>Housing Affordability –housing suitable for different incomes and life stages and household affordability continue to be challenges in the region.</p>



4.0 STRATEGIC AREAS AND THEMES

The potential response to achieve the Outcomes and address the Challenges and Issues noted above are organized into 11 Strategic Areas, further grouped into 5 Themes: Each strategic area includes a number of potential goals. Potential Strategies and Actions are further detailed in the RGS Review Report (Golder, Feb 2013).

4.1 Theme 1: Growing Smarter

Strategic Area One: Manage Growth and Development

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Keep Urban Settlement Compact

Build complete communities

Design with nature

Protect the Integrity of Rural Lands and Rural Communities

Take action on climate change

Strategic Area Two: Strengthen Mobility Options

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Integrate land use and transportation planning

Provide a framework for a regional approach to transportation

Take action on climate change

Strategic Area Three: Increase Housing Affordability and Choice

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Improve housing choice, affordability and attainability

Take action on climate change



4.2 Theme 2: Greening our Buildings and Infrastructure

Strategic Area Four: Build and Manage Efficient, Effective, Infrastructure & Utilities

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Protect Drinking Water Quality and Quantity

Effectively Integrate the Management and Delivery of Regional Infrastructure

Take action on climate change

Strategic Area Five: Facilitate Green Buildings and Energy Systems

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Generate energy efficiently and use renewable sources

Require and incentivize high performance green buildings

Take action on climate change



4.3 Theme 3: Supporting Economic Vitality

Strategic Area Six: Advance Sustainable Economic Development

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Support a vibrant economy that considers environmental and social capital (natural systems and social inclusiveness)

Support employment growth in the metropolitan core and major centres

Foster an attractive and stable investment climate

Support renewable resource dependent economies

Take action on climate change

Strategic Area Seven: Rebuild Local, Sustainable Food and Agriculture Systems

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Conserve agricultural land

Encourage farming, food production and valued added processing

Protect and manage soil, water and environmental resources on farms

Take action on climate change



4.4 Theme 4: Stewarding our Natural Environment and Resources

Strategic Area Eight: Conserve, Connect and Restore the Natural Environment

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Protect and enhance the natural landscapes, ecosystems and their connectivity

Take action on climate change

Strategic Area Nine: Steward our Natural Resources

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Manage our Natural Resources to ensure they continue to provide value (including ecosystem services) in perpetuity

Support renewable resource dependent economies

Take action on climate change



4.5 Theme 5: Supporting Community Well-Being and Resilience.

Strategic Area Ten: Promote Health & Well-being

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Promote the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities in the CRD

Prevent and respond to homelessness

Support arts, recreation, culture and heritage (NEW)

Take action on climate change

Strategic Area Eleven: Prepare the Region for Emergencies and Natural Disasters

Potential goals related to this strategic area

Enhance Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness

Take action on climate change



5.0 ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

Although not included here, we expect the following additional components to be part of the RSS:

- More detailed Strategies and Actions that will further define what the various players in the region will do to achieve the agreed upon Outcomes.
- Maps – regional maps including land use designations, RUCSPA, environmentally-sensitive areas; major infrastructure etc.
- Guidance for the completion of Regional Context Statements
- Dispute Resolution and Amendment Procedures
- A Monitoring and Reporting System - Indicators, Targets and a Report Card to track progress.
- Roles and Partnerships – defining the different roles and responsibilities of CRD, member municipalities, other levels of government and other organizations.



6.0 SUSTAINABILITY MATRIX

This matrix shows conceptually how the strategic Areas and Themes support the desired outcomes.

Table 2: Strategic Areas and Themes

Themes	Growing Smarter			Greening our Infrastructure		Supporting Economic Vitality		Stewarding our Natural Environment and Resources		Supporting Community Well-Being and Resilience	
Strategic Areas	Manage Growth & Development	Strengthen Mobility Options	Increase Housing Affordability and Choice	Build and Manage Efficient, Effective, Infrastructure & Utilities	Facilitate Green Buildings and Energy Systems	Advance Sustainable Economic Development	Rebuild local, Sustainable Food & Agriculture Systems	Conserve, Connect and Restore the Natural Environment	Steward our Natural Resources	Promote Health & Well-Being	Prepare the Region for Emergencies and Natural Disasters
Outcomes											
Healthy Citizens and Inclusiveness											
Economic Vibrancy and Resilience											
A Healthy Natural Environment and Resources											
Resilience to Climate Change, and Natural Disasters											
A Broad Range of Choices											
Global Responsibility											
A Culture of Health and Sustainability											



Report Signature Page

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Executive Summary

This document provides a review of successes and challenges of the CRD's Regional Growth Strategy (adopted 2003) and recommendations for strengthening regional policies as the CRD transitions to a Regional Sustainability Strategy.

RGS Policy & Implementation Review Conclusions

Overall the Capital Regional District is effectively planning regionally as a federation of member municipalities. The RUCSPA and urban containment policies have proven effective at managing growth and keeping urban settlement relatively compact.

Policy

RGS policies have generally proven sufficient to achieve many of the desired outcomes, notably, increasingly compact communities, continued robust growth in core communities, core green space (sea to sea green/blue belt) acquisitions are on target, there is substantial completion of the regional trail network, and considerable progress has been made across the region toward creating more complete communities.

Weaknesses that may be addressed include overly conceptual mapping in some cases, vague policy language describing what is rural, and what is urban, an inconsistently applied RUCSPA boundary, and the lack of sub regional differentiation for matters such as servicing standards where, for example, public water service to agricultural uses may be appropriate.

The opportunities for policy changes identified in this report and summarized below represent for the most part strengthening and polishing in terms of depth and breadth rather than fundamental change.

The addition of new sub-strategies - climate change and food systems - will serve to strengthen the core RGS component of the new RSS. The new draft Regional Transportation Plan, the update of the Regional Housing Affordability strategy (RHAS) the new Community Health & Well-Being project, and the update to the Integrated Solid Waste & Resource Management Plan are parallel initiatives that will also inform and support the RSS.

In our view the expanded RGS, the new sub-strategies and the parallel planning initiatives will serve as a robust and resilient trilogy of policy instruments guiding the region to a sustainable future.

Implementation

There are notable implementation achievements: all member municipalities have adopted Regional Context Statements that were accepted by the CRD Board, a Regional Transportation Plan is near completion, an affordable housing strategy was completed and in the process of being updated, and a housing secretariat has been established.



However, implementation has proven more challenging than setting the right policy direction. Failure to execute master implementation agreements has served to limit success. Challenges have persisted in determining consistency between the RGS and member municipality's OCPs as well as consistency between the RGS and the region's own bylaws. More robust implementation of the RGS should include:

- Further discussion on the merits of implementation agreements relative to other means of implementation such as sub-strategies and parallel plans;
- A clear process for amendments, including a minor amendment process;
- Establishing protocols for consistency review of municipal and Electoral Area OCPs;
- Improved bylaw consistency for the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, and other regional bylaws pertaining to matters addressed in the RSS; and
- Continued monitoring and reporting.

Summary of Recommendations for the Transition of the RGS to the RSS

These recommendations follow from the key questions posed in Section 13 of this review.

How should the RUCSPA be updated?

- 1) Maintain the RUCSPA with minor modifications and extensions; provide greater clarity on the nature and extent of urban, rural resource, and rural settlement patterns of development.
- 2) Permit water servicing for residential and agricultural uses within avowedly rural areas beyond the RUCSPA.
- 3) Incorporate technical, fiscal, and equity criteria into the servicing policy.
- 4) Explore a more consistent approach to establishing the RUCSPA boundary, e.g. matching urban areas of the OCP, not merely municipal boundaries; or avoiding the use of the RUCSPA boundary to encompass fully serviced development.
- 5) Review rural settlement policy and mapping to consider rural settlements. Consider greater clarity on what type of development is appropriate in the rural/resource area.



What elements of the existing RGS are supportable and should be retained?

What should be added?

1) Growth Management

- a. Create sub-regional policies that reflect urban and rural characteristics, the anticipated rate of growth, and the anticipated level of servicing.
- b. Explore a performance based approach to key strategies and policies that provide greater flexibility to local governments. This may include, for example, sub-regional density targets, growth targets and thresholds that support RSS outcomes, while providing greater autonomy to local governments in attracting and managing growth.
- c. Expand the urban centre hierarchy where feasible and higher levels of urban density and mix of land uses explored.
- d. OCPS, zoning bylaws, and approved development proposals have modified the policy and regulatory landscape. Review these commitments on a sub-regional basis in order to recalibrate targets and sub-regional growth strategies.
- e. Strengthen integration between land use and transportation.
 - i. Target growth around future rapid transit corridors and mobility hubs.
 - ii. Increase dwelling unit density to urban transit-supportive levels (medium and high density) within 600 m of rapid and frequent transit stations and corridors by 2020, in urban centres and settlements where adequate servicing capacity exists.
 - iii. Introduce inclusionary and minimum density zoning policies within urban centres to support mixed-use developments.
 - iv. Achieve a minimum jobs-to-population ratio of 0.6 in the core centres, 0.4 to 0.5 in the western communities.
- f. Further clarify the nature and extent of rural development
 - i. Agree on large minimum lot sizes to preserve rural character.
 - ii. Create rural centre designations to distinguish between existing low density rural residential uses and mixed use rural service centres.

2) Regional Housing Affordability Strategy

- a. Affordable housing for all segments of society is a top priority: expand the housing spectrum to include a range of market rate housing for all household types and work force categories.
- b. The RHAS should look at the affordability of housing for people at different income levels (e.g. moderate income earners as well as low income earners).
- c. Consider a regional housing levy to support the Regional Housing Trust Fund.
- d. Set targets for the creation of new units of subsidized housing, market rental housing, affordable market ownership housing, supportive housing, the percentage of households in core housing need.
- e. Consider the following elements in an updated Regional Housing Affordability Strategy:



- i. Expand beyond affordability to incorporate the full housing spectrum, including “price controlled” housing;
- ii. Adopt farm worker housing policies; and
- iii. Introduce inclusionary zoning policies within urban centres to support mixed use developments.

3) Community Health and Wellbeing

- a. Address the interacting social, cultural, economic and environmental determinants of community health and wellbeing.
- b. Create policies related to culture, creativity and happiness.
- c. Add policies related to poverty prevention and reduction.
- d. Consider policies on equitable transportation investment on a per capita basis benefiting all citizens regardless of income, age, and mobility.
- e. Consider more detailed evidence-based policy guidelines .

4) Environmental Health and Resource Management

- a. Maintain rural and ecological integrity.
 - i. Prepare a regional ecosystem network (ecological greenways) plan that identifies linked habitat hubs, sites and corridors.
 - ii. Provide a suite of tools to adapt zoning and land use regulations so that the regional ecosystem network can be achieved with a fair combination of land acquisition, covenant, and transfer of development potential or similar tools that allow for both ecological function and managed development.
 - iii. Incorporate the “Nature needs half” concept brought forward by the CRD Parks Department.
- b. Address the removal of private forest land from provincial regulation under forestry tenures.
 - i. Expand the sea to sea blue/green corridor into the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area.
 - ii. Explore legal mechanisms and incentives to restrict large lot development and preserve forest resources.

5) Transportation

- a. Enhance mobility choices and reduce reliance on the automobile.
 - i. Support a Regional Multimodal Network (RMN) and Mobility Hubs.
 - ii. Expand TDM (transportation demand management).
 - iii. Focus development within 400 metres of a bus stop or access to transit.



- iv. Prioritize non-motorized and shared transportation infrastructure.
- v. Prioritize multi-modality in appropriate locations based on the Regional Transportation Plan.
- b. Align transportation investments with sustainable transportation objectives
 - v. Coordinate with the Regional Transportation Plan for funding, implementation and investment, strategic initiatives and managing growth and development.
 - vi. Measure mobility and “trips not made” in matching investment priorities with projects.
- c. Establish a desired growth pattern, then shape the transportation and mobility options to suit.
- d. Prioritize auto travel where appropriate.

6) Economic Development

- a. Create a resilient economy that fosters social innovation;, build a collaborative economy.
- b. Expand low-carbon/green industries.

7) Food Systems

- a. Stimulate economic growth and the health of the agricultural industry based on responsible use of renewable resources.
- b. Increase regional food self-sufficiency and access to fresh healthy food.
- c. Establish a regional identity around the special attributes of food and farming in the CRD.
- d. Create more robust support for the agricultural industry and for farmers that includes:
 - i. Enhanced edge planning;
 - ii. Long-term protection of working landscapes (agriculture, forestry);
 - iii. Review opportunity for ALR land swapping; and
 - iv. Provide consideration to farmers for the ecological services rendered by farmland.

8) Regional resiliency

- a. Consider climate change as a primary lens for the RSS.
- b. Create land use plans that focus growth and redevelopment in a way that makes it possible for residents and business to transition to lower carbon forms of transportation and smaller, more energy efficient homes.
- c. Integrate climate change criteria into budgeting and decision making processes.
- d. Enhance disaster mitigation and preparedness by:



- i. Achieving high seismic standards in new facilities and in upgrades to existing civic buildings and Infrastructure; and
 - ii. Address specific natural hazards such as, sea level rise through regulatory mechanisms such as zoning bylaws and development permit area guidelines.
- e. Increase regional resiliency in the face of major trends such as climate change, globalization, ongoing ecological degradation, changing demographics, and rising energy prices by prioritizing the opportunities that address the widest range of objectives which can be adapted to alternative future scenarios.

Implementation framework for the new RSS

1) Include a sliding scale amendment process in the RSS

A sliding scale for RSS amendments should be established to reflect the range of regional significance of policy changes. For example, a minor amendment process may apply to minor changes to the RUCSPA boundary whereas a major amendment would be more appropriate for a significant change in a regional land use designation or a major boundary change. The RSS also needs a mechanism to allow CRD staff to review proposed major amendments to an OCP to test the proposed amendment for consistency with the RSS.

2) Build a robust implementation framework covering the wide range of topics of the new RSS.

The implementation framework may include:

- Describing CRD's role in coordinating public investments;
- Equitable approaches to financing regional growth and development;
- Agreed criteria for defining regionally significant development initiatives, including the expansion or extension of services beyond the RUCSPA boundary; and
- Procedures to initiate processes for inter-jurisdictional review on matters of mutual interest.