



**REPORT TO PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2013**

SUBJECT REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (RSS) – RSS FRAMEWORK

PURPOSE

To request the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee (PT&PSC) to adopt the Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) Framework.

BACKGROUND

On March 6, 2013, the Committee met to consider adoption of the RSS Framework and to discuss the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Review Report. The Committee provided comments and feedback on the RGS Review Report that will assist staff in understanding the Committee's perspective for consideration during drafting of the RSS. The Committee referred the RSS Framework back to staff with direction that it be brought back to the following meeting for reconsideration. The Committee directed staff to modify the RSS Framework as follows:

- Simplify the framework
- Elevate climate action as a lens
- Use plain language
- Illustrate intergovernmental involvement more clearly

DISCUSSION

The revised RSS Framework diagram and report have been modified considerably in response to Committee's direction (Attachment 1 and 2). The diagram has been simplified to more clearly illustrate the basic structure as well as the interrelated nature of the core elements and linkages. Climate Action is shown as the overarching theme or lens through which the RSS will be developed. The Framework is organized in a series of five themes:

1. Growing Smarter
2. Infrastructure and Energy
3. Economic Vitality
4. Natural Environment and Resources
5. Community Well-Being

A total of 12 strategic areas are grouped under relevant themes. For example, Growth Management, Transportation & Mobility, and Housing are grouped within the Growing Smarter theme. Policies, strategies and actions developed in the various thematic and strategic areas will work together to support and maintain a healthy, sustainable region.

It is important to note that the framework itself is the main end product that will be reflected in communications and engagement materials and on the website. The rest of the document is considered to be supportive and will be posted on the website as background, but will not be vetted with municipal councils or other public bodies.

In addition to the prominence given climate action in the Framework diagram, climate action has been highlighted in Section 3.0 as the first and overarching global challenge and local issue to be addressed.

Attention was also given to using more specific and clear language throughout the Framework. For example, the committee expressed concern about the over-use of words like ‘sustainability’ and ‘resilience’ that have imprecise meanings. Changes were made throughout the document to address this concern.

The Committee also noted that effectively addressing the challenges and issues identified in the Framework will take a concerted effort among all orders of governments working together with one another. The Framework highlights that intergovernmental collaboration is the cornerstone of the RSS process as evidenced in the involvement of the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, Development Planning Advisory Committee and Sustainability Resource Team in the workshop processes. The RSS Framework makes numerous references to the intergovernmental nature of the RSS including the phrase “working together on the inter-related themes” in the Framework diagram.

The draft RSS Framework has been significantly revised to address the concerns and direction provided by the Committee.

SUMMARY

The RSS Framework (Attachment 1 and 2) have been revised in accordance with Committee’s direction and is in better shape to support development of the RSS policy and communications and engagement materials for Phase 2 of the process. Staff recommends Committee adoption so that work can proceed on website renovations and preparation for Phase 2.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee:

- 1) adopt the Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) Framework (Attachment 2) for the purpose of developing the RSS policy, and communications and engagement materials to support Phase 2 of the process.

**** ORIGINAL SIGNED****

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Concurrence

Attachment 1: RSS Framework Diagram
Attachment 2: RSS Framework

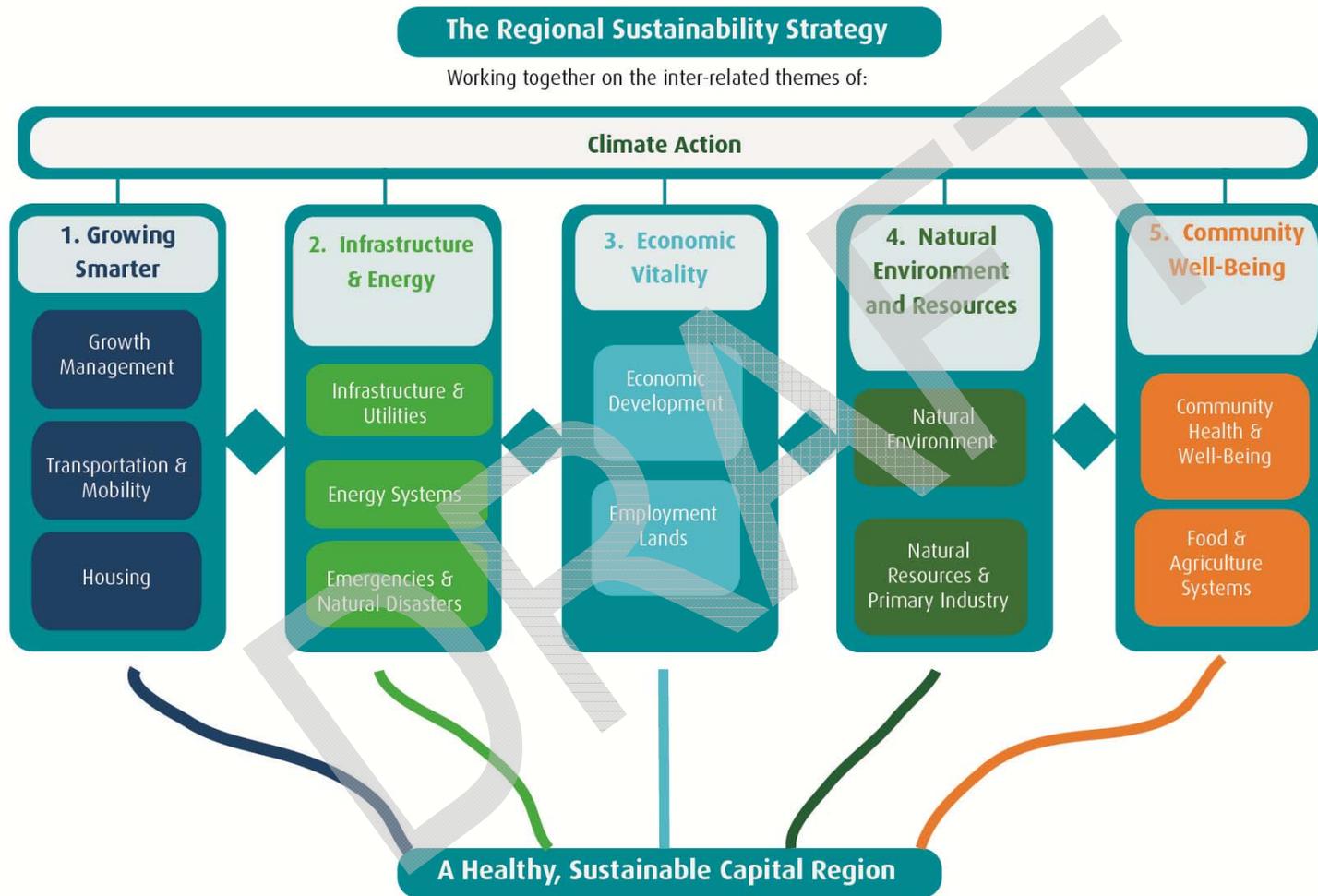


Figure 1: Elements of the Regional Sustainability Strategy



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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 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. This material has been adapted from previous CRD material including the 9 policy areas, 6 strategic area “straw models” and recent “Strategic Plan.”

Intergovernmental collaboration is the cornerstone of the RSS process: The RSS is being developed through a collaborative workshop process with the involvement of the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, Development Planning Advisory Committee and Sustainability Resource Team.

The framework has been designed based on a conceptual foundation of:

- shared values;
- desired outcomes; and
- global and local challenges and issues.

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The Regional Sustainability Strategy

Working together on the inter-related themes of:

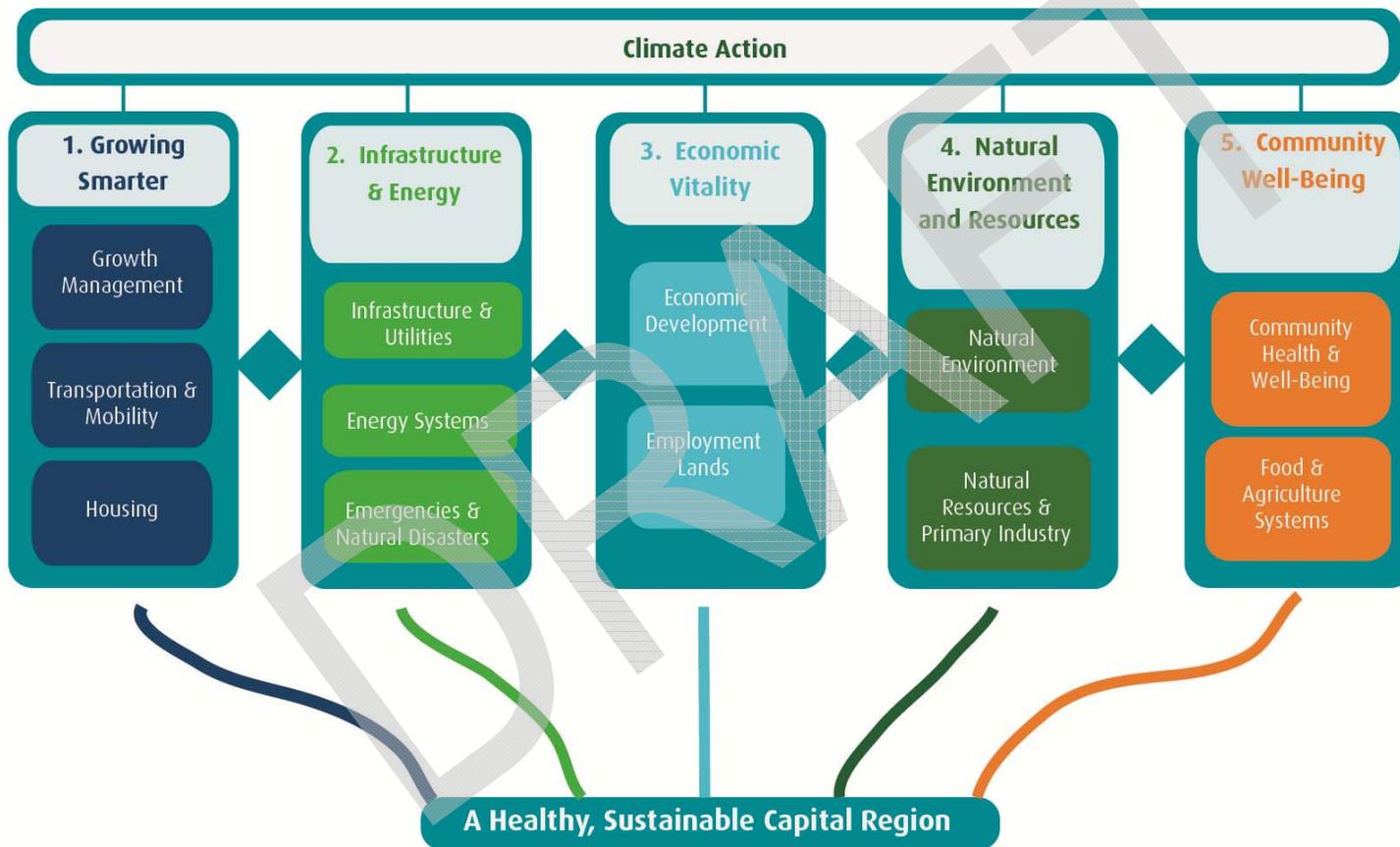


Figure 1: Elements of the Regional Sustainability Strategy



1.0 SHARED VALUES

The values we share in the region serve as a compass, keeping us on the right track. They are derived from those articulated in the Corporate Strategic Plan.

- **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.

- 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 Stability** - 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 local economy can cope with global economic uncertainty.
- 3) **A Healthy Natural Environment and Resources** – wise use of resources; access to nature; healthy ecosystems (healthy air, water, soils, forests); and high levels of biodiversity in the region.
- 4) **Addressing Climate Change and Natural Disasters** - reduced greenhouse gas emissions; less 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 Shared Sense of Purpose** - a shared regional culture that recognizes the rights and needs of future generations, works towards mutually beneficial goals and plans proactively to create a better region.



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>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>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>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>
<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>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>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>



Global Challenges	Local Issues and Implications
<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>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 ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

The following additional components will be part of the RSS:

- More detailed Goals, Strategies and Actions.
- Maps – regional maps including land use designations, the 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.

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5.0 SUSTAINABILITY MATRIX

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

Table 2: Matrix of Strategic Areas and Desired Outcomes

Themes	Growing Smarter			Infrastructure & Energy			Economic Vitality		Natural Environment and Resources		Community Well-Being	
Strategic Areas	Growth Management	Transportation and Mobility	Housing	Infrastructure & Utilities	Energy	Emergency Preparedness	Economic Development	Employment Lands	Natural Environment	Natural Resources & Primary Industry	Community Health	Food & Agriculture Systems
Outcomes												
Healthy Citizens and Inclusiveness												
Economic Stability												
A Healthy Natural Environment and Resources												
Resilience to Climate Change, and Natural Disasters												
A Broad Range of Choices												
Global Responsibility												
A Shared Sense of Purpose												



Report Signature Page

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