

Regional Growth Strategy

Capital Regional District

DRAFT (v.1.5)

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Making a difference...together

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Vision

In 2038, Capital Regional District residents enjoy a healthy and rewarding quality of life within a region that is economically vital, where communities are livable and where the environment and natural resources are stewarded with care.

Fundamental to this vision is a commitment to work toward regional sustainability. Simply defined, sustainability means that actions taken to meet needs today do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs, ensure the ongoing health of the natural processes that sustain life, and support the social and economic arrangements that create prosperity and well-being.

The purpose of the Regional Growth Strategy is to help realize this vision, through the commitment of the Capital Regional District, the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area and local municipalities to guide regional growth and change toward common goals.

Goals:

- The majority of future population is housed in existing urban areas;
- Rural areas experience limited population increases and maintain a strong agricultural and resource base;
- A belt of protected green space runs sea to sea from Saanich Inlet south to Juan de Fuca Strait, defining the western edge of Metropolitan Victoria;
- An integrated parks, green space, greenways and trail system protects important natural areas and links town to country;
- Victoria remains the primary regional employment, business and cultural centre and is complemented by major employment and population centres in Langford, Colwood, Saanich and Sidney;
- The proportion of trips taken in single occupant automobiles is reduced, trips by public transit are increased, and there is a region-wide foot path and cycle network;
- Established employment centres are enhanced;
- A wide range of housing types and tenures meet the needs of regional residents; and,
- Communities are socially and physically complete with new development that enhances the identity and walkable human scale of neighbourhoods.

Context

A regional growth strategy is a framework, developed by municipalities and the regional district in partnership, for identifying social, economic and environmental objectives. Its purpose, under Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*, is to "... promote human settlement that is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources." A regional growth strategy expresses how communities will work together to enhance regional quality of life and social well-being. As of 2008, regional growth strategies must also include policies, actions and targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

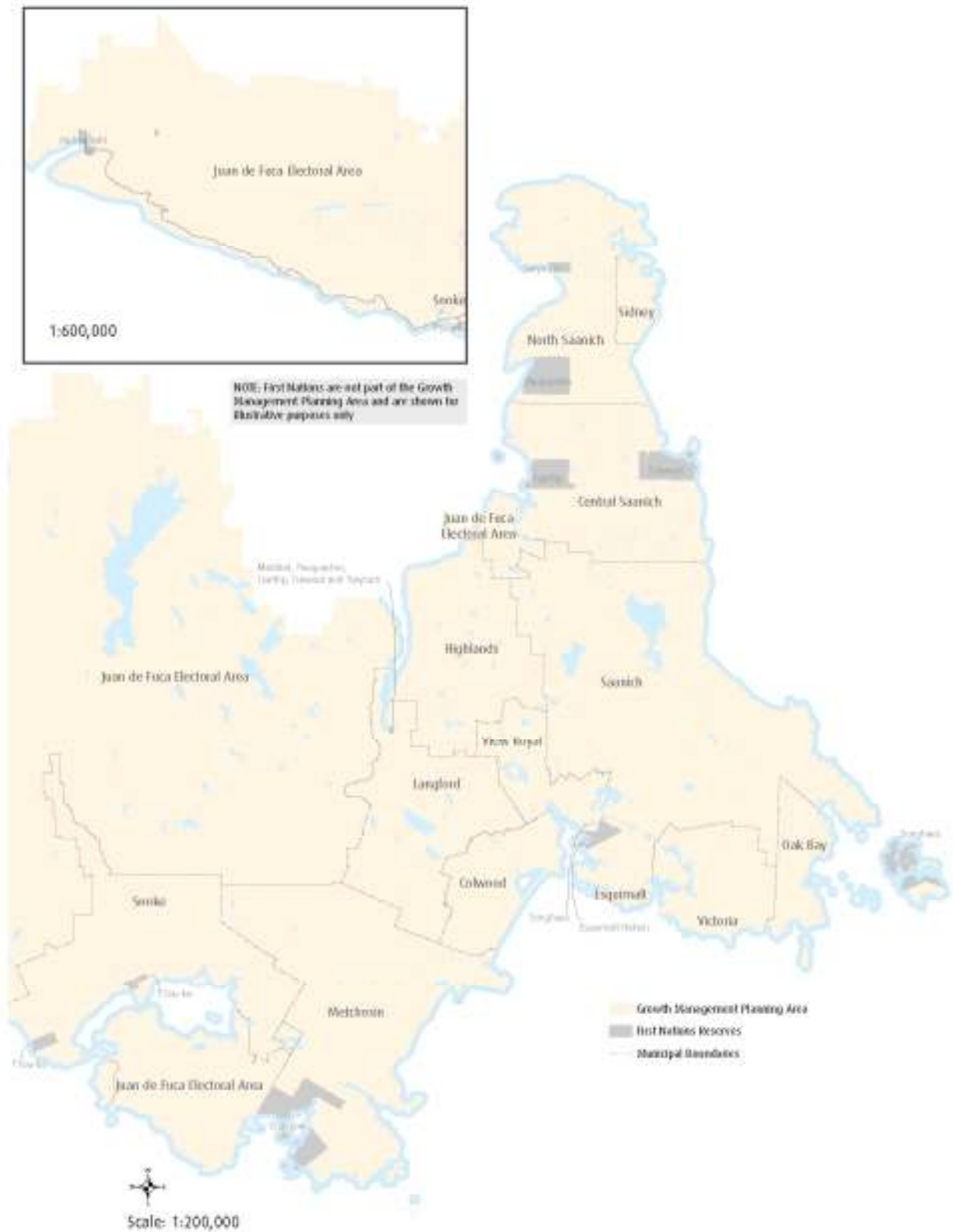
The Capital Regional District adopted a Regional Growth Strategy bylaw in 2003. In 2008, the Capital Regional District Board in partnership with local municipalities initiated the required five year review of the Regional Growth Strategy (2003). The 2016 update to the Regional Growth Strategy follows considerable public and intergovernmental discussion and consultation. At the present time, the Capital Region's ten First Nations are not partners in the regional growth strategy, nor does it apply to the Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Areas, which fall under the planning jurisdiction of the Islands Trust (see Map 1).

Citizens, local governments, First Nations, school district boards, stakeholders, and provincial and federal agencies have been involved in the Strategy's update through a regional sustainability planning process. This process determined that many of the policies of the Regional Growth Strategy (2003) are achieving desired objectives, notably, increasing compact and complete communities, acquiring green space, and substantially completing the regional trail network. Further, key complementary planning documents identified as actions to implement the Regional Growth Strategy (2003) are complete, including:

- 2007 Regional Housing Affordability Strategy; and
- Regional Transportation Strategy (completed as the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and the 2011 Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan).

Input and feedback have affirmed the desire for a strong growth management framework rooted in the Regional Growth Strategy (2003) objectives. Updates integrate recommendations from completed planning documents and address the requirements for policies, actions and targets for greenhouse gas reductions.

MAP 1: REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY AREA



The Capital Region is located at the southern-most end of Vancouver Island, in the Cascadia/Salish Sea bio-region (see Map 2). The bio-region runs north-south along a coastal corridor stretching from Campbell River south to Olympia, Washington and east to Hope. The Capital Region's present settlement pattern is characterized by a diverse mix of urban and rural communities, with a concentration of population in the Core Area located along key transportation corridors. The West Shore and Saanich Peninsula feature smaller urban centres, with forestry lands to the west throughout the Juan de Fuca electoral area. Agricultural lands are concentrated on the Saanich Peninsula, with some slightly more dispersed lands on the West Shore.

In this context, modest population growth is forecast for the Capital Region. Table 1 highlights existing and forecasted population, dwelling units and employment.

TABLE 1. POPULATION, DWELLING AND EMPLOYMENT UNIT FORECAST

	2011			2038			Population Share	
	Population	Dwellings	Employment	Population	Dwellings	Employment	2011	2038
Core <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Esquimalt Oak Bay Saanich Victoria View Royal 	238,900	111,400	141,900	276,700	137,400	164,900	68.9%	62.6%
Saanich Peninsula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Saanich North Saanich Sidney 	38,400	16,100	20,300	47,300	20,900	24,900	11.1%	10.7%
West Shore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colwood Highlands Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Langford Metchosin Sooke 	69,600	26,700	21,500	117,800	46,600	42,700	20.0%	26.7%
Total	346,900	154,200	183,700	441,800	204,900	232,500	100%	100%

Source: Urban Futures, 2014

Please note that First Nations populations are not included in Table 1 as First Nations Reserves fall outside the GMPA.

MAP 2: GEORGIA STRAIT/ PUGET SOUND BASIN



From a 2011 base of approximately 346,900, the region's population is forecast to increase by approximately 95,000 people to 441,800 in 2038, an approximate 1% average annual population increase. The slow aging of the region's population continues as a significant trend, with the proportion of residents 65 years and older expected to rise from 18% in 2011 to 26% by 2038. Further, although the workforce (ages 15 to 64) is projected to grow by 31,900, the proportion of workforce to total population is projected to decline from 69% to 61% by 2038. Serving the needs of an aging population in the context of a proportionally smaller workforce will affect all aspects of the region's social, economic and physical development.

It continues to be clear, however, that even modest population growth would undermine the regional vision if it were accommodated as it has been since the 1950s, through further urban expansion into farms, forests and countryside. Achieving the regional vision requires a concerted effort to largely shift to policies that encourage investment and development in designated urban centres.

The Regional Growth Strategy supports the regional vision by making this policy shift, through strategies that aim to: keep urban settlement compact; protect the integrity of rural communities; protect regional green/blue spaces; manage natural resources and the environment sustainably; build more complete communities; improve housing affordability; increase transportation choice; strengthen the regional economy; and, reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Objectives

The Regional Growth Strategy includes integrated strategic objectives, incorporating policies, targets, maps and guidelines that together express a program of joint action by the Capital Regional District and local municipalities to achieve the regional vision.

- Policies are provided under the “policy” heading for each objective. The Capital Regional District will implement policies and undertake actions for regionally-delivered services and programs. Local municipalities will identify how their Official Community Plan aligns to each policy in a Regional Context Statement.
- Maps showing the growth management concept plan (Map 3) and the regional green/blue space system (Map 4) provide spatial definition for policy.
- Targets for each objective are provided in Table 2 at the end of the document.
- Actions for the Capital Regional District to implement the Regional Growth Strategy are provided in the Implementation Measures section.

1. Managing and Balancing Growth

1.1 Keep Urban Settlement Compact

The Regional Growth Strategy aims to keep urban areas compact and largely contained within a Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area. Fundamental to urban containment are four related principles that aim to increase the capacity of urban areas, particularly in the Core Municipalities and the urban West Shore, to accommodate new growth.¹

Principles:

- I. Establish a strong mixed-use Metropolitan Core focused around Victoria’s downtown core area;
- II. Focus new growth primarily in eight Major Centres, shown on Map 3, revitalized as walkable, transit-focused complete communities with a dense mix of businesses, housing, services and public open space;
- III. Increase the proportion of apartments, row houses and other attached housing types within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area, especially within Major Centres; and,
- IV. Locate a minimum of 95% of the region’s new dwelling units to 2038 within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area.

¹ Table 1 provides a general forecast, for information only, of population, dwelling units and employment in 2038 by sub-region that could be expected under the Regional Growth Strategy.

The aim of the objective is to create a pattern of major centres within a firm urban containment boundary that will over time result in the concentration of most new growth in the centres and connecting corridors that can be effectively served by express-bus transit. This lays the foundation to achieve a longer term objective of connecting the downtown Victoria–Douglas Street–Uptown corridor with the Colwood and Langford Major Centres, by high– capacity public transit running in a dedicated right–of–way.

To support quality of life and community character in rural areas, the Regional Growth Strategy establishes policies to reduce development pressures in rural communities (and contained urban areas) in the Saanich Peninsula, rural West Shore, Sooke and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area and to keep growth moderate consistent with existing official community plans.

Five land use policy designations and the general identification of locations for a Metropolitan Core and eight Major Centres support this growth management concept. Maps 3 and 4 illustrate the growth management concept. The maps contained in the RGS are small-scale illustrations of the official land use policy area maps. Regional land use policy area boundaries are approximate; should boundaries not align with a legal boundary, the Agricultural Land Reserve boundary, a municipal or Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Official Community Plan or zoning boundary, or a distinct geographic feature, the boundaries shown in the accepted Regional Context Statement or adopted Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Official Community Plan prevail. The five land use policy designations on Maps 3 and 4 are:

Capital Green Lands Policy Area: Includes Ecological Reserves, Capital Regional District Water lands, and Major Parks identified in the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy. The Regional Growth Strategy sets out in policy 1.2(1) the continued long-term use of these lands for these purposes.

Renewable Resource Lands Policy Area: Includes lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), the Privately Managed Forest Land and Crown Forest Lands identified in the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy. The Regional Growth Strategy sets out in policy 1.2(2) the continued long-term use of these lands as renewable resource working landscapes.

Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area: Includes lands, at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw, designated in official community plans primarily for urban development. The Regional Growth Strategy restricts extension of urban-standard sanitary sewerage services beyond the boundary of this policy area except as set out under policy 1.1(4). A complementary policy (policy 1.2[3]) restricts development potential for Capital Green Lands, Renewable Resource Lands and Rural/Rural Residential to subdivision and density limits identified in the applicable Official Community Plan at the date of adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw.

The policy area also includes the general locations for a Metropolitan Core and eight Major Centres. Boundaries for these centres are shown generally on the growth management concept map and may be defined more specifically by municipalities in municipal plans (e.g., Official Community Plans) and may be shown in Regional Context Statements.

Where Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands Policy Areas overlap with the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area, the land use policy for the Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands Policy Areas shall take precedence. Liquid waste service may be provided to such lands within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area provided it is for a purpose consistent with the purpose and intent of the Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands Policy Areas.

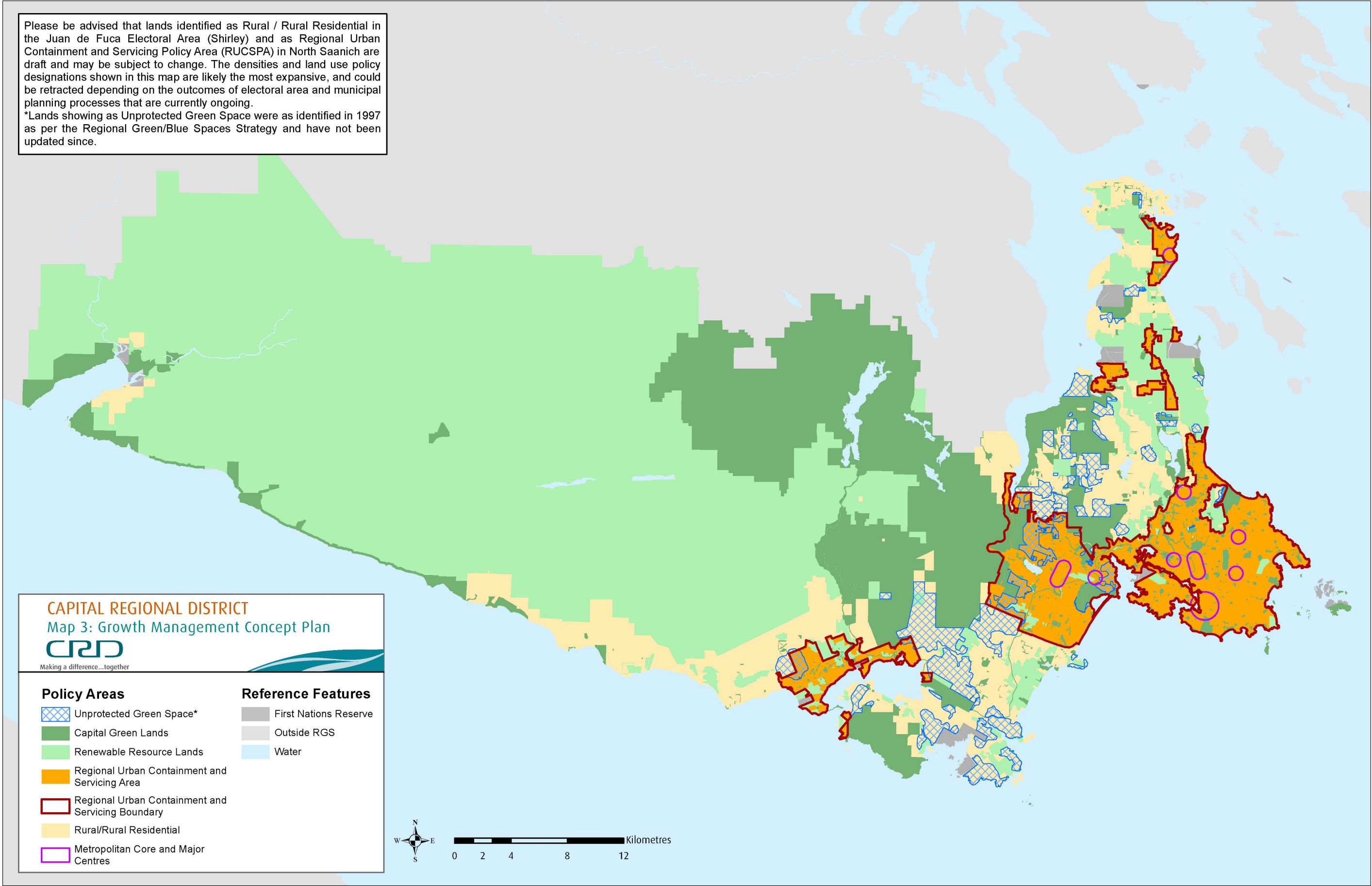
Unprotected Green Space Policy Area: Includes lands, shown on Maps 3 and 4, identified in the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy as unprotected core green space (i.e., areas with green space value which are not in existing parks or protected areas). The Regional Growth Strategy sets out in policy 2.1(2) that the ecological value of significant portions of these lands be protected through a variety of means. Depending upon circumstances, these means could include designation as a development permit area for the protection of ecological values, protection by a conservation covenant, or acquisition and designation as a park or ecological reserve.

Rural/Rural Residential Policy Area: Includes lands at the date of adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw, designated in official community plans for rural and rural residential purposes and, for the Victoria International Airport, with development potential as established through approved Memorandum of Understanding. The policy area also includes pockets of small lot detached, duplex and other housing, isolated local commercial and industrial land uses, and low-impact tourism land uses in areas of predominantly rural character. The Regional Growth Strategy sets out in policy 1.2(3) that these areas remain rural in character with development potential restricted to density and subdivision limits identified in official community plans, as determined at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw.

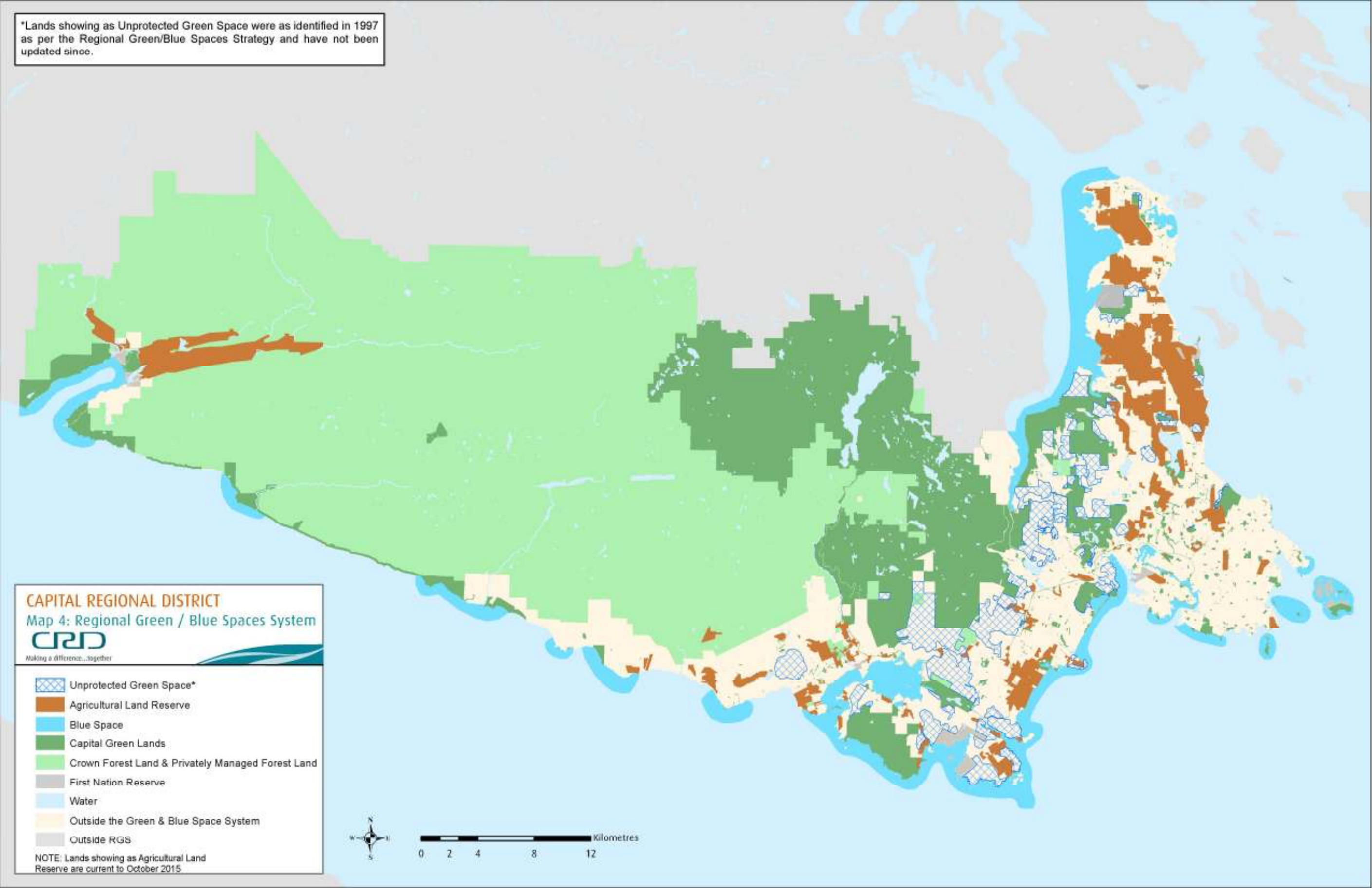
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MAP 3: GROWTH MANAGEMENT CONCEPT PLAN



MAP 4: REGIONAL GREEN/BLUE SPACES



Policies:

1. Provide for urban containment and servicing areas consistent with the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area depicted on Map 3, and adopt associated policies regarding the protection, buffering and long term maintenance of its boundary.
2. Permit amendment to the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area designation generally, only as an outcome of a comprehensive 5-year review of the Regional Growth Strategy, recognizing that municipal councils and the Capital Regional District Board are free to initiate at any time amendments to official community plans and the regional growth strategy they deem necessary, through statutory processes established in the *Local Government Act*.
3. Provide for Major Centres shown on Map 3, recognizing that Major Center boundaries are conceptual, and that municipalities will undertake detailed centre planning through their official community plan and zoning processes. Review, modify and implement policies to best facilitate growth and investment in the Major Centres in partnership with the Capital Regional District, and permit the designation and development of additional Major Centres only as an outcome of a comprehensive 5-year review of the Regional Growth Strategy.
4. Do not further extend urban sewer services, or increase sewer servicing capacity to encourage growth beyond subdivision and density limits designated in the official community plan at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw, outside the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area generally described on Map 3, except to address pressing public health and environmental issues, to provide fire suppression or to service agriculture. Where expansion or increased capacity of existing sewer services is proposed beyond the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area boundary, the Regional Context Statement will provide specific guidelines to govern such service expansion and extension.

1.2 Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities

The Regional Growth Strategy seeks to protect the character and quality of rural communities, to ensure that they remain strongly rooted in the agricultural and resource land base, and that the rural countryside and natural landscape remain a durable fact of life in the Capital Region. It does this by designating for long term protection as Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands, those natural assets including major parks, ecological reserves, forests, farmland and watersheds identified in the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy as the region's green infrastructure. The designation of Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands has the further benefit of reinforcing the long-term effort to keep urban settlement compact.

Subdivision and development proposed for rural and rural-residential communities that are not defined as Capital Green Lands or Renewable Resource Lands must be undertaken in a way that enhances rural character and quality of life.

Policies:

1. Ensure the long-term protection of Capital Green Lands depicted on Maps 3 and 4. This would include policies aimed at buffering Capital Green Lands from activities in adjacent urban areas.
2. Ensure the long-term protection of Renewable Resource Lands depicted on Maps 3 and 4. This would include policies aimed at buffering Renewable Resource Lands from activities in adjacent urban areas, and policies that support farming within the Agricultural Land Reserve, and forestry and silviculture within the Privately Managed Forest Land.
3. Restrict development potential on lands identified as Capital Green Lands, Renewable Resource Lands, and Rural/Rural Residential on Map 3 to subdivision and density limits in the designated official community plan as determined at the date of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy bylaw. Regional Context Statements could reference specific mechanisms (for example, density bonusing provisions) that could be used to achieve this overall goal.
4. Identify, where appropriate, policy guidelines for buffering and land use transition between urban areas and Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands, and how the guidelines would be applied through regulation.

2. Environment and Resources

2.1 Protect Regional Green and Blue Space

The Capital Region has a rich inheritance of natural lands and waters of great beauty and biophysical diversity. Many of the region's green and blue spaces are of provincial, national and international significance. The Regional Growth Strategy aims to protect the landscape character, ecological heritage and biodiversity of the Capital Region. It does this by supporting the collaborative implementation of the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy, approved by the Capital Regional District Board and the former Provincial Capital Commission in November 1997. Key elements of the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy include the protection of a sea to sea green/blue belt running from Saanich Inlet south to Juan de Fuca Strait, and the development of an integrated system of parks and trails linking urban areas to rural green space areas. Map 4 identifies the regional green/blue space system that the Regional Growth Strategy intends to achieve. The Regional Growth Strategy sets a target to acquire 100% of the sea to sea green/blue belt.

A significant part of the proposed green/blue space system is comprised of lands with ecological value of regional significance either in public or private ownership, that are identified as currently unprotected by the Regional Green/ Blue Spaces Strategy. The Regional Growth Strategy objective is for the Capital Regional District and local municipalities to work together to protect from development, as much as possible, the lands identified as Unprotected Green Space Policy Area on Maps 3 and 4.

The Capital Region's rich marine water and foreshore environments are an equally important part of the proposed green/blue space system. The Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy identifies many of these waters and tidal zones as having ecological value of regional and indeed national significance. These marine areas fall under the jurisdiction of the federal and provincial government.

Policies:

1. Establish the regional green/blue space system identified on Map 4. Prioritize community and regional park land acquisition, public and private land stewardship programs and regional trail network construction that contributes to completion of the sea to sea green/blue belt.
2. Protect lands within the area identified as Unprotected Green Space Policy Area on Map 4 using tools that may consist of policies, regulations, development permit area guidelines, incentives and initiatives delivered at the local level.
3. Protect the ecological integrity of the marine areas identified as Blue Space Core Policy Area on Map 4 through collaborative initiatives (e.g., the preparation of a coastal zone management plan).

2.2 Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably

The Regional Growth Strategy intends that residents of the Capital Region enjoy a healthy environment where environmental quality is improved and the inheritance of renewable and non-renewable natural resources is carefully stewarded. It does this by supporting the use of principles of sustainability to govern the ways in which local governments manage the land and natural resources within their jurisdiction, and deliver services that affect the natural environment. Managing natural resources and the environment sustainably means following four general principles.

Principles:

- I. Waste discharges of all types should not exceed the assimilative capacity of the natural environment (including land, air and water);
- II. Depletion rates for natural resources should not exceed the regenerative capacity of the ecosystems that produce them;
- III. Consumption of scarce renewable and non-renewable resources should be minimized through conservation, efficiency and application of reduce, reuse and recycle practices; and,
- IV. Decision-making should give first priority to options that maintain ecosystem health and support the ongoing ability of natural systems to sustain life.

Managing regional district and municipal physical services consistent with these principles – in particular, drinking water, liquid and solid waste, and storm water – is a means of improving human health and environmental quality, and of using natural resources in a careful manner. By applying these principles, it will be possible to accommodate the anticipated population increase without significant changes to regional water, sewer and solid waste management services.

Policies:

1. Manage, deliver, and extend physical and environmental services consistent with the principles of sustainability and overall intent of the Regional Growth Strategy.
2. Manage surface water, drainage and groundwater in non-catchment watersheds throughout the region using an integrated watershed planning approach consistent with the principles of sustainability included in the Regional Growth Strategy.
3. Plan for the long term strategic resource needs in the Capital Region – including food, (paying specific attention to local food production), energy, water, and aggregate materials. Plans will consider long term demand, security of supply, potential impacts of factors such as long term climate change, fossil fuel depletion and water reclamation where feasible, and make policy and program recommendations to ensure that future needs are successfully anticipated and met.

3. Housing and Community

3.1 Build Complete Communities

The Regional Growth Strategy supports the development of communities within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area that enable residents to undertake a wider range of daily activities closer to home. It does this by supporting the development of communities that offer a variety of housing types and tenures in close proximity to places of work, schools, shopping, recreation, parks and green space. Complete communities provide a better balance and distribution of jobs and housing, a wider choice of affordable housing types, a better distribution of public services and more opportunity to walk, cycle, and use public transit conveniently. Complete communities are safe, socially diverse, openly accessible, and livable, thereby enhancing social sustainability and community health and well-being.

Urban development projects contribute to community completeness when, to the greatest extent possible, all or some of the criteria listed below are satisfied.

Urban Development Criteria

- I. Projects are located within the Metropolitan Core or a Major Centre;
- II. Projects are located within a ten-minute walk (500 metres) of the Metropolitan Core or a Major Centre;
- III. Projects co-locate a mix of housing, employment, services, and recreation;
- IV. Housing is located within a ten minute walk of an existing commercial/ employment centre, neighbourhood store, recreation facility, school, park, or community allotment garden;
- V. Projects either avoid locations with high seismic hazard – associated with ground-motion amplification, liquefaction, slope instability or are prone to flooding – or incorporate appropriate engineering and planning measures to mitigate risk; and,
- VI. Businesses, services, and housing are located within a seven minute walk (400 metres) of a public transit route.

Policies:

1. Create complete communities that support the wellbeing of residents, using urban development criteria outlined in Objective 3.1 as a guide.

3.2 Improve Housing Affordability

Maintaining a broad range of housing types and forms that are affordable is necessary for individual quality of life, community health, and economic competitiveness. Urban containment and the establishment of a Metropolitan Core and Major Centres may have mixed results for housing affordability. Increased residential densities and an expanded stock of attached housing may enhance general affordability by expanding the choice of more affordable housing types and by reducing the need to rely on travel by car to reach services. On the other hand, urban containment measures also have the effect of limiting the supply of new lands for the urban housing market, thereby putting upward pressure on housing prices, particularly for single detached homes. The provision of affordable housing to accommodate the anticipated population increase is the responsibility of many stakeholders including the Capital Regional District, local and senior levels of government, industry and the not-for-profit sector.

The Capital Region Housing Corporation will continue to provide affordable housing to meet the needs associated with anticipated population growth, recognizing that implementation relies on funding and partnerships with other stakeholders. In addition to the provision of affordable housing, the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy has been developed to support all residents of the Capital Region – especially low and moderate-income households, the elderly, youth, those with special health and other needs, and the homeless – to have reasonable choice of housing by type, tenure, price and location. Five principles underlie the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy.

Principles:

- I. Work across the housing spectrum when identifying the current and anticipated future issues concerning market and non-market housing affordability for no, low and middle income and special needs households;
- II. Analyze the extent of present issues and forecast future problems;
- III. Focus on developing practical policies, and gaining commitments to action to address these needs and problems in the short, medium and long term across the Capital Region;
- IV. Involve the broader community in the development of the strategy and its recommended solutions; and,
- V. Act as a catalyst for activities to improve housing affordability in the Capital Region.

Policies:

1. Provide for an adequate, accessible and diverse supply of affordable housing across the housing continuum.

4. Transportation

4.1 Increase Transportation Choice

The Regional Growth Strategy supports the development of a balanced and sustainable transportation system providing residents with reasonable and affordable transportation choices that enhance overall regional quality of life.

To achieve this objective, the Regional Growth Strategy relies on two related initiatives. First, the coordination of land use and transportation so that the majority of regional residents do not have to rely solely on travel by automobile to meet their daily needs. The Regional Growth Strategy's aim to keep urban settlement compact and build complete communities (Objectives 1.1 and 3.1) will tend to increase average urban densities and put people and their activities (homes, jobs, services) closer together. These measures on their own enhance opportunities for walking, cycling, and public transit to meet daily needs, thereby reducing the need to devote more land to arterial roads and parking.

Second, the Regional Transportation Plan and the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan guides the planning, development and implementation of a Regional Multi-Modal Network that provides travel choices and supports smart growth and livable, complete communities. Achieving the Regional Multi-Modal Network is the responsibility of many actors, including the Capital Regional District, local and senior levels of government and BC Transit. Seven principles guide the Regional Transportation Plan and support the multi-modal and integrated approach to transportation across the region.

Principles:

- I. Take a coordinated and engaged approach to planning;
- II. Prioritize strategic investments that serve regional mobility needs;
- III. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for changes;
- IV. Integrate transportation and land use planning;
- V. Capitalize on the potential for alternatives to driving alone;
- VI. Enhance the role for public transit; and
- VII. Maximize efficiency of existing transportation corridors for multiple modes.

Policies:

1. Implement the Regional Multi-Modal Network in accordance with the principles outlined in Objective 4.1.
2. Locate growth and major trip-generating uses where it can be efficiently serviced by transit and active transportation.
3. Prioritize transit and active modes in community planning and in the design and implementation of infrastructure, facilities and programs.

5. Economic Development

5.1 Strengthen the Regional Economy

The Regional Growth Strategy intends that residents of the Capital Region enjoy economic prosperity as a foundation of high regional quality of life. Economic sustainability means the production and distribution of wealth to meet the needs of present and future generations for goods and services in ways that ensure the long-term promotion of a satisfying and high quality of life for all residents. A sustainable economy is one that exhibits diverse and viable economic opportunities and is resilient and responsive to changing circumstances. A further characteristic is the involvement of a broad range of parties and interests in economic decision-making. A sustainable economy also supports the achievement of environmental and social sustainability.

The Capital Region already has a highly diversified economy. Current strengths include the internationally significant tourism industry, agri-tourism, colleges and universities, provincial capital services and functions, major national defense headquarters and facilities, a growing high technology sector, health services, small business, environmental consulting, retirement services, the film industry and a natural environment and livable communities that attract others to live here. These advantages notwithstanding, significant regional growth management and quality of life issues remain that need to be addressed including:

- I. Finding ways to achieve a minimum jobs/population ratio of:
 - i. 0.60 in the Core Area
 - ii. 0.53 in the Saanich Peninsula
 - iii. 0.36 in the West Shore;
- II. Finding ways to expand and diversify the economy of formerly resource-dependent communities in Sooke and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, and the region as a whole;
- III. Finding ways to ensure the long term, affordable supply of strategic economic resources such as water, aggregate and energy;
- IV. Finding ways to increase economic activity in forestry and agriculture including high-value and specialized agriculture and value-added forestry;
- V. Finding ways to address the shortage of designated space-extensive industrial/business land in the region in locations consistent with overall goals regarding community completeness, transportation balance, and a network of major centres within an urban containment boundary;
- VI. Finding ways to include high-value, clean industry and business in the Metropolitan Core and Major Centres;
- VII. Finding ways to attract, develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce; and,
- VIII. Finding ways to reduce poverty in the Capital Region.

Policies:

1. Build on the region's economic, environmental and quality of life advantages to position the region as a highly desirable location for investing in existing and new businesses.
2. Provide for land development patterns that maintain an adequate supply of employment land, transportation infrastructure and services to support a diverse regional economy.

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6. Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

6.1 Significantly Reduce Community-Based Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Regional Growth Strategy supports the reduction of community-based greenhouse gas emissions to address the effects of a changing climate. In the Capital Region, greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation system, the heating, cooling and energizing of buildings, waste, energy production, the production of goods and agriculture.

The Capital Regional District and local governments have long-standing commitments to make decisions, target investments and build capacity for reducing the use of fossil fuels and expanding the clean energy economy. Further, the Regional Growth Strategy's aim to keep urban settlement compact, build complete communities and create a regional multi-modal network of transportation corridors (Objectives 1.1, 3.1 and 4.1) will support the low-carbon built form that is the foundation for reducing energy demand.

Reducing community greenhouse gas emissions requires action on many fronts and is the responsibility of many actors including the Capital Regional District, local and senior levels of government, industry, institutions, businesses and residents. It requires coordinated, consistently applied action focusing on people, land use, transportation, infrastructure and technology. Achieving the community greenhouse gas reduction targets means following four related principles.

Principles:

- I. Create a low-carbon built form to reduce energy demand;
- II. Increase energy efficiency and recovery from retrofits and new development;
- III. Promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable, clean energy to reduce reliance on fossil fuels; and
- IV. Protect the carbon sequestration value of natural systems, including forested lands and wetlands.

Policies:

1. Prioritize investment in compact, complete communities to provide for a low-carbon built form that supports efficient energy use, the provision of clean and renewable district energy, active transportation modes, transit service, and low/zero emissions vehicles.
2. Design, manage, fund and operate programs, services and infrastructure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in keeping with the principles outlined in Objective 6.1.
3. Strategically acquire protected areas that contribute to climate change mitigation.

Implementation Measures

The Capital Regional District Board, working in partnership with local municipalities, the Province, the Federal Government and others, will undertake the following implementation measures to realize the vision, objectives and policies of the Regional Growth Strategy:

- I-1a. Maintain a collaborative regional strategic planning program directed to work towards achievement of the long term objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy.
- I-1b. At least once every five years, consider whether the Regional Growth Strategy should be reviewed for possible revision and amendment.
- I-2. Monitor, evaluate and annually report on trends and progress towards achievement of Regional Growth Strategy vision and objectives.
- I-3(a) Prepare a Climate Action Strategy to support the implementation of community-based greenhouse gas reduction initiatives.
- I-3(b) Support local governments and electoral areas through regional capacity building, education and projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- I-4. Work to reach agreement with local municipalities on Regional Context Statements within two years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy. Regional Context Statements, adopted within the applicable Official Community Plan, set out how each municipality will address Regional Growth Strategy policies.
- I-5. Establish a mechanism to ensure that the vision, goals and objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy cascade to Capital Regional District plans, bylaws, services and spending.
- I-6. Coordinate the review and update of regional planning documents to inform future updates to the Regional Growth Strategy.
- I-7. Implement the Regional Growth Strategy without prejudice to any aboriginal rights or title that may currently exist, or be defined further through treaty or other processes. The Board will do this with the full recognition that Capital Region First Nations have asserted within their traditional territories, aboriginal rights and title and treaty rights currently undergoing formal definition through the modern treaty and other processes. The Board recognizes that First Nations Councils are neighbouring governments in the Capital Region, with a shared interest in managing long term development to enhance regional quality of life.
- I-8. Coordinate with the Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Islands Trust to ensure that long term planning and development policies and initiatives in those jurisdictions

are compatible with the vision and objectives of the Capital Region's Regional Growth Strategy.

- I-9 The Capital Regional District will work with the Province, agencies such as the Vancouver Island Health Authority and BC Transit, and the federal government to coordinate implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy while respecting the authority of each jurisdiction.

DRAFT

TABLE 2: TARGETS BY PRIORITY AREA AND OBJECTIVE

PRIORITY AREA	OBJECTIVE	TARGETS
1) Managing and Balancing Growth	1.1 Keep Urban Settlement Compact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate 30% of new growth (dwelling units) in walkable, bikeable, transit serviced communities that provide a variety of housing types and tenures close to places of work, shopping, learning, recreation, parks and green space. • Accommodate a minimum of 95% of the region's cumulative new dwelling units within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area.
	1.2 Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2038, do not exceed the subdivision and density limits in designated Official Community Plans at the date of adoption of the RGS in rural and rural residential areas.
2) Environment and Resources	2.1 Protect Regional Green and Blue Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire 100% of the sea-to-sea green/blue belt. • Complete a minimum of 100% of the Regional Trail Network.
	2.2 Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify long-term capital plans for Capital Regional District utilities and major infrastructure improvements necessary to address the impacts of climate change and natural hazards.
3) Housing and Community	3.1 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.
	3.2 Improve Housing Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the supply of more affordable housing. • Reduce the number of people in core housing need. • Reduce the number of people who are homeless.²
4) Transportation	4.1 Increase Transportation Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a transportation system that sees 42% of all trips made by walking, cycling, transit.
5) Economic Development	5.1 Strengthen the Regional Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a jobs/population ratio of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 0.60 in Core Area – 0.53 in Saanich Peninsula – 0.36 in West Shore
6) Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions	6.1 Significantly reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by 33% (from 2007 levels) by 2020, and by 61% by 2038.

² Numeric targets will be identified in an updated Regional Housing Affordability Strategy. At the time of writing, the targets in the approved Regional Housing Affordability Strategy are inconsistent with the legislated timeline of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Appendix A Framework For Our Future: Guiding Principles

On July 15, 1998 the Capital Regional District Board resolved to adopt the Framework For Our Future Agreement to guide the development of a regional growth strategy for the Capital Region. The Framework Agreement provided general guiding principles for the preparation of the Regional Growth Strategy. Over 15 years later, in 2016, this framework endures as the foundation of the Regional Growth Strategy (2003).

1. The Capital Region's Growth Management Strategy is based on four fundamental principles:

Sustainability: actions to meet our needs today do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and ensure the ongoing healthy functioning of the natural systems that sustain life.

Appropriateness: actions are appropriate to the aspirations and local conditions of the Capital Region, and do not simply reflect the uncritical application of ideas developed for other places and situations.

Continuity: the strategy will build on work that has already been undertaken by the Capital Regional District and its member municipalities, and will consider the thoughts and ideas contributed by individual residents and community associations.

Cooperation, Collaboration and Coordination: the Capital Regional District, local municipalities, provincial ministries and agencies, and regional residents will work together to develop and implement the strategy. First Nations, the Islands Trust, and the Cowichan Valley Regional District are neighbouring governments and will be invited to participate.

2. In addition, the development and evaluation of alternative solutions will pay due regard to the following 14 provincial goals set out in the *Local Government Act*:
 1. Avoid urban sprawl;
 2. Minimize automobile use and encourage walking, cycling and efficient public transit;
 3. Move goods and people efficiently, making effective use of transportation and utility corridors;
 4. Protect environmentally sensitive areas;

5. Maintain a secure and productive resource base, including the agricultural land and the forest land reserves;
6. Encourage economic development that supports the unique character of communities;
7. Reduce and prevent air, land and water pollution;
8. Ensure adequate, affordable and appropriate housing;
9. Ensure adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement;
10. Protect the quality and quantity of ground and surface water;
11. Minimize the risks to settlement associated with natural hazards;
12. Preserve, create and link urban and rural open space including parks and recreation areas;
13. Plan for energy supply and promote efficient use, conservation and alternative sources of energy; and,
14. Ensure good stewardship of land, sites and structures with cultural heritage value.

Appendix B

The Regional Green/Blue Spaces Vision

The Green/Blue Spaces Strategy sets out a comprehensive, long-term strategy for maintaining, conserving, rehabilitating and restoring green/blue spaces on public and private lands in the region, including areas with ecological, aesthetic, renewable resource, outdoor recreation and greenways values. The Board adopted the Green/Blue Spaces vision on November 26, 1997 as a guide for the preparation of the regional growth strategy. This vision – Our Essential Nature – forms part of the Framework For Our Future Agreement adopted by the Board on July 15, 1998 to guide the development of the regional growth strategy.

“*There are times when we just want to roam the Gowlland Range and listen to the sound of air stirred up by eagles’ wings. Or stroll the Swan Lake boardwalk and watch a family of proud ducklings parade past our feet.*

Then there are days when splashing about with our children in the cool, clean waters of Thetis Lake is the only thing worth doing. Or maybe it’s kicking up the warm, soft sand of Willows Beach.

Perhaps it’s walking along the Colquitz Creek that makes our world come alive. Or taking a second, reflective look at a rare old Douglas-fir on the grounds of Royal Roads.

Whether it is the pastoral splendour of the Saanich Peninsula Farmlands, or the stark and wild beauty of the Juan de Fuca coastline, our ability to appreciate nature begins with whatever captivates our senses. It then expands to values we feel deeply but rarely capture in words.

All of us who live in the Capital Regional District cherish the natural environment that is so essential to our quality of life, and we are determined that it never be compromised.

So although we already enjoy a diverse network of protected areas that stretches from the southern Gulf Islands to Port Renfrew, we cannot be complacent. As the region’s population continues to grow, we must ensure that the stewardship of the natural environment remains integral to all forms of urban, suburban and rural development.

But we don't protect nature just so we can hike, relax and contemplate. We must also safeguard endangered species and sensitive ecosystems such as Garry Oak meadows and stands of old growth Douglas-fir. And we need to give Pacific salmon a fighting chance to return to urban streams.

To that end we envision the development of a regional green/blue space system that will protect and maintain the full range and diversity of the natural environment that surrounds us, including significant green spaces, the marine environment, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, and unique ecosystems.

We are also committed to protecting and maintaining the last remnants of ecosystems that flourished here before the time of Captain Cook, and to restore natural systems we have altered.

This is neither a park plan nor a policy document, but a vision of cooperative stewardship that integrates the contributions of citizens, landowners, businesses, communities, and all levels of government. It is a vision of sustaining the essential nature of our region, of continually creating and protecting a livable and healthy community – and passing on that legacy to future generations.

The objectives of the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy are to:

- Conserve rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems and species in the Capital Regional District;
- Maintain biological diversity by protecting and enhancing a variety of habitats;
- Conserve ecologically valuable areas in large, diverse, contiguous units and connect them with greenways;
- Maintain the character and diversity of green/blue spaces in the Capital Regional District;
- Enhance and restore areas that could have green/blue space values;
- Develop a comprehensive set of priorities for the conservation of green/blue spaces in the Capital Regional District;
- Educate people about the value of protecting green/blue spaces in the Capital Regional District; and,
- Foster partnerships for the conservation and stewardship of green/blue spaces.

Appendix C Glossary

Attached housing Any form of housing where more than two individual dwellings are structurally attached including townhouses, apartments regardless of tenure, stacked townhouses and the like.

Benchmark A statement or value of a level of performance widely considered to be acceptable or 'best in class', used for comparison purposes with actual performance results (determined by initial baseline data and indicators used to monitor performance); may be the same value as, or higher or lower than targets (see definition below).

Climate Change A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity.³

Complete Community Multiple-use urban community that contains within its boundaries the full range of facilities and activities necessary to meet typical household needs for employment, shopping, personal services, recreation, housing, education and other goods and services. Complete communities typically are defined by what they are not, that is, single-use residential areas that serve a largely dormitory function to a larger centre, with few local opportunities to meet the broad range of household needs described.

Core Municipalities The Capital Region sub-region that includes the municipalities of Victoria, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and View Royal.

Core green/blue space *Core green space areas* contain the major examples of the Capital Region's historic land-based ecosystems and the majority of areas identified in the Conservation Data Centre's Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory, including existing parks (e.g., national parks, provincial parks and ecological reserves, regional parks and municipal nature parks); unprotected green space (e.g., areas with green space value which are not in existing parks); and Capital Regional District Water lands. *Core blue space areas* are marine environments with high ecological, recreational, and/or scenic value.

Density A measure of the intensity of occupancy and use of the land, generally described in terms of persons per hectare, or dwelling units per hectare, or a ratio of the built floor area of a structure to the area of the lot it occupies.

Framework For Our Future Agreement An agreement approved by the Capital Regional District Board on July 15, 1998 that set out the scope, overall vision, priority areas and guiding principles for the preparation of the Regional Growth Strategy.

³ Based on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change definition.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Gases in the earth's atmosphere that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation. These gases occur through both natural and human-influenced processes. GHG emitted through human activities include carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂O), methane (CH₄), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆).

Greenways Corridors that link areas of greenspace to provide wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Greenways include trails in some areas and no public access in other areas. Greenways can include both public holdings and private working landscapes.

Ground oriented housing Includes all dwelling units that have individual and direct access to the ground. Includes single-family (detached) dwellings, semi-detached (duplex) dwellings, and other ground-oriented housing town-houses, linked dwellings, and the like.

Growth management Implementation of government regulations that control the type, location, quality, scale, rate, sequence or timing of development. More generally, the whole range of policies designed to control, guide or mitigate the effects of growth. By attempting to guide growth rather than react to its effects, communities engaged in growth management assume a proactive stance in ensuring that the very qualities that attract growth are not destroyed for existing residents and future generations.

High capacity transit A transit service operating in an exclusive corridor carrying from 15,000 to 20,000 riders per hour in the peak hour, peak direction. High capacity transit service can be provided with many different vehicle types.

Housing affordability Generally describes a condition in which housing costs consume no more than 30% of gross household income (unless by choice); including taxes and insurance (for owners) and utilities (for owners and renters). Applies to both market and non-market (subsidized) dwellings.

Indicator Usually, a measurable characteristic or relationship, used to measure progress toward a goal, a trend (if in a series), or to compare one place/program/result with another. An indicator is a proxy that can be used to represent all aspects of a subject.

Infrastructure The physical capital and associated services considered basic and necessary to the functioning of an urban area. These include such things as: sanitary sewers, treatment plants, and water pipelines and distribution/collection systems; roads, signals, sidewalks and other components of the transportation system including transit vehicles, ferries and airports; solid waste management facilities including transfer stations and landfills; and, energy supply and distribution systems including hydroelectric and natural gas transmission and distribution systems. More generally, infrastructure can refer to other tangible public and private assets necessary to support the development of a modern urban settlement, such as hospitals, schools and recreation facilities. In some cases, preserved green space and natural

areas including forests, wetlands, and stream corridors have been described as a “green infrastructure”, essential to the vitality of healthy human communities.

Metropolitan Victoria or Victoria Metropolitan Area (VMA) That portion of the Capital Region from, Otter Point in the west to Swartz Bay in the north, defined by Statistics Canada as the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area.

Mixed-use Land use regulations that permit a variety of different uses and activities either on one legal parcel or within one defined land use zone. The classic example of a mixed use district is a historical downtown core that contains a wide range of residential, business, service, institutional, cultural, recreational and industrial uses within a relatively small area; in many cases, a wide range of different uses within individual buildings or on single sites.

Non-Ground Oriented Housing Dwellings that access the ground via shared corridors (typically apartments regardless of tenure) and not through individual direct access to the ground.

Official Community Plan (OCP) Under Section 471 of the *Local Government Act*, a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan.

Peninsula The sub-region of the Capital Regional District including the municipalities of Central Saanich, Sidney, and North Saanich.

Regional Context Statement Under Section 446 of the *Local Government Act*, a statement, accepted by the regional district board, included in a municipal official community plan within two years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy, that explains the relationship between the official community plan and the Regional Growth Strategy.

Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Under Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*, a regional agreement (including a vision, goals, policies and actions) that commits affected municipalities and regional districts to a course of action to meet common social, economic and environmental objectives. It is initiated and adopted by a regional district and referred to all affected local governments for acceptance.

Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy (GBSS) A joint initiative of the Provincial Capital Commission and the Capital Regional District, the GBSS sets out a comprehensive, long term strategy for maintaining, conserving, rehabilitating and restoring green/blue spaces on public and private lands in the Capital Region. Included are areas with ecological, aesthetic, renewable resource, outdoor recreation and greenways values. The Capital Regional District

Board adopted the GBSS as a guide for the preparation of the regional growth strategy on November 26, 1997.

Regional Multi-Modal Network The interconnected transportation corridors defined in the Regional Transportation Plan. The multi-modal network provides for connectivity across modes (walking, cycling, transit and driving) and describes the backbone of the region's transportation system. The corridors that comprise the network are prioritized based on expected demand for two or more transportation modes.

Sea to Sea Green/Blue Belt A band of watersheds running between Saanich Inlet and Sooke Basin that is currently or proposed for protection by the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy, including major parks and Capital Regional District Water lands, delineated on Map 4.

Sensitive ecosystems Lands defined as sensitive in the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory and subsequently identified as core green space areas in the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy.

Target A desired level of performance set for a specific situation in a plan or program.

Urban containment and servicing area The area contained within a regulatory boundary (an urban containment boundary) marking the limit between a defined urban growth and servicing area and other areas such as rural and resource areas, where urban growth is discouraged.

Walkable In urban design, a community is walkable when it is scaled, dimensioned and provided with facilities and a mix of uses and activities that make walking an easy, convenient way to get around. A general rule of thumb is that most people will not walk much more than 10 to 15 minutes to shop or reach services such as libraries and schools. To meet this standard, a walkable community would have a shopping and service centre no more than 400–600 metres from most residences, with a sidewalk and street environment scaled to be interesting and inviting to people on foot.

West Shore The sub-region of the Capital Regional District that includes the municipalities of Colwood, Langford, Metchosin, Highlands, Sooke, and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area.