

The RGS Monitoring Program

Introduction

The monitoring program is an important component of the Regional Growth Strategy. It will enable the CRD, its member municipalities and the provincial partners to assess whether the RGS and the related implementation actions are having the desired effect.

The program is designed to meet the requirements of the Provincial legislation, as well as provide feedback to the Regional Board and the municipal councils on the growth strategy. It may indicate that new policies need to be created, or existing RGS provisions need to be modified, or growth assumptions altered. The monitoring program will provide timely information for the proposed Interim Update and any subsequent updates or amendments to the RGS.

Legislative requirement

The Implementation chapter of the RGS states that “*to implement the Regional Growth Strategy, the CRD Board, working in partnership with its member municipalities, the Province, the Federal Government and others will:*

(I-3) Establish within one year of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy, a process and program to monitor, evaluate and periodically report on regional economic, population, social and environmental trends and progress towards achievement of the Regional Growth Strategy vision and objectives.”

These assessments may reveal new issues or changing priorities. As required by the Local Government Act, at least once every five years the Board will consider whether there is a need to review the Regional Growth Strategy.

Project Scope

The monitoring program suggested in this report is intended to be a starting point. It can be added to or modified over time to better meet the needs of the Board and member municipalities.

The proposed monitoring approach is designed to balance the need for assessment with resource availability. The focus of this monitoring program is on the RGS objectives, planning assumptions, policies and targets. It is not intended as a comprehensive, community-based assessment of quality of life, smart growth, or sustainable development. The main “deliverable” is an annual report as required by the provincial legislation.

An additional deliverable is a more comprehensive report on the state of the region and the RGS, which may be done to assist in the 5 year review. Alternatively, this report could be produced to coincide with each new term of council in order to provide elected officials with a comprehensive base of information. This could assist in determining priority areas for budget allocations and implementation actions.

The Regional Growth Strategy

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) establishes a framework for managing growth in a sustainable manner. It was prepared to help local government, the province and stakeholders to reach consensus on how the capital region should grow and develop over the next two decades. It reflects a commitment to collaborative planning, partnerships and comprehensive decision-making.

Implementation of the regional growth strategy is a responsibility shared with the municipalities, the CRD, senior levels of government, community and economic agencies, and citizens.

The Regional Growth Strategy contains eight strategic initiatives. These will provide the framework for monitoring. The eight strategic initiatives include:

1. Keep urban settlement compact
2. Protect the integrity of rural communities
3. Protect regional green and blue space
4. Manage natural resources and the environment sustainably
5. Build complete communities
6. Improve housing affordability
7. Increase transportation choice
8. Strengthen the regional economy

Together, the annual report and the more comprehensive assessment should answer three basic questions: As a region...

- Are we doing what we said we would do?
- Are we moving toward our targets?
- Are we making a difference in terms of improving quality of life and sustainability in the region?

The RGS Targets

The RGS defines a target as a “desired level of performance”. The targets are not requirements or regulations, but they indicate a level of effort recommended for achieving the RGS goals. The monitoring program should not only consider progress made toward the targets – but should periodically assess their relevance and appropriateness (should they be higher/lower or changes completely?). The targets for the 8 strategic initiatives are listed below:

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Strategic Initiative	Target
1. Keep urban settlement compact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By 2011, increase the designated supply of detached and ground access housing within the Urban Containment and Servicing Area in Victoria, Esquimalt, Saanich and Oak Bay, by 5% over designated capacities at the date of adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy. ▪ Accommodate a minimum of 15% of the region's cumulative <i>new</i> dwelling units within the City of Victoria to 2006 following adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy (30% of the region's total dwelling stock was located within the City of Victoria in 1996). ▪ Accommodate a minimum of 90% of the region's cumulative new dwelling units within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Area to 2026 following adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy (<i>just under 90% of the region's total dwelling stock was located within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Area in 1996</i>).
2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By 2026, do not exceed designated official community plan development capacity limits determined at the date of adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy <i>in rural and rural residential areas</i>.
3. Protect Regional Green and Blue Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By 2011, achieve protection of a minimum of 100% of the proposed Sea to Sea Green/Blue Belt (<i>approximately 75% was protected as of March 2001</i>). ▪ By 2016, complete a minimum of 100% of the Regional Trail Network (<i>approximately 46% was completed by the end of 2001</i>)
4. Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targets for physical and environmental services to be established <i>through a best management practices implementation agreement, within two years of the adoption of the RGS</i>. ▪ Targets for air quality to be established in part through the Regional Transportation Strategy, within 2 years of the adoption of the RGS, and <i>through the RGS monitoring program</i>.
5. Build Complete Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Municipal targets to be established through desired development guidelines for individual official community plans through Regional Context Statements, within two years of the adoption of the RGS.
6. Improve Housing Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Targets to be established in the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy
7. Increase Transportation Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By 2026, achieve a minimum PM peak period region-wide transit mode share of 10% (<i>it was 4.6% in 1996</i>) ▪ By 2026, achieve a minimum PM peak period mode share by non-auto modes of 40% for trips to, from, and within the Metropolitan Core (<i>it was 31% for trips by non-auto modes to/from the Victoria Central Business District, a proxy of the Metropolitan Core, in 1996</i>) ▪ By 2026, achieve a minimum region-wide transit mode share of 15% for Journey-to work trips (<i>4.9% in 1996</i>); and 15% for journey-to-work trips for residents of the combined areas of the City of Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and urban Saanich (<i>6.2% in 1996</i>) ▪ Other transportation targets to be established through the Regional Transportation Strategy within 2 years of the adoption of the RGS.
8. Strengthen the Regional Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accommodate a minimum of 20% of the region's cumulative employment growth within the City of Victoria to 2026 following adoption of the RGS (<i>approximately 49% of the region's total employment was located in the City of Victoria in 1996</i>). ▪ By 2026, achieve a minimum jobs/population ratio in the urban Western Communities of 0.35 (it was 0.27 in 1996) ▪ Other economic targets to be established through the Regional Economic Development Strategy within 2 years of the adoption of the RGS.

Proposed Indicators for the RGS Strategic Initiatives

An indicator is a measure that reveals a condition, a trend, or an emerging issue. Its purpose is to reveal the direction the region is moving toward. More specifically, indicators can reveal if the region is moving toward responsible and sustainable growth management – or away from it.

Most importantly, indicators provide an opportunity to reveal and address policy gaps, implementation needs, changing conditions and funding lags affecting RGS implementation. They enable decision makers and residents to see where changes are needed and desired.

In their seminal book, *Reinventing Government*, authors David Osborne and Ted Graebler suggested four reasons why indicators are important for progress: *What gets measured tends to get done. If you don't measure results, you can't tell success from failure. If you can't recognize success, you can't reward it. If you can't recognize failure, you can't learn from it.*

The following are the indicators that may be used to prepare the annual report. The first annual report may contain a more comprehensive list of measures than subsequent annual reports, simply to provide some benchmark data.

Since data sources such as the Census are prepared on a five-year cycle, annual updates will not be possible for certain indicators. Should a more comprehensive monitoring program be desired, the CRD could produce an outlook or state of the region report every five years to coincide with census data availability.

To the extent possible, the indicators proposed below are aligned with the data monitored by other regional districts with regional growth strategies in order to provide comparative data on growth rates and trends.

Strategic Initiative # 1: Keeping Urban Settlement Compact

Monitoring Question: How much of the new development is contained within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing boundaries?

Urban Containment Measures: (*5-year measures*)

- Population density within the urban containment boundary (UCB) compared to areas outside of the UCB
- Number & percentage of new dwellings located within urban containment boundary compared to areas outside of the UCB
- Amount of land within the UCB compared to areas outside the UCB
- Number or % of jobs located within urban containment boundary compared to areas outside the UCB

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Centre Development

- Number of residential units located within the eight designated centres (*will require agreement on boundaries of the centres*)
- Number of jobs located within designated centres
- Expenditure of regional and provincial dollars in all centres and core

Metropolitan Core:

- Number of new residential units in the M.C. for owner-occupied and rental property
- Vacancy rate of retail and office space
- Value of all building permits issued (residential, commercial, institutional)
- Crime rates

Strategic Initiative #2: Protecting the Integrity of Rural Communities

Monitoring Question: How well are we doing at preserving the agricultural land base and keeping the rural communities rural?

Agricultural Development:

- Average farm size
- Land base under ALR
- Average farm receipts

Non-Agricultural Development:

- Annual number of residential units added to areas designated rural
- Average residential lot size

Strategic Initiative #3. Protect the Regional Green and Blue Spaces

Monitoring Question: How are we doing at protecting green space and creating a linked system of parks, trails and greenways?

Land Protection

- Hectares of park land
- Amount of parkland per capita
- Amount of environmentally sensitive land protected through development permit and other regulations

Green Space

- Sea to Sea Green/Blue Belt; amount of land acquired and % complete
- Regional trail Network: amount of land acquired and % complete

Strategic Initiative #4: Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably

Monitoring Question: Are we properly managing the environmental impacts of development, on air and water quality, energy consumption, and waste generation?

Service & Resource Consumption:

- Average per capita consumption of water (litres/day)
- Average per capita consumption of energy (kwh)

Resource Quality:

- CO2 emissions from energy used for car travel.
- Air Quality Index (*pending*)
- Number of residential dwelling units hooked to primary sewer service
- Number of dwellings connected to secondary treatment facility.

Strategic Initiative #5 Build Complete Communities

Monitoring Question: How well are we doing at promoting a more efficient and sustainable development pattern?

Development Efficiency:

- Housing mix: existing stock (*requires a base year*)
- Housing mix of new stock
- Regional population-development ratio (*% of land base consumed to accommodate growth. For example; if 10% of the land base is consumed to accommodate a 1% increase in population, it means that development is occurring at very low densities and consuming too much land. This means that sprawl development is occurring, and that is working against the objectives of the RGS*

Development Distribution:

- Job/population balance in Metropolitan Core
- Job/population balance in Langford & Colwood

Strategic Initiative #6: Improve Housing Affordability

Monitoring Question: How well does our housing stock meet the range of needs, in terms of affordability and availability?

Housing Affordability & Availability

- Average new house (single-detached) price
- Average price, MLS, all housing types
- Gross income required to qualify for the average MLS house
- Percentage of CRD residents earning less than the required gross income
- Average rent for two-bedroom apartment
- Rental vacancy rate

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Extent of Need Measures

- Number of households in core housing need
- Number of households in critical housing need (those spending more than 50% on shelter)

Strategic Initiative #7: Increase Transportation Choice

Monitoring Question: How well are we doing in reducing the number of people driving alone, particularly during peak commuting periods?

Travel Time & Distance:

- Average travel time to work
- Average journey to work distance

Alternative Modes of Travel:

- Percent of travel by modes other than single-occupant vehicle (SOV) use
- Mode share for PM peak period travel
- Mode share for journey-to-work trips (total, CMA, and urban core)

Travel Behaviour:

- New vehicle registrations compared against population increase
- Public transit ridership rates
- Vehicle ownership per household; within UCB and outside UCB

Strategic Initiative #8: Strengthen the Regional Economy

Monitoring Question: How well are we doing at improving the economic health of the region?

(Note: much of this information is only updated and made available on a periodic basis because it originates from the Census. As such, annual updates would not be available for all of these indicators).

Economic Activity

- Total employment in region
- Unemployment rate
- Total labour force
- Labour participation rate
- Commercial vacancy rates
- Commercial, industrial, institutional building starts

Income & Social Sustainability:

- Average employment income
- Employment income as a percent of total income
- % of population falling below Low-Income Cut-off

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- % of families earning 50% or less of the LICO wage rate (*is a measure of the depth of poverty*)
- Education levels compared to Lower Mainland, RDN, Calgary and Ottawa (*others?*)

Employment Concentration:

- Proportion of regional workforce employed in public sector
- Number of businesses by sector

Employment Distribution:

- % of region's cumulative employment growth located within the City of Victoria
- job/population ratio in urban western communities
- amount of development activity (subdivision or proposed re-zoning) within 500 metres of an Urban Containment Boundary (this would require GIS analysis)

Tracking of Basic Growth Assumptions

In the development of the RGS, a number of assumptions were made about the type and amount of growth the region would attract. These indicators will be monitored to test those assumptions and indicate if and when course corrections are required.

- Population
- Net Migration
- Natural Increase (births minus deaths)
- Average Household size
- Dwelling units by municipality and annual changes

Proposed Timing & Format

The growth strategy legislation requires an annual report be prepared within the first year of the RGS adoption. It is proposed that the annual reports come forward each year in March or April. This would allow the elected officials to consider the findings, allow time for distribution to residents and stakeholders, and obtain any required information from staff – prior summer breaks and budget sessions.

The proposed format for the annual report is a user-friendly, non-technical, newspaper-style document. This would permit distribution as an insert to the community newspapers, should the Board wish to convey the document this way. Cost for production should not exceed \$2,000.00. A one-time (modest) charge for design and layout assistance may be required.