

Draft 2016 Regional Growth Strategy

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Draft 2016 Regional Growth Strategy?

The Draft 2016 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is a strategic planning document that sets out a vision for the future of the region. This document would, if adopted by the CRD Board, update the 2003 RGS (Bylaw No. 2952). The draft 2016 RGS is currently a working draft document.

Why does the CRD want input on the draft Regional Growth Strategy from municipalities and the Juan de Fuca Land Use Commission?

The desired outcome is to prepare an RGS document with broad municipal support before initiating the bylaw adoption process. The purpose of obtaining input on the draft 2016 RGS is to identify and potentially address any objections to the document. Once the document is in bylaw format, the referral must follow legislated requirements including dispute resolution if municipalities do not all accept the RGS. The CRD Board is seeking input on matters that may affect your municipality's acceptance of the RGS now, rather than waiting until the formal referral process.

When did the Regional Growth Strategy update process start? When will it be complete?

The *Local Government Act* requires a review of a regional growth strategy five years after it is adopted. In 2008, the CRD began a review of the 2003 RGS. The review has focused on how to best address additional content areas and required legislative changes within the context of a statutory growth management document. The RGS process will be complete once all affected local governments accept the document and it is adopted as a bylaw by the CRD Board.

Why is the Regional Growth Strategy important?

The updated RGS would guide regional decision-making to 2038 and provide a common policy framework to address matters that are regional in nature. All CRD services and bylaws are required to be aligned with the RGS bylaw. Through a Regional Context Statement, municipalities identify how their official community plans align to the RGS bylaw.

How was the Draft Regional Growth Strategy developed, and what happened to the Regional Sustainability Strategy?

As part of the five-year review of the 2003 RGS, the CRD Board directed that the content of the RGS be expanded to a Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS). The RSS was intended to provide a climate action lens to regional planning and growth management considerations and broaden RGS content as shown in the table below. In addition to the climate action lens and expanded content, the RSS was structured to identify specific actions which

the CRD agreed to implement as well as separate but related actions for municipalities, provincial and federal agencies.

RGS and RSS Content Areas

2003 Regional Growth Strategy	Regional Sustainability Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing and balancing growth • Environment and resources • Housing and community • Transportation • Economic development 	All the 2003 RGS content areas plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Climate action + Community health and wellbeing + Emergency management and natural disasters + Energy systems + Food and agriculture systems

A draft RSS document was presented to the Board on October 22, 2014 and staff were directed to obtain public input on the draft document. Through 2015, the CRD Board deliberated how a statutory growth management document could address the expanded RSS content areas in light of input on the draft RSS. On May 27, 2015 the Board directed that the document be approached as a Regional Growth Strategy rather than a Regional Sustainability Strategy. On October 23, 2015 the CRD Board directed staff to update the 2003 RGS document and report on options for addressing RSS content in subsidiary CRD documents. On February 24, 2016 the Planning Transportation and Protective Services Committee received the draft 2016 RGS for information. On March 9, 2016 the CRD Board resolved to invite municipal Councils and the Juan de Fuca Land Use Committee to provide comment on the draft 2016 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) document, through an informal referral, by May 18, 2016. Following input from municipal councils, the draft will be presented to the CRD Board for further direction.

What will happen to the expanded Regional Sustainability Strategy content areas that would not be included in the Regional Growth Strategy?

The Regional Sustainability Strategy expanded content beyond that in the 2003 RGS and identified actions for the CRD *and* local municipalities. Since then, court rulings have identified that a municipality's relationship to an RGS is through policies, not actions. As such, the current draft does not identify actions for municipalities. Content relating to CRD actions not included in the draft 2016 RGS, as a result of the Board's direction for narrower content focus, can be addressed in related CRD strategies or management plans. The draft 2016 RGS proposes, as an implementation activity, that the CRD prepare a framework that shows how the various strategies/management plans relate to RGS objectives.

What are the updates to the 2003 Regional Growth Strategy?

CRD staff have updated the 2003 RGS based on Board direction. The updates maintain the overall direction of the 2003 RGS, preserving the policy approach that provides a high level of municipal flexibility in RGS interpretation and subsequent alignment through a Regional Context Statement. The updates include:

- removal of water servicing as a growth management tool
- new content (RGS Section 6) to address legislative requirements in s. 429(2)(d) of the *Local Government Act* for greenhouse gas emissions reductions
- updates to outdated content (e.g., completed plans, outdated time horizons and maps)

- refinements to address issues identified through legal review
- changes to clarify that municipalities, through a Regional Context Statement, align to policies rather than actions

Has there been public input on the draft 2016 Regional Growth Strategy?

From October 2014 to March 2015, the CRD consulted with the public and stakeholders to receive input on the policy direction and targets in the draft Regional Sustainability Strategy document. Public consultation results indicated strong support for the proposed targets and for advancing regional coordination on topics related to:

- transportation
- rural character and agriculture
- compact, complete communities
- climate action
- ecosystem protection

The draft 2016 RGS addresses the above topics. The public hearing during the bylaw adoption process would provide the final opportunity for public input.

How does the Draft Regional Growth Strategy become a bylaw?

Once the CRD Board receives municipal Council input on the draft 2016 RGS, it will decide if the document is ready for bylaw adoption. The bylaw adoption process would then proceed as follows:

- introduce the bylaw at first and second reading
- hold a public hearing
- refer the bylaw to affected local governments for acceptance
- adopt the bylaw at third reading if the bylaw is accepted by all affected local governments

What is the relationship between the Regional Growth Strategy and municipal Official Community Plans?

Within two years of the RGS becoming a bylaw, municipalities must submit a Regional Context Statement to the CRD Board for approval. The Regional Context Statements describe how each municipality's Official Community Plan aligns to the RGS.

Where would the bylaw apply?

Central Saanich, Colwood, CRD (including Juan de Fuca), Esquimalt, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, North Saanich, Oak Bay, Saanich, Sidney, Sooke, Victoria, View Royal.

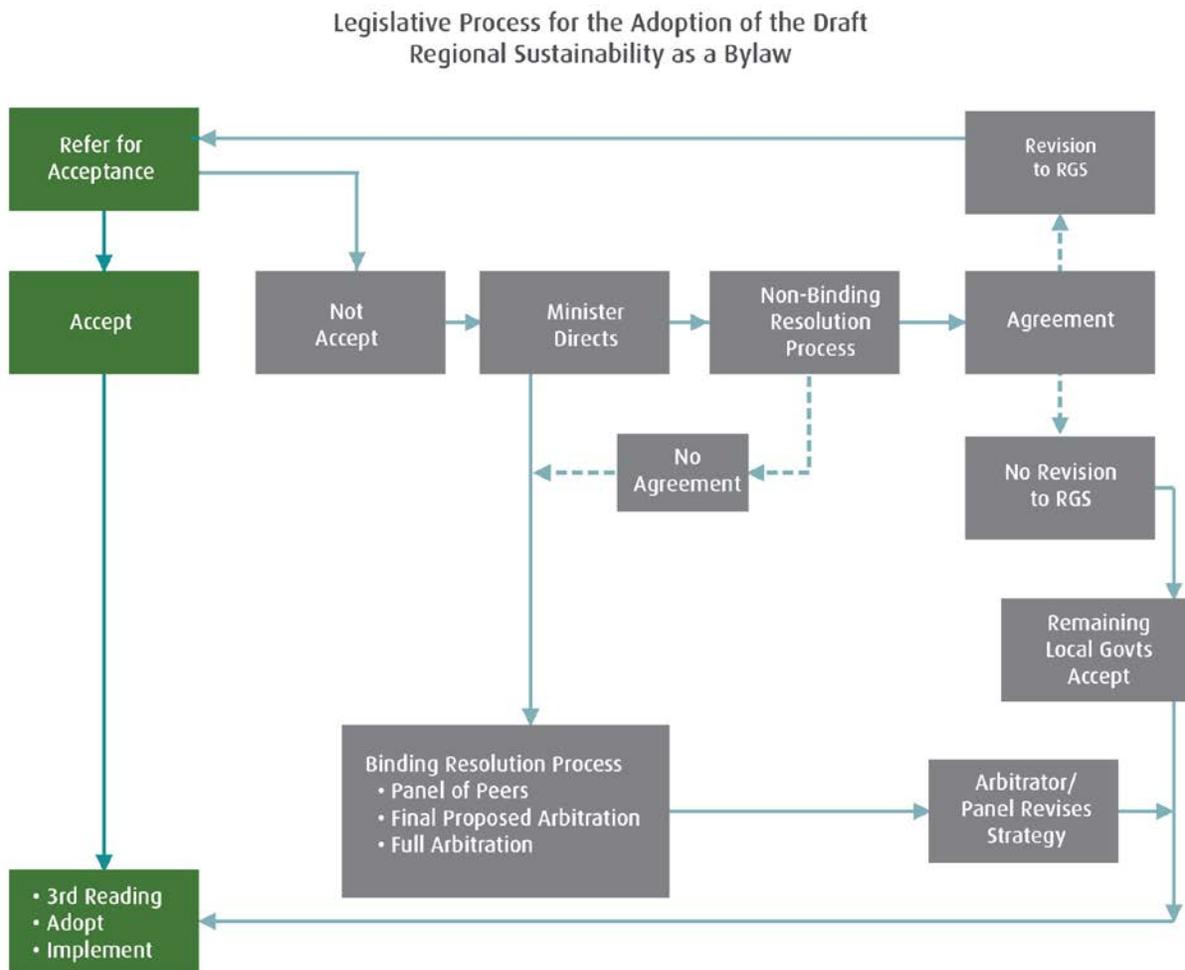
The RGS does not apply to Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Island which fall under the jurisdiction of the Islands Trust land management area.

Will the Regional Growth Strategy apply to First Nations?

The RGS does not apply to land held as reserve or land owned by a Band. Ten First Nations have reserve lands adjacent to the RGS Growth Management Planning Area and a further ten have traditional territories within the region. The CRD recognizes that the regional district lies within traditional territories of First Nations. The CRD further 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. The RGS is to be implemented without prejudice to any aboriginal rights or title that may currently exist, or be defined further through treaty or other processes.

What happens if not all affected local governments accept the Regional Growth Strategy?

A facilitation process is established in the *Local Government Act* to resolve disputes amongst those involved, as outlined below:



How is the Draft 2016 Regional Growth Strategy structured?

The draft 2016 RGS offers a vision, objectives, and policies and targets to guide decision-making to 2038. The draft document updates the 2003 RGS.

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.

Objectives

The RGS includes nine integrated strategic objectives organized around six priority areas. Together with policies, targets, maps and guidelines, the objectives express a program of joint action by the CRD and local municipalities to achieve the regional vision.

Managing and Balancing Growth	1. Keep urban settlement compact 2. Protect the integrity of rural communities
Environment and Resources	3. Protect regional green and blue spaces 4. Manage natural resources and the environment sustainably
Housing and Community	5. Build complete communities 6. Improve housing affordability
Transportation	7. Increase transportation choice
Economic Development	8. Strengthen the regional economy
Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions	9. Significantly reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions

On March 9, 2016 the Board directed staff to consider integrating a regional food systems section in the draft document, to be prepared concurrently with the informal municipal referral that will take place in March/April/May 2016.

Targets

Priorities tell us what we will work on. Targets tell us how HARD we need to work. Targets reflect a community's ambitions. Measuring progress (through annual reporting on related indicators) will provide essential feedback. If progress is too slow, there may be a need/desire to strengthen related actions.

By 2038, we will:

Urban Settlement	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.
Rural Communities	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.
Regional Green and Blue Space	Acquire 100% of the Sea-to-Sea Green/Blue Belt.
	Complete a minimum of 100% of the Regional Trail Network.
Sustainable Natural Resources and Environment	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.
Complete Communities	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.
Housing Affordability	Increase the supply of more affordable housing.
	Reduce the number of people in core housing need.
	Reduce the number of people who are homeless.
Transportation Choice	Achieve a transportation system that sees 42% of all trips made by walking, cycling, transit.
Regional Economy	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
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by 33% (from 2007 levels) by 2020, and by 61% by 2038.

Maps

A regional growth management concept plan and a regional green / blue spaces system are the foundation for managing and balancing growth. The RGS establishes corresponding land use policy designations and the general identification for a Metropolitan Core and eight Major Centres as policy tools for implementing the RGS.

What are the next steps?

Below is a tentative timeline of next steps leading to the bylaw adoption process. The timeline is subject to change depending on input received through the informal municipal referral and subsequent Committee of the Whole direction.

March – May 18	Informal municipal referral
June 2016	Report to Committee of the Whole with results of informal municipal referral
Summer 2016	Prepare final draft RGS
Fall 2016	Prepare RGS bylaw and initiate bylaw adoption process
Early 2017	Public hearing and formal referral for RGS acceptance
Spring 2017	Third reading and adoption of the RGS bylaw