

Electoral Area “G”  
Official Community Plan Project  
Community Profile  
October 2020



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# 1.0 Background

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## 1.1 What is an Official Community Plan?

An official community plan (OCP) provides guidance and policies on a broad range of topics including land-use, transportation, housing, parks and infrastructure.

Official community plans are developed through public consultation and professional planning practices. The objectives and policy statements within them should reflect the collective desires of the people within the planning area. Local governments then use official community plans to help guide and support decision-making on many important community matters including economic development, transportation, recreation, environmental protection, and more. Official community plans also designate land for specific purposes, like commercial office, retail, residential, park, and industrial.

BC local governments are given the authority to adopt an official community plan through the *Local Government Act* (LGA), which describes what must be included in an official community plan, what may optionally be included in it, and what steps need to be followed for it to be adopted. The required content of an official community plan is defined in Section 471 of the LGA.

An OCP should be re-examined and updated on a regular basis (approximately every 15 years within the RDOS) to ensure that it continues to reflect the long-range planning objectives of residents and the regional district. Updates also ensure that an OCP remains consistent with other procedures, bylaws and government implementation tools.

The principle functions of an OCP are to:

- Establish goals, directions and broad development strategies to guide the future growth of Electoral Area “G”;
- Provide policy guidance for development, programs, municipal budgets, actions and services;
- Provide a basis for coordinating land use decisions;
- Provide a basis for the amendment of land use regulations, such as the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw;
- Provide a general policy basis for assessing proposals for change or development not currently anticipated.

Before it can come into effect, an OCP must be adopted by the Regional Board as an official Bylaw. Once adopted, any decisions made on land use, the subdivision of land, development and other related matters must be consistent with the goals, objectives and policies included in the OCP.

## 1.2 Community Engagement (2019)

The Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) initiated a project to prepare an OCP for Electoral Area “G” in 2020 following the completion of a “Let’s Talk Land Use” Public Engagement Campaign with the community in 2019.

This engagement campaign was initiated to assist the Electoral Area “G” Director in determining if there was community interest in developing an Official Community Plan (OCP). The engagement process was undertaken between August and October 2019 and consisted of three main approaches: a focus group style lunch, two public open houses and a survey. It was both educational in terms of explaining land use jurisdictions but was also to understand what land use matters are of importance for residents.

Approximately 145 people responded in the survey and approximately 50 people participated with the lunch and open houses. Electoral Area “G” residents expressed a diversity of opinions and topics of concern throughout this process; however, there were also some topics that resonated strongly for the majority of people.

Overall from the survey results, it appears that a large majority of residents are in favour of local input on future land use changes of large scale developments, with 88% of survey respondents answering ‘yes’ to this question. Also 79% of the survey respondents were in favour of developing a community vision that will help guide Electoral Area “G” for the next 20 or so years.

The two open house comments also reflected these sentiments, although there was also concern that by developing a community plan it will result in greater government interference. People also felt that because most of the properties are within the ALR, the role of local government appears limited, although it was also stated that the ALC were not actively upholding their regulations. Most people; however, had expressed a desire to be involved in future land use planning and a vision for their community through some means.

A number of recommendations were made in response to the project’s initial goals and the resulting information gleaned from the engagement process. These recommendations included:

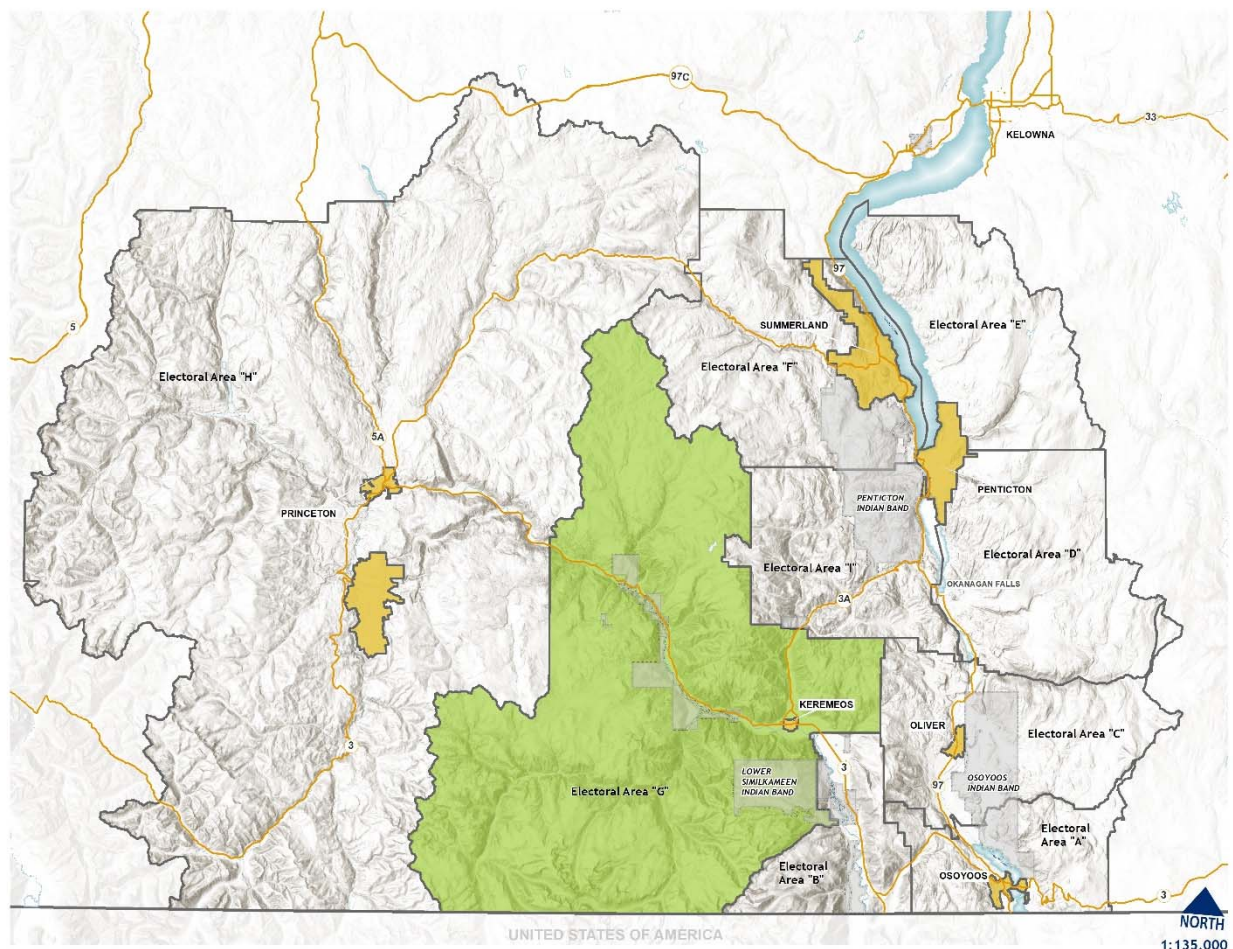
- a) There appears to be enough evidence to proceed with developing an Official Community Plan (OCP);*
- b) Developing the OCP needs to be conducted with consideration that land use bylaws are an unknown entity in this area and its creation will be the first of its kind. The OCP process needs to both educational and allow for a great deal of community dialogue;*
- c) There is a strong sense of place within each area by residents and given the different historical patterns of settlement and constraints, it will be important to assess and provide policies locally;*
- d) Given the strong connection between ‘rural’ Keremeos and the Village of Keremeos, there is an opportunity to collaborate on ‘fringe’ planning around the Keremeos area;*
- e) Given the amount of Indian Reserve land along the Similkameen River valley, and the traditional territory of the local Indian Bands, it is vital to be able to collaborate on a planning project such as an OCP;*
- f) It is noted that many of the communities concerns are in response to land use jurisdictions outside those of the RDOS, such as forestry, mining and the ALC. The OCP will be an opportunity to work with those governments and agencies in order to collaborate on shared goals.*

## 2.0 Regional Context

### 2.1 Geography

Electoral Area “G” comprises a land area of approximately 2,157 km<sup>2</sup> and is the second largest Electoral Area within the Regional District, comprising 20.4% of the total area within the RDOS. The Electoral Area includes the Village of Keremeos, Upper Similkameen Indian Band (USIB) lands, Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) lands, and the unincorporated communities of Hedley and Olalla.

The Plan Area is bounded by the international border with the United States of America to the south, and abuts the rural areas of Electoral Area “H” to the west and north, Electoral Area “F” to the northeast, and Electoral Area “I”, “C” and “B” to the east.



**Map 1 – Electoral Area “G”**

Of note, the area contains approximately 3,904 ha of lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), generally following the Similkameen River/Highway 3 and Highway 3A corridor. Electoral Area “G” also contains 55,000 ha of parkland comprising approximately 27% of the total land area, including Cathedral Provincial Park and the Snowy Protection Area.

## 2.2 Relevant Plans and Studies

Several plans, reports and documents are relevant to any OCP prepared for Electoral Area “G” and include:

- Electoral Area “G” Let’s Talk Land Use” Summary Report (2019);
- Memorandum of Understanding between Upper Similkameen Indian Band and Town of Princeton and Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (2019);
- Similkameen Watershed Plan (2017)
- Okanagan-Similkameen Transit Future Plan (2015)
- Regional Heritage Strategic Plan (2015);
- Public Report Climate Action Revenue Incentive (CARIP):
  - 2013 Public Report
- Keeping Nature in Our Future: A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the South Okanagan Similkameen, South Okanagan Conservation Program (2013);
- BC Community Energy Emissions Inventory (2007, 2010, and 2012);
- Regional Trails Master Plan (Cascade Environmental Resource Group Ltd., March 2012);
- Strategy for a Sustainable Similkameen (2011)
- Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen Electoral Areas Community Climate Action Plan (Stantec Consulting Ltd., January 2011);
- Solid Waste Management Plan (AECOM, June 2011); and
- Air Quality Management Plan (RDOS, 2006).

## 3.0 Local Context

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### 3.1 History

Indigenous peoples have lived in the RDOS area for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans. The original people of the Okanagan are known as the Syilx speaking people – the “Okanagans” and according to their history have been in the area since the beginning of people on this land. The Okanagans (Syilx) people occupied an area that extended over approximately 69,000 square kilometres. The northern area of this territory stretched from the area of Mica Creek, just north of modern day Revelstoke, BC and east to Kootenay Lake. The southern boundary extended to the vicinity of Wilbur, Washington and the western border extended into the Nicola Valley.

Okanagan (Syilx) peoples once travelled widely to fishing, gathering and hunting areas. Each year, the first harvests of roots, berries, fish and game were celebrated by ceremonies honouring the food chiefs who provided for the people. During the winter, people returned to permanent winter villages. The names of many of the settlements in the Okanagan Valley – Osoyoos, Keremeos, Penticton and Kelowna – all come from Indigenous words for these settled areas and attest to the long history of the Syilx people on this land.

Non-indigenous settlement in what is now Hedley and Ollala began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, spurred by mineral claims.

### 3.2 Core Communities

The main settlement areas within Electoral Area “G” include Olalla, Hedley and the agricultural community surrounding the Village of Keremeos. Smaller, residential agglomerations also occur in the Plan area, primarily in the form of mobile home park developments adjacent Highway 3.

Of its 2,236 residents, 1,462 people live in Rural Keremeos, 378 in Olalla and 242 in Hedley with only 6.8% (154 residents) living outside of these core communities.

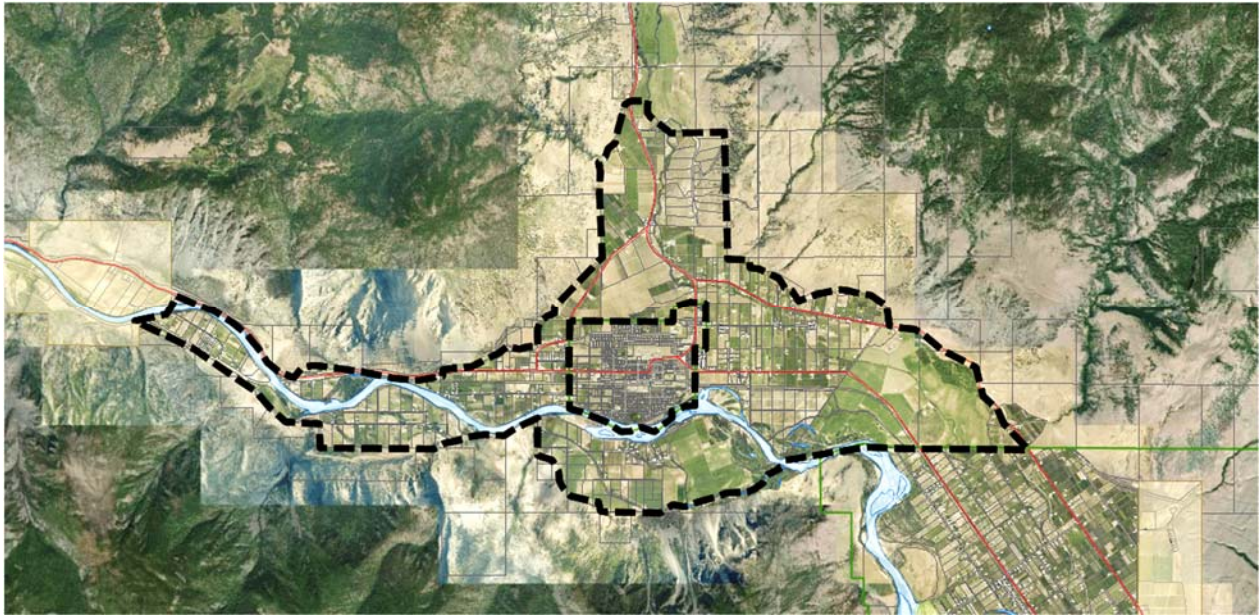
#### 3.2.1 Rural Keremeos

Keremeos is a Similkameen name for the “water or stream running through an open flat”.

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, what would become the Village of Keremeos began to emerge and was quickly followed by the surveying of a townsite in 1908, as well as surrounding agricultural lands in 3, 5 and 10 acres lots and the construction of an irrigation system to facilitate fruit growing.

It is this agricultural area, now primarily in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), that comprises “Rural Keremeos” (or the “Keremeos Fringe”) area and is the largest settlement area within Electoral Area “G”, accounting for 68% of households (476 of 700 households within Electoral Area “G”).





Map 2: Aerial photo of Rural Keremeos Area (2017)



Figure 1: Photo of Rural Keremeos Area (2017)

### 3.2.2 Hedley

Indigenous peoples' presence in the Hedley area dates back thousands of years with the name of the region being Chuchuwayha and Nickle Plate Mountain as "Snaza'ist" (meaning "striped rock place").

The Similkameen people had undertaken mining in the area for ochre, chert, opal, quartz and petrified wood.

The first mineral claims on Nickel Plate Mountain occurred in 1898; the Bulldog, Copperfield, Sunnyside, and Nickel Plate. These claims would form the nucleus of a

YEAR	POPULATION	Average annual population change
1966	347	n/a
1971	385	1.75%
1976	480	3.74%
1981	426	1.97%
1986	374	-2.15%
1991	409	1.50%
1996	Not available	Not available
2001	Not available	Not available
2006	256	Not available
2011	252	-0.26%
2016	242	-0.67%

significant underground mining operation, producing millions of dollars worth of gold before its close in 1955.

A small settlement at the base of these claims would come to form the community of Hedley, which derived its name from Robert Hedley, a well known mining person from the Nelson-Trail area. Hedley had previously staked one of the early prospectors in the area who returned the favour by naming the camp after his sponsor.

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the community was first surveyed and added a post office, general store, newspaper (The Hedley Gazette), church, bank, hospital, hotel, brewery and was connected by train when the first Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern (VV&E) Railway passenger service arrived in town.

By 1949, the known economical ore pockets had been exhausted while remaining ones were either too expensive to reach or too low in gold value and the Hedley Mascot mine was closed with all the useful equipment removed and the buildings abandoned.

In the following decade, fires would destroy many of the buildings in Hedley's original commercial area. There is no significant industrial activities left in Hedley and it now serves as an affordable retirement community (55% of the population is over the age of 60).

Certain parts of the survey townsite have been deemed unsafe due to the threat from rock fall hazard (2 died in 1939 when a slide on Stemwinder Mountain brought debris into the townsite) and have reverted to Crown land and cannot be built on.

In 1995 the Mascot Mine site was officially designated a Provincial Heritage resource.



Map 3: Aerial photo of Hedley (2017)

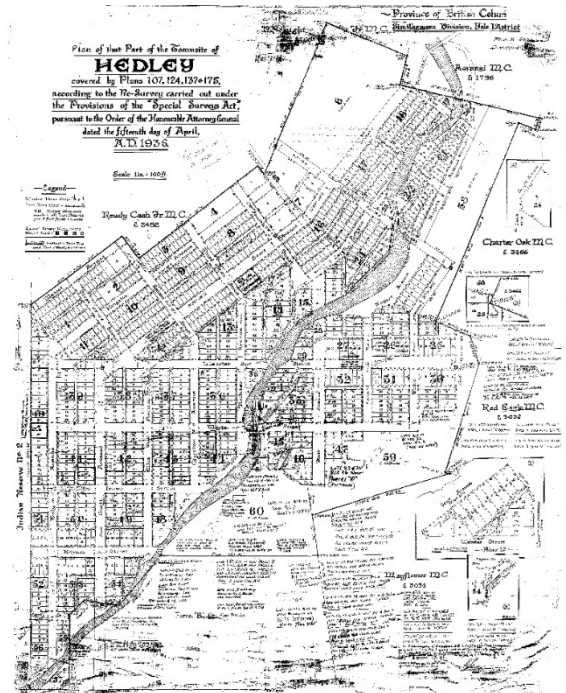
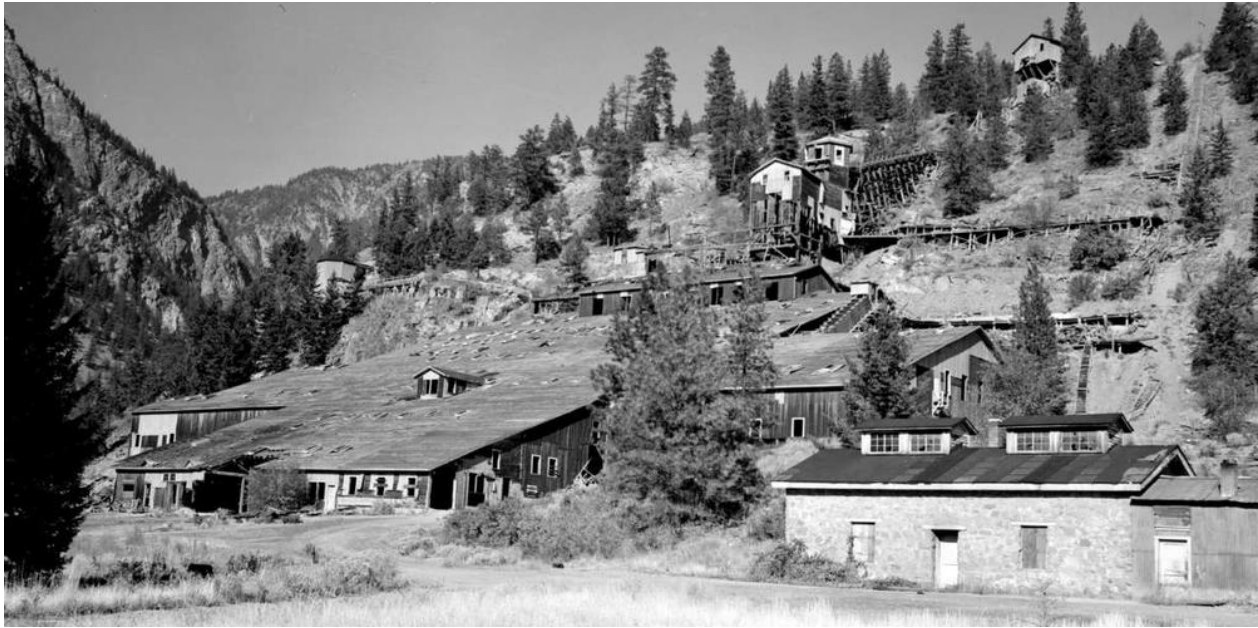


Figure 2: 1936 Survey of the Hedley Townsite.



**Figure 3: Hedley Mine**

### 3.2.3 Olalla

The name of the Olalla community is considered to be a local adaptation of the Salish and Chinook word for “berries” (e.g. “olallie” or “ollalie”) and is thought to be reflective of the use of the area by local Indigenous peoples prior to European Settlement.

The modern settlement of Olalla dates to the mid-1880s and the staking of mineral claims in the area and the establishment of “Olalla Camp” as a service centre.

While not a particularly prosperous mining area, a 1922 mining report stating that “the history of this camp, which embraces both sides of the valley, has been insignificant when based on production, only a few tons having been shipped” at its height, the Olalla community was able to support a hotel, assay office, school, dance hall, store, post office and numerous dwellings.

When a real estate bubble in the province burst in 1913, land sales and mineral claims in the Similkameen stagnated. With the onset of war the following year (1914), population also started to decline in smaller communities such as Olalla.

YEAR	POPULATION	Average annual population change
1966	80	n/a
1971	144	10.29%
1976	108	-4.68%
1981	327	20.28%
1986	271	-3.08%
1991	443	8.54%
1996	Not available	Not available
2001	Not available	Not available
2006	393	Not available
2011	401	0.34%
2016	378	-0.98%

By 1930, the population of Olalla had declined to 80 and, according to *Ghost Towns of British Columbia* (1970), by the early 1960s, the community had virtually been abandoned and most of the structures destroyed by a bushfire that came through the area in 1950s.

Over the proceeding decades, Olalla has re-emerged as an affordable bedroom community for Pentiction and Keremeos.



Map 4: Aerial photo of Olalla (2017)



Photo 4: Abandoned Buildings at Olalla (c. 1930)  
Photo Credit: BC Archives (E-03828)

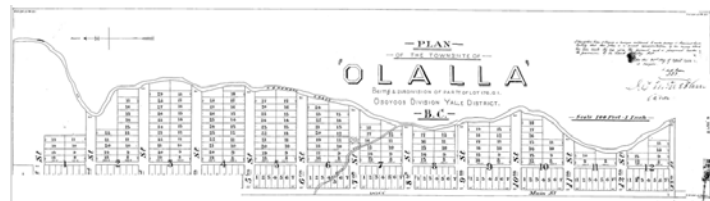


Figure 5: 1900 Survey of the Olalla Townsite

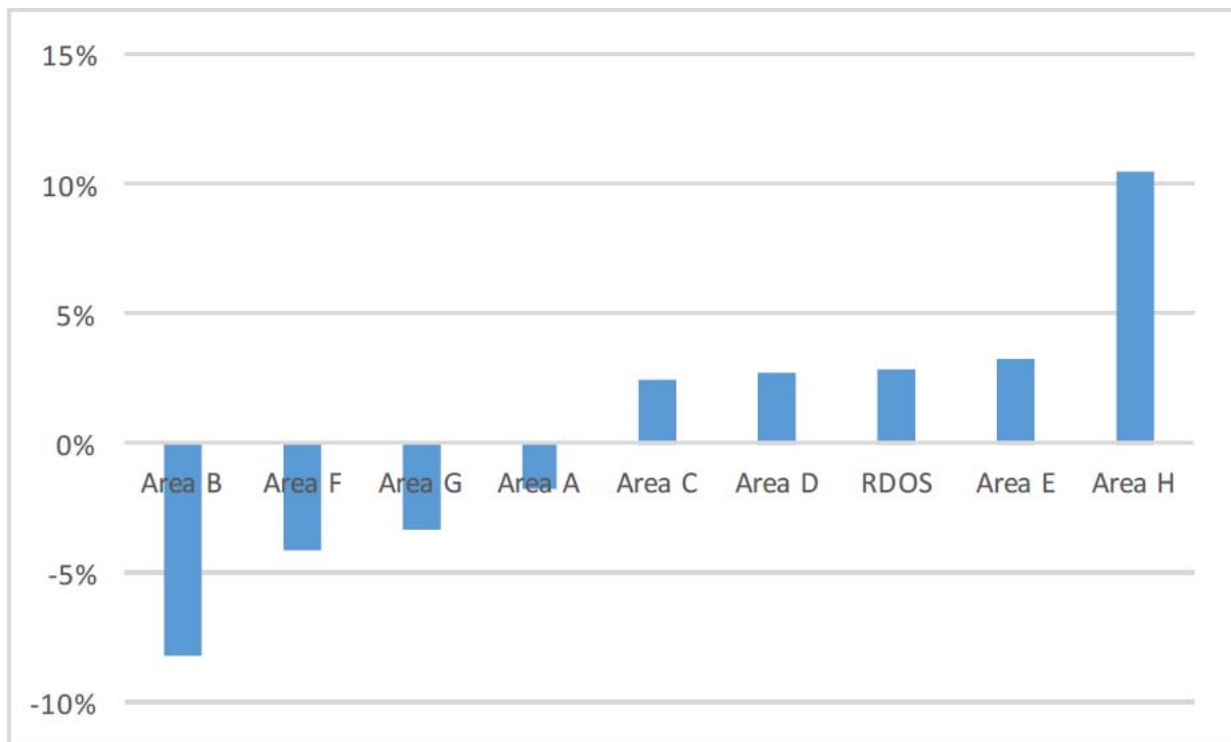


Figure 6: Photo of Olalla (c. 2007)

### 3.3 Population and Demographics

The total population of Electoral Area “G” decreased slightly between 2011 and 2016, from 2,314 residents to 2,236, a change of 78 fewer residents or a decline of 0.57%. Of the eight electoral areas that comprise the RDOS, half grew in population between 2011 and 2016 while the other half declined. Overall the population of the RDOS grew by 3% in this five-year time period (see Figure 1).

YEAR	POPULATION	Average annual population change
1966	1,044	n/a
1971	1,254	3.10%
1976	1,483	2.83%
1981	1,694	2.24%
1986	1,596	-1.00%
1991	1,818	2.19%
1996	1,910	0.83%
2001	2,052	1.20%
2006	2,308	1.98%
2011	2,314	0.04%
2016	2,236	-0.57%



**Figure 7 – Regional Growth Rate Comparisons 2011-2016**

The age and gender distribution of Electoral Area “G” is illustrated in Figure 8. Overall, approximately 51.5% of the population is male and 48.5% female. In Electoral Area “G”, the “baby boomer” generation (currently aged 55 - 75 years old) makes up the largest proportion of the population (59% of the population in 2016). In comparison, the 20 - 34 year age group

comprised only 9% of the population in the 2016 census. The Figure 8 profile provides a strong contrast to the Province of BC as shown in Figure 9. Both show an aging population; however, the proportion of residents aged 20 - 34 years in Electoral Area “G” is quite low relative to the provincial average.

In 2016, the median age in Electoral Area “G” was 59.9 years, while the provincial median age was 43 years - a difference of 17 years. The median age for Electoral Area “G” is also higher than that of the RDOS. In the RDOS as a whole, the median age in 2016 was 55 years. Electoral Area “G” has a significantly higher proportion of older residents in proportion to youth and young adults as is graphically illustrated when comparing Figures 8 and 9.

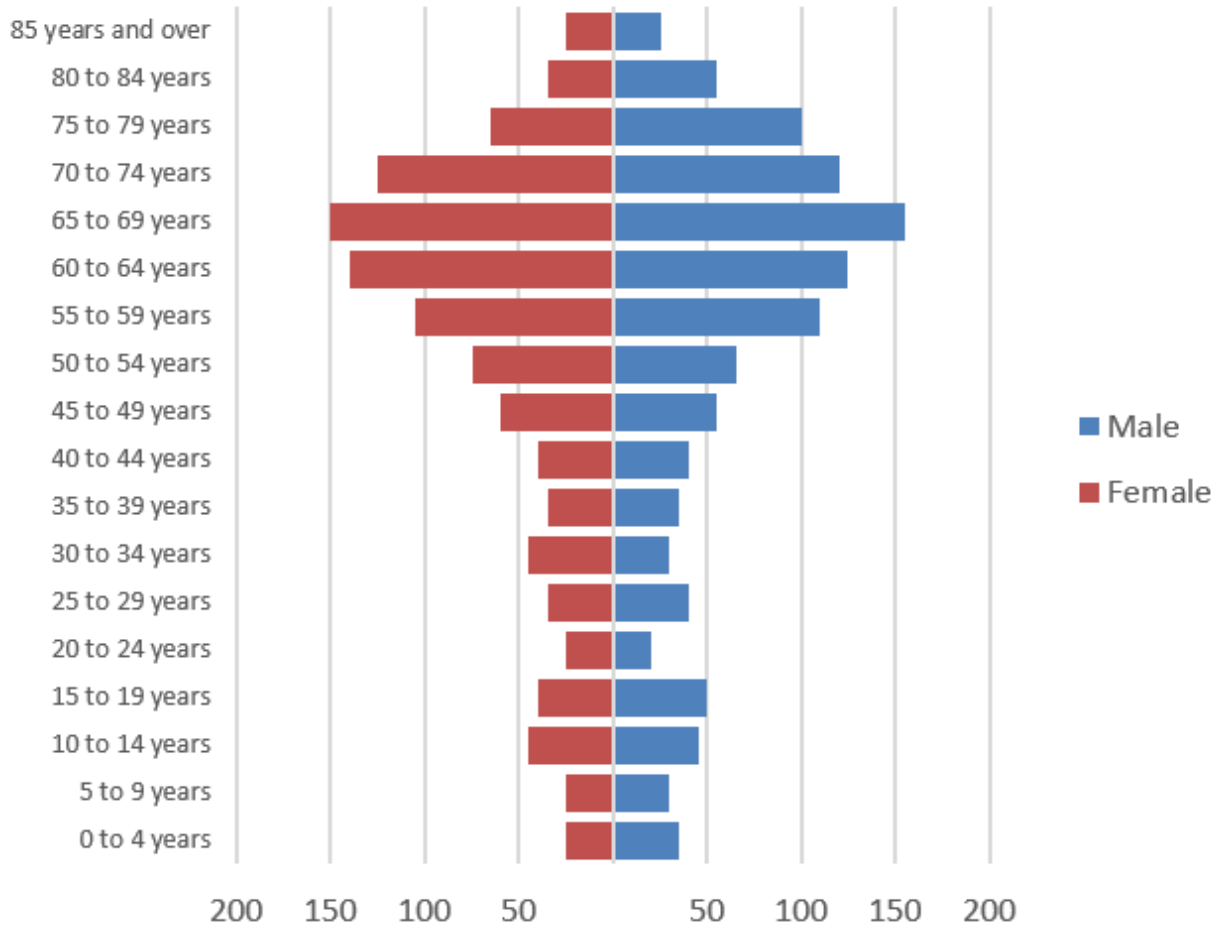


Figure 8 – Electoral Area “G” 2016 Population by Gender and Age Cohort

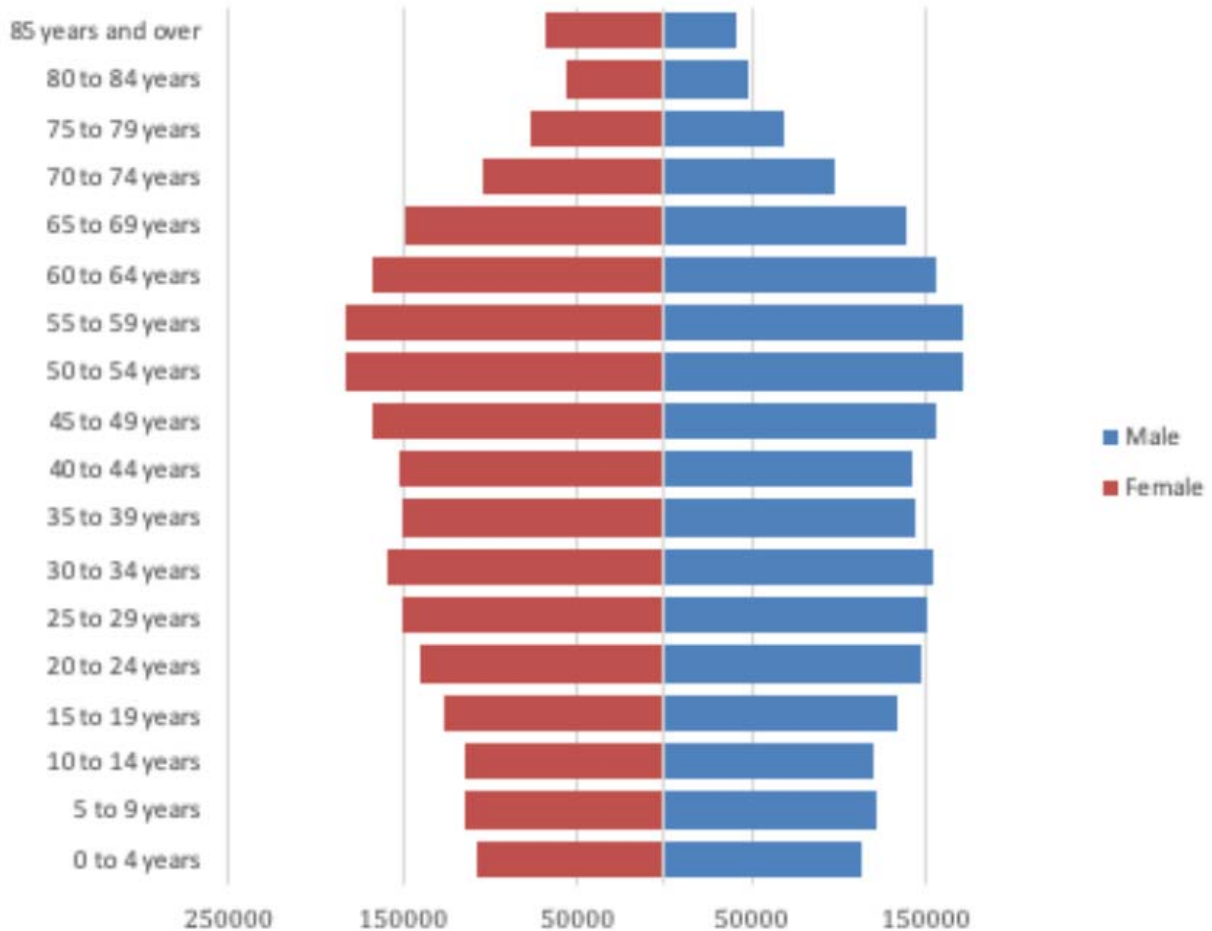


Figure 9 – BC 2016 Population by Gender and Age Cohort

### 3.3.1 Population Growth

Total population figures from 1996 - 2016 suggest a stable population with a slight decline from 2011 to 2016 (Figure 10). If modest population growth or decline were to continue for the next 20 years, the population would be between 1,973 and 3,244 by 2041, given scenarios of +1% growth, +1.5% growth or -0.5% decline.

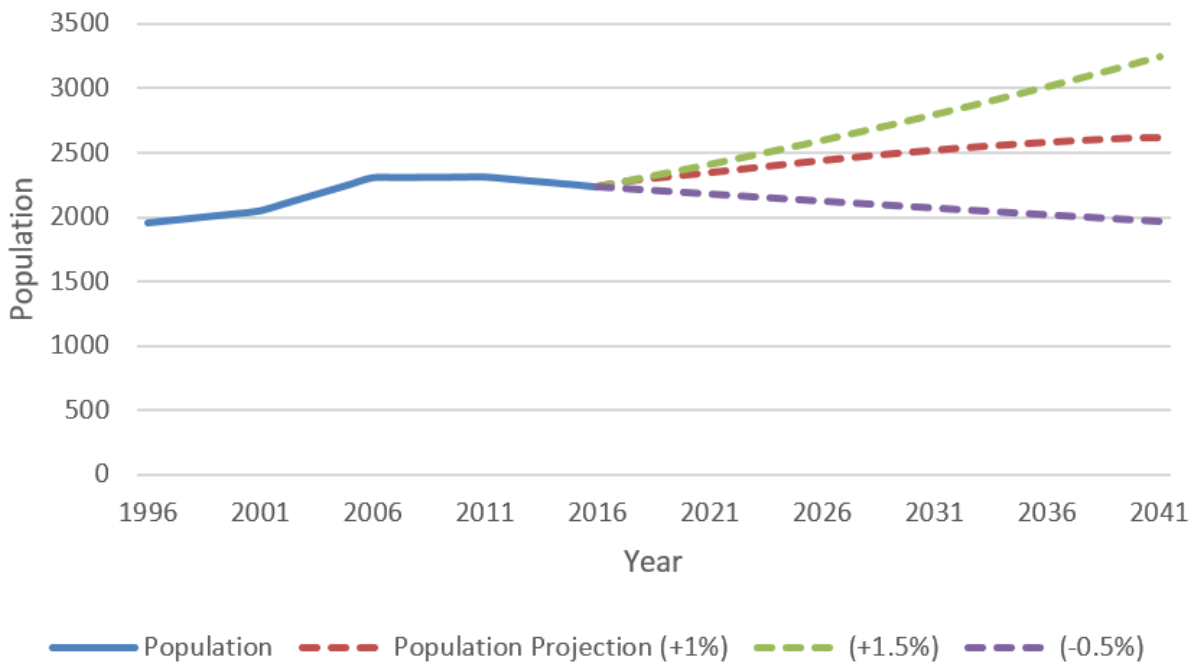


Figure 10 – Electoral Area “G” Project Population Growth (1996-2041)

### 3.3.2 Dependency Ratio

The dependency ratio, which measures the proportion of youth (0-19) and seniors (age 65+) per 100 workers (i.e., people of working age, 20-64), highlights the age composition of a given population as it changes over time.

In Electoral Area “G”, the dependency ratio is 106%, meaning there are 106 dependents for each of 100 workers (Figure 11). This figure is significantly higher than the B.C. provincial average, largely due to the significant number of seniors living in the area. As the last segment of the “baby boomer” generation continues to age and retire, this older segment of the proportion is expected to remain high or even increase.

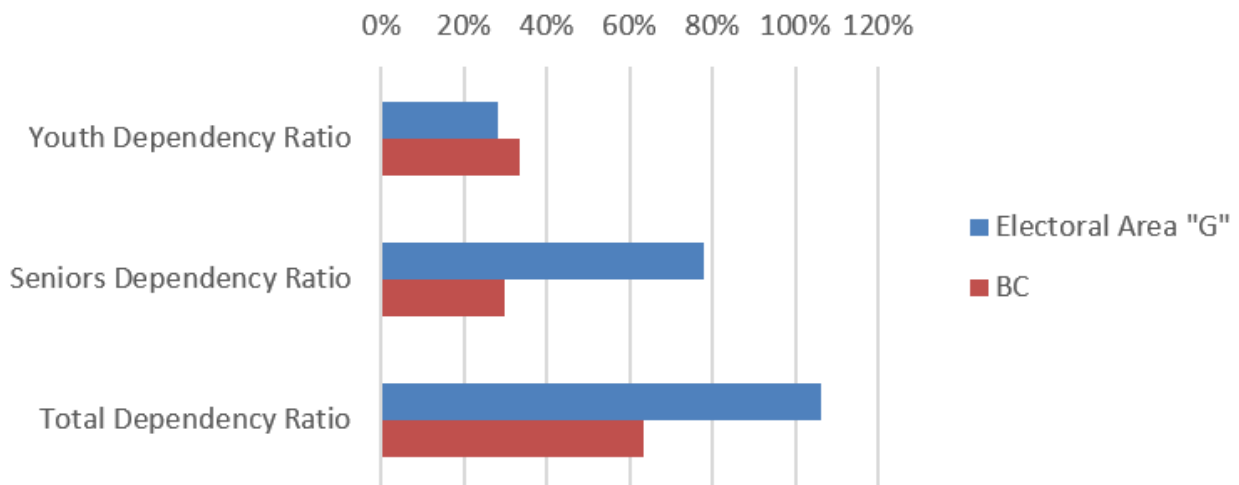
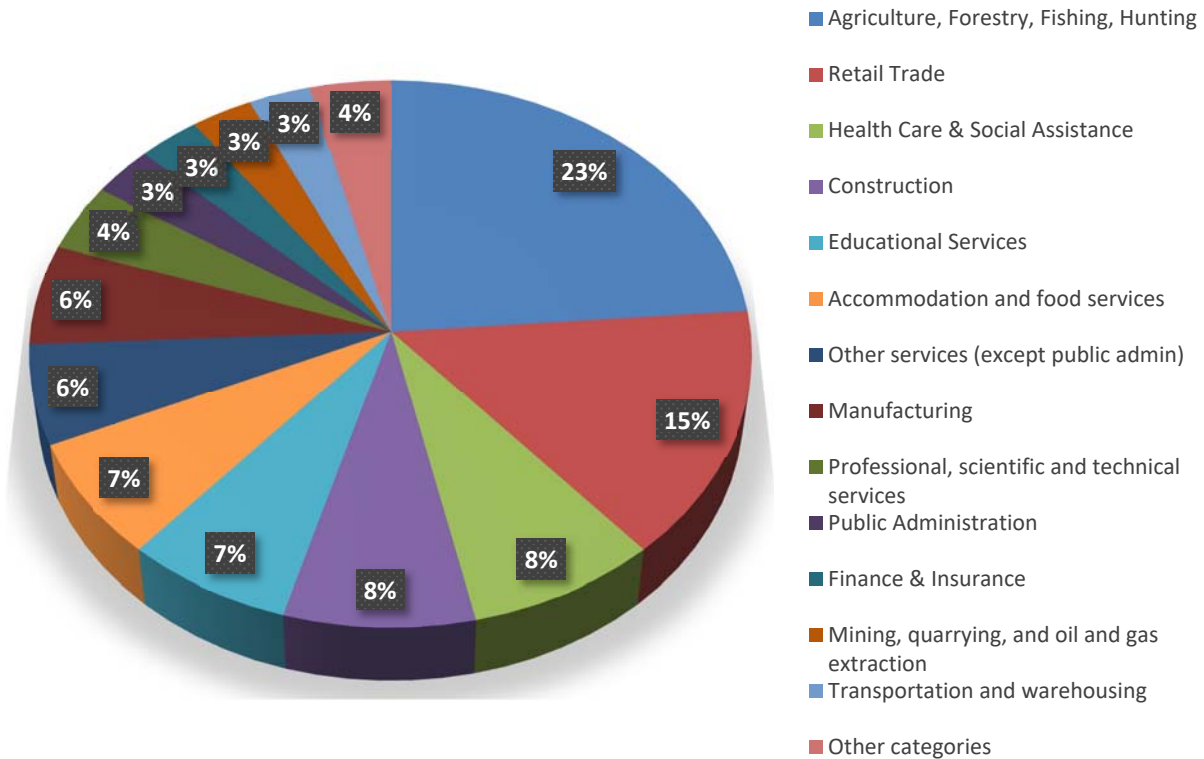


Figure 11: Dependency Ratios in Area “A” compared to BC, 2016



### 3.3.3 Employment and Income

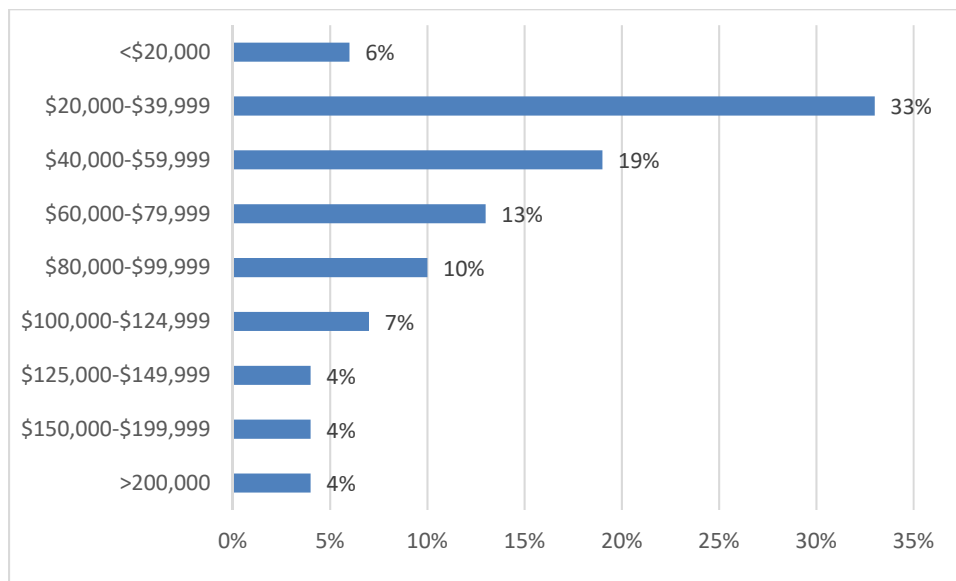
According to 2019 ESRI Community Analyst data, of Electoral Area “G” residents in the labour force, the top five occupation types are as follows: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Retail Trade; Health care and social assistance; Construction; and Educational Services.



**Figure 12: Electoral Area “G” Labour Force By Industry (ESRI Community Analyst Data, 2019)**

According to 2019 ESRI Community Analyst data, 33% of residents in Electoral Area “G” have a current income by household between \$20,000-39,999, with 19% in the \$40,000-\$59,999, and 13% in \$60,000-\$79,999 range. The percentage of households in each of these income cohorts (lower than \$79,999) is higher than that of British Columbia as a whole, while the percentage of residents in income cohorts of \$80,000 or higher are lower than that of British Columbia.

The median household income for Electoral Area “G” is \$51,889.



**Figure 13: Household by Current Income in Electoral Area “G”, 2016  
(ESRI Community Analyst Data, 2019)**

### 3.4 Health and Wellbeing

Electoral Area “G” is within the Keremeos Local Health Area, which is within the Okanagan Health Service Delivery Area and the Interior Health Authority. While there are not any health services located in Electoral Area “G”, there is easy access to a wide range of health services in the Village of Keremeos and Town of Princeton.

The South Similkameen Health Centre is in Keremeos and the Princeton Health Centre is in Princeton, with the closest hospitals located either in the City of Penticton or the Town of Oliver, each of which is an approximate drive of between 35 to 50 minutes from the Village of Keremeos. People that do not have access to a vehicle or are unable to drive (such as seniors) may find it hard to access the available health care services.

Although Electoral Area “G” has a relatively mature and aging population, due to the small and rural nature of the communities, there are no assisted living facilities in the area itself. There are assisted living facilities within driving distance in the Town of Princeton and Village of Keremeos, and other larger communities in the Okanagan Valley.

The challenge of finding physicians to locate into the Keremeos and Princeton areas is a common one for rural communities.

### 3.5 Community Services

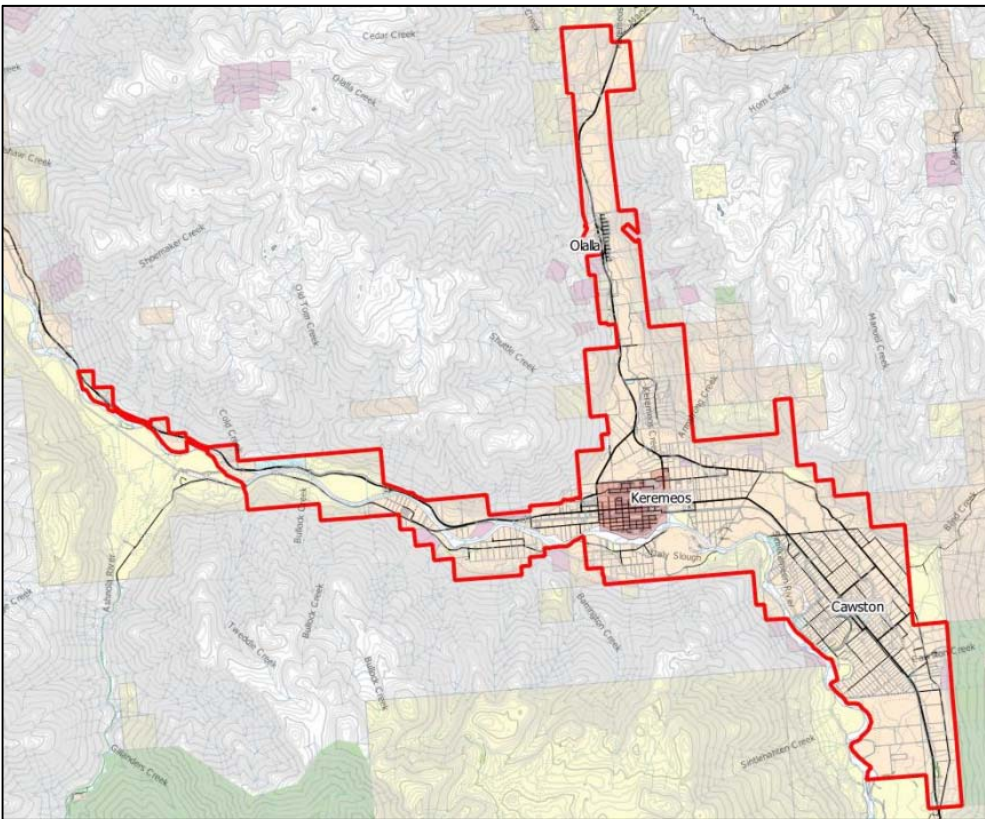
At present, there are no schools within the Plan area following the closure of the Hedley Elementary School in 2008.

Elementary and Secondary school education in the vicinity of Keremeos is delivered by School District #53 (Okanagan Similkameen), which currently operates the Cawston Primary School, which offers instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 4 and the Similkameen Elementary/Secondary School and offers instruction from grade 5 to 12.

Approximately 9% of the population of Electoral Area “G” is “school-aged” (ages 5-19).

The Village of Keremeos Fire Department provides service to Electoral Area “G” on a fee-for service basis, provides mutual aid to the province for interface fires and further provides first responder service for vehicle accidents.

The Hedley Fire Department provides public safety services to the residents of Hedley and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band.



**Map 5:  
Keremeos  
Volunteer Fire  
Department  
Fire District**

Police services are provided by the RCMP, which has a station in the Village of Keremeos, as does the BC Ambulance Service.

### 3.6 Heritage and Cultural Resources

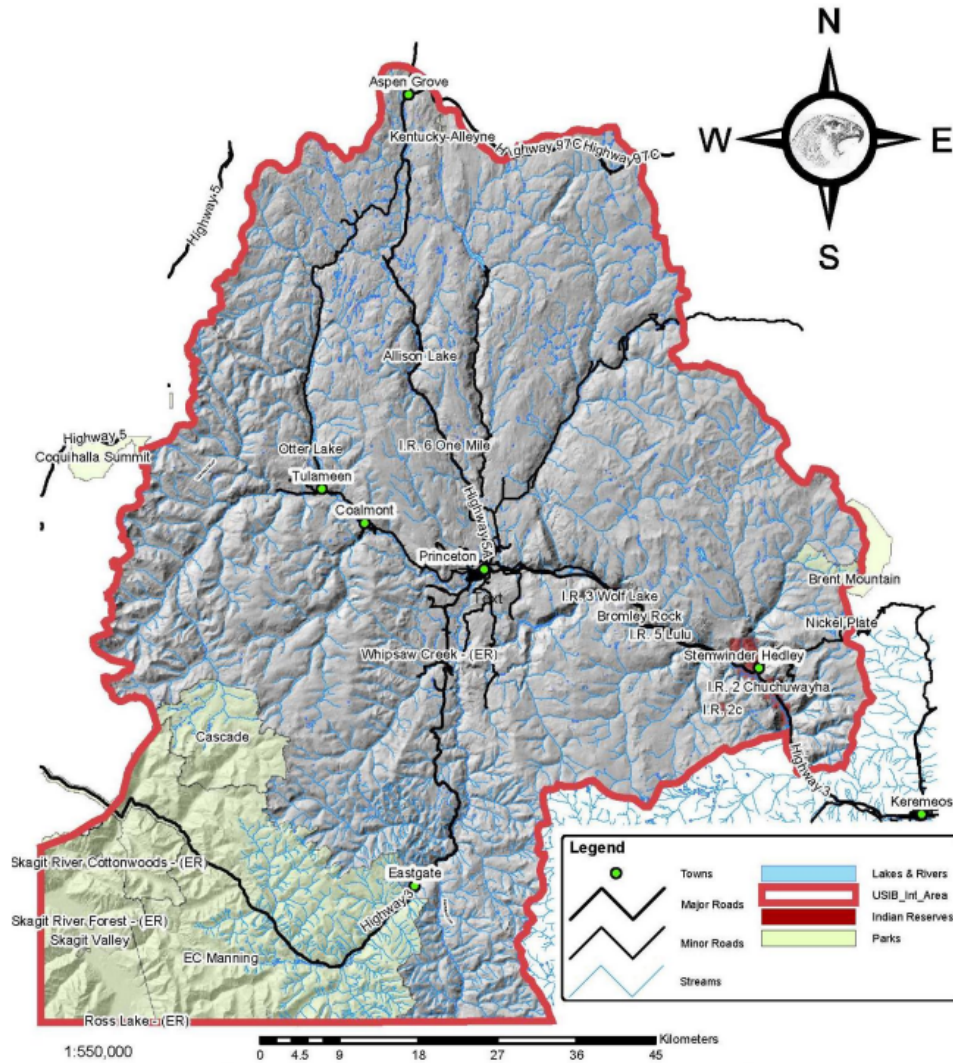
The RDOS Regional Heritage Strategic Plan identifies several heritage resources or “valued settlements” located in Electoral Area “G”, including Standing Rock (Highway 3), Crater Moon, Stone Columns, Mascot Mine, Grist Mill and the Irrigation flumes on Keremeos Bench.

The Regional District, along with the Town of Princeton, has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Upper Similkameen Indian Band (USIB) that provides “a framework for increased collaboration and communications between the Town of Princeton, Regional District

Okanagan-Similkameen Areas “G” and “H”, and the Upper Similkameen Indian Band, so that a mutually beneficial relationship is maintained.”

As part of this Agreement, the Regional District has, amongst other things, undertaken:

- i) To support the development and understanding of aboriginal issues including heritage, culture and economics
- ii) To create and maintain open and mutually beneficial communications, that will provide the foundation of trust and lead to expanded opportunities for the present and future residents of the Similkameen Valley.



**Map 6 – Upper Similkameen Indian Band Area of Responsibility**

### 3.7 Housing and Development

Homes and communities are a vital element of the quality of life in Electoral Area “G”. Sustainable and enduring communities include housing opportunities for people in all stages of

life, different family types, a range of financial situations, and for individuals and families with special needs.

### 3.7.1 Housing and Growth

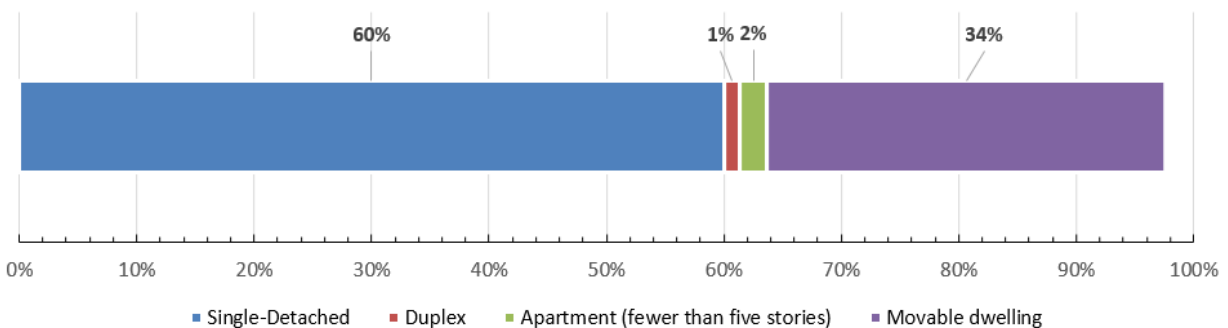
There are 1,100 housing units in Electoral Area “G”. Over the past 10 years, 55 new single-family homes were built. This represents an increase of 5.3% over a decade, which is a compound annual growth rate of 0.5%. Population increase may be even less due to declining family sizes.

Due to the absence of building inspection services in Electoral Area “G”, there is no data available regarding residential building permit activity.

Housing has become less affordable, as the median home price increased by 32.5%. The affordability ratio – the median home price compared to the median home income – increased from 6.7 to 7.8, well beyond the common threshold of 3.0 or 3.5.

### 3.7.2 Housing Types

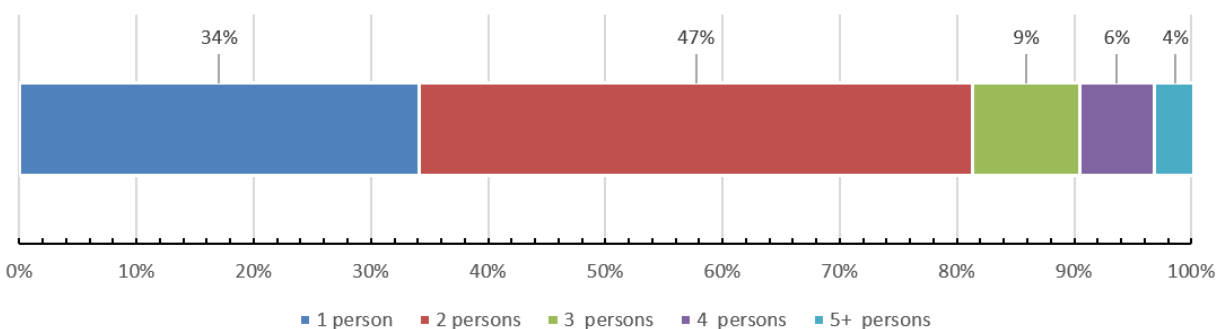
A majority of housing in Electoral Area “G” consists of single-detached homes (Figure 14). This comprises 60% of all housing, with the remaining housing being in the form of mobile homes (34%) and duplex/semi-detached housing (6%). Generally, the housing in Electoral Area “G” is relatively low-density and dispersed.



**Figure 14: Housing by Dwelling Type in Electoral Area “G” (2016)**

### 3.7.3 Household Size

Most households (47.3%) in Electoral Area “G” are two person households (Figure 15). Together, one and two person households account for 81.4% of households. These smaller household sizes are consistent with the older population in the planning area.



**Figure 15: Electoral Area “G” Household Size (2016)**

### 3.7.4 Number of New Units Required

To meet anticipated housing demand in Electoral Area “G”, an additional 29-43 units will be required by 2041 due to population growth. The number of units required to meet anticipated housing needs was calculated by applying projected growth rates to baseline housing numbers from the 2016 census. Most of this growth will be for the group aged 65-84.

Annual projected growth rate	1%	1.50%
Total estimated population (2041)	2,293	2,322
Additional population estimate (2041)	57	86
Average persons per household	2	2
New dwelling units	29	43

### 3.7.5 Identified Housing Needs

Electoral Area “G” has an aging population with a majority of residents between 65 and 84. This population group is expected to increase by 25% over the next decade, while the proportion of long-term residents who have not moved in more than 5 years is also increasing. This emphasizes the need for age appropriate housing to allow residents to age in place. This may include home adaptations, age friendly apartments close to amenities, or seniors housing developments. In addition, employment opportunities in the health care and social assistance sector, such as in-home caregivers, cleaning, meal delivery and other services are anticipated to increase.

Maintaining and adapting housing units will be an important future consideration as housing units age. Currently, more than 60% of housing units in Electoral Area “G” were built before 1980. Houses older than 20 years may require increased maintenance and major components may need to be replaced. With an aging population there is also a need for home modifications to accessible, safe, and independent living.

Renter vulnerability has increased over the years. Both renter and owner households’ average income are increasing, but there is a gap between renter and owner average incomes. Renter households are more likely to be in core housing need compared to owner households.

Though average household incomes have increased rapidly over the past five years, labour market participation has decreased, and unemployment has increased in the Electoral Area “G”. This may emphasize a need for programs and services in Electoral Area “G” that support residents without employment income to access housing. This may include affordable housing developments and financial and housing expense management.

## 3.8 Land Use and Development

This section provides an overview of land use and development in Electoral Area “G” using land use designations determined through a desktop analysis completed by Regional District staff based on BC Assessment classifications and existing or historic land uses, as well as ALR boundaries (see Land Use Map).

The categories assigned to these land uses are based upon land use designations found in other Electoral Area OCP Bylaws and are as follows:

Land Use Designation	Total Hectares	Percentage of Total Land Base
Resource Area (RA)	142,676.43	70.45%
Parks, Recreation and Trails (PR)	54,942.96	27.13%
Agriculture (AG)	4,326.62	2.14%
Large Holdings (LH)	239.58	0.12%
Low Density Residential (LR)	107.33	0.05%
Conservation Area (CA)	84.17	0.04%
Small Holdings (SH)	77.22	0.04%
Administrative, Cultural & Institutional (AI)	42.21	0.02%
Transportation Corridor (TC)	16.21	0.01%
Tourist Commercial (CT)	8.77	0.004%
Industrial (I)	7.46	0.004%
Commercial (C)	2.03	0.001%
Medium Density Residential (MR)	0.36	0.0002%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>202,531.35</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.8.1 Resource Area (RA)

Lands classified as Resource Area (RA) are generally used for grazing or rangelands, forestry, natural resource extraction, recreation, watersheds, environmental conservation opportunities and comprise both private and/or Crown land in parcels greater than 60.0 ha in area.

It was determined that approximately 142,676 ha of land, or 70.45% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” fits a Resource Area (RA) designation.

### **3.8.2 Agricultural (AG)**

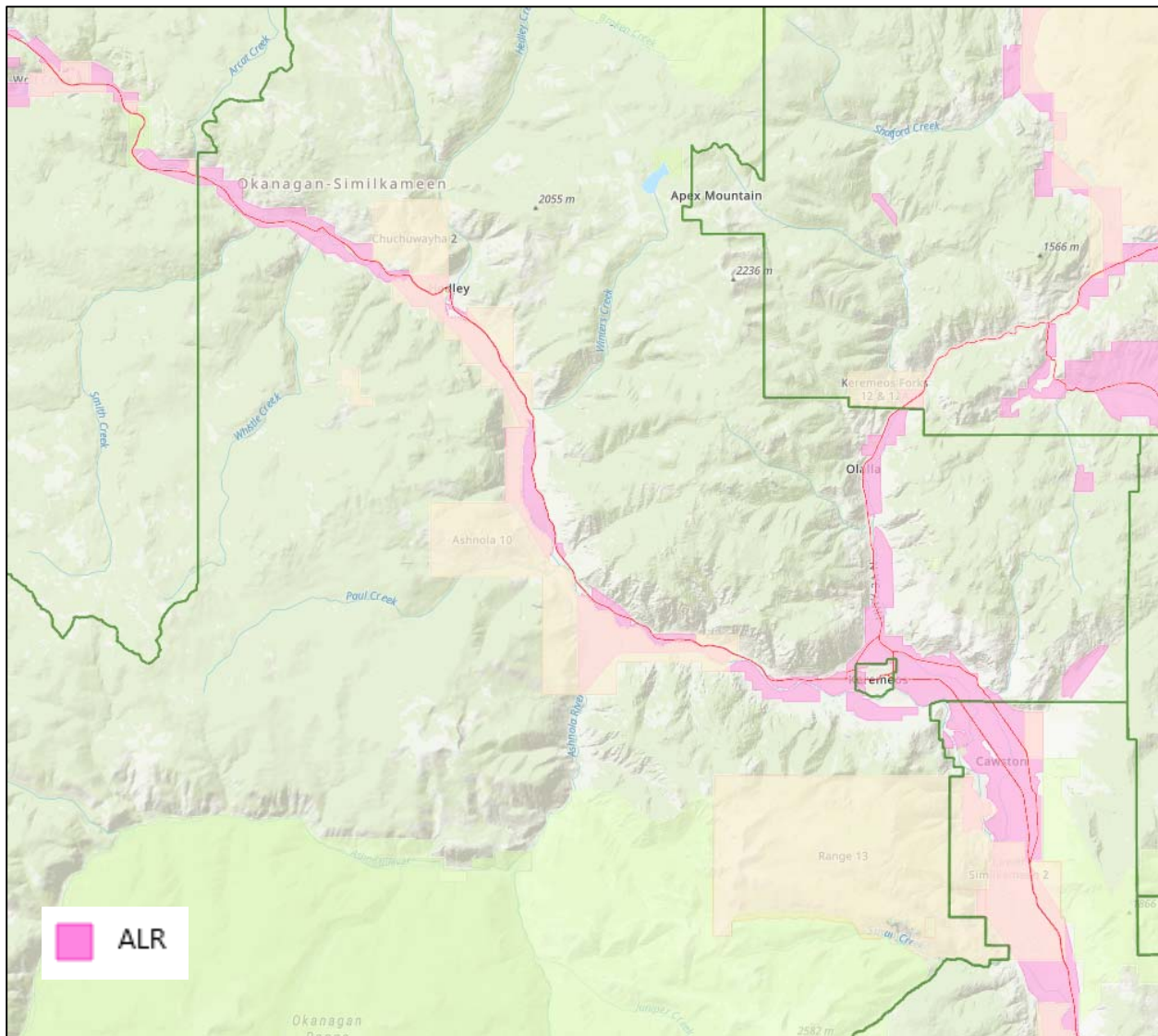
Lands classified as Agricultural (AG) are generally used or intended to be used for agricultural operation or activity generally including the production of livestock, poultry, farmed game, fur bearing animals, crops, fruit, grain, vegetables, milk, eggs, honey, mushrooms, wood and fibre crops, grapes and horticultural and aquacultural products, as well as activities associated with the production and processing of these items.

Approximately 1.8% of the Electoral Area “G” land base is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The ALR is a provincially-designated reserve in which agriculture is recognized as the priority and use of the land is regulated by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). This includes the subdivision of land, permitted non-farm uses, the removal and deposit of soil and fill, and the exclusion of land from the ALR. In other Electoral Areas, ALR lands are generally designated as Agriculture (AG), with exceptions made for existing non-farm uses that existed prior to the creation of the ALR in 1972 (i.e. residential subdivisions, campgrounds, etc.).

It was determined that approximately 4,326 ha of land, or 2% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” should be considered for designation as AG.

Most of these lands are found in the valley bottom and adjacent to Highway 3 & 3A and play a significant part of the overall economy of Electoral Area “G”.





**Map 7 – Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) lands in Electoral Area ‘G’**

### **3.8.3 Large Holdings (LH)**

The Large Holdings (LH) designation typically applies to rural, large privately held properties between 4.0 ha and 8.0 ha in area and includes parcels of land generally used for acreages, hobby farms, limited agriculture, ranching, grazing, and other uses that fit with the character of this area. An LH designated parcel should have a range of parcel sizes but not less than of 4.0 ha.

It was determined that approximately 239 ha of land, or 0.12% of the land base in Electoral Area ‘G’ should be considered for designation as LH.

There are lands designated as Large Holdings that are regulated under the Area ‘G’ Zoning Bylaw No. 2781, 2017 accessed from Liddicoat Road. Other Large Holding lands are interspersed throughout the Electoral Area ‘G’, generally abutting either Highway 3 or Highway 3A.

### **3.8.4 Small Holdings (SH)**

The Small Holdings (SH) designation includes parcels of rural, privately held land generally used for rural residential, part time farming, limited agriculture, home industry and other uses that fit with the character of the area. As with Large Holdings, SH designations are generally located outside the ALR.

It was determined that approximately 77 ha of land, or 0.04% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” should be considered for designation as SH.

Most of these lands are found interspersed along Highway 3 and Highway 3A near Hedley, rural Keremeos and Olalla and are smaller than 4 ha.

### **3.8.5 Low Density Residential (LR)**

The Low Density Residential (LR) designation includes parcels of land that have generally been developed to single detached dwellings, mobile homes, and duplexes and can include complementary secondary uses such as daycares, preschools, and small parks which are integral to a low-density residential neighbourhood.

It was determined that approximately 107 ha of land, or 0.05% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” should be considered for designation as LR.

Most of these lands are found along Highway 3 and Highway 3A, including the majority of the Olalla and Hedley communities, and the historic residential developments in rural Keromeos.

### **3.8.6 Medium Density Residential (MR)**

The Medium Density Residential (MR) designation includes parcels of land that have generally been developed to townhouses, triplexes, fourplexes, and can include complementary secondary uses such as daycares, preschools, and small parks, which are integral to a medium density area.

Medium density residential development is not common in Electoral Area “G”. Lands to be considered for MR designation include less than one hectare of land, or 0.0002% of the land base in Electoral Area “G”.

### **3.8.7 Commercial (C)**

The Commercial (C) designation includes parcels of land that have generally been developed to smaller-scale, neighbourhood-serving commercial activities, such as retail stores and restaurants.

It was determined that approximately 2 ha of land, or 0.001% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” should be considered for designation as C.

Most of these lands are found within the Hedley townsite, with the exception of a few established stores and gas stations along Highway 3.

### **3.8.8 Tourist Commercial (CT)**

The Tourist Commercial (CT) designation includes parcels of land that have generally been developed to commercial services and activities catering to visitors and tourists, including golf courses, campgrounds, resorts, RV parks, and agri-tourism businesses, including fruit stands.

It was determined that approximately 16 ha of land, or 0.01% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” should be considered for designation as CT.

Most of these lands are found along Highway 3 between the Town of Keremeos and Hedley and include campground and RV parks catering to the travelling public.

### **3.8.9 Industrial (I)**

The Industrial (I) designation includes parcels of land that have generally been developed to construction supply centre; fleet service; food and beverage processing; freight terminal; manufacturing; outdoor storage; packing, processing and storage of farm products; salvage operation; self-storage; service industry establishment; storage and warehouse; vehicle sales and rentals; veterinary establishment; and wholesale business.

It was determined that approximately 7 ha of land, or 0.004% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” should be considered for designation as I.

Industrial lands within Area “G” are limited and include the holding ponds for the Hedley mine, a waste transfer station and a Fortis utility station.

### **3.8.10 Administrative, Cultural & Institutional (AI)**

The Administrative, Cultural & Institutional (AI) designation includes public, non-profit or utilities uses such as schools, religious buildings, recreation facilities, community centres, public health facilities, community care facilities, fire halls, libraries, post offices and local government and improvement or irrigation district buildings.

The AI designation identifies local government buildings within Hedley, as well as established utilities and cemeteries along Highway 3 and Highway 3A. It was determined that approximately 42 ha of land, or 0.02% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” should be considered for designation as PR.

### **3.8.11 Parks, Recreation and Trails (PR)**

The Parks, Recreation and Trails (PR) designation includes parcels of land that have generally been developed to or designated as park and which are generally publicly owned areas that provide an opportunity for individuals to pursue leisure and recreation activities.

In other Electoral Areas, parkland includes Crown land, land owned by the Regional District, land zoned for park purposes and land designated as park on a subdivision plan. Parkland can also include land or general areas that the Regional District may have an interest in for future park or trail use.

It was determined that approximately 54,942 ha of land, or 27% of the land base in Electoral Area “G” should be considered for designation as PR and a further 8 ha as Transportation

Corridor (TC). Some of the types of park and recreation facilities under the Parks, Recreation and Trails (PR) designation or Transportation Corridor (TC) in the Plan Area include:

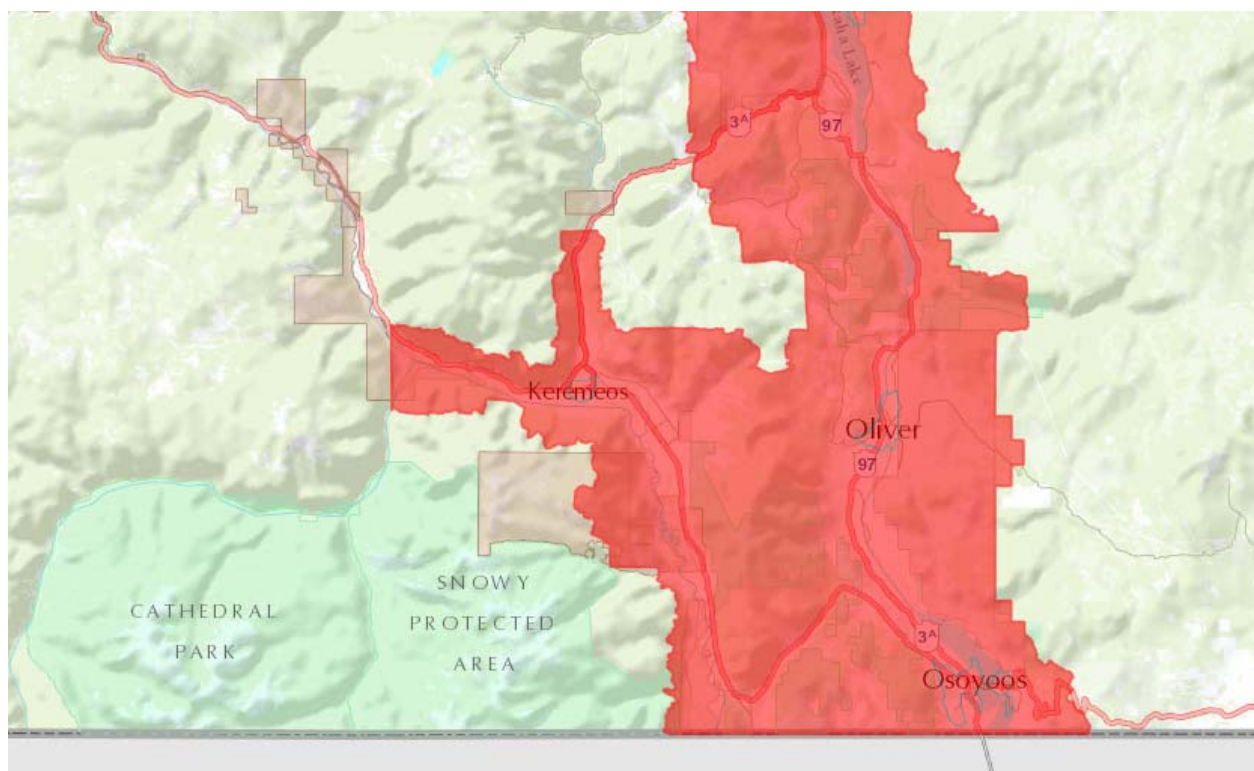
- Local Parks: There are no parks formally operated by the Regional District in Area G; however, there are neighbourhood parks/amenities in Hedley operated by community groups serving the local community (i.e. Woodlie Park and outdoor facilities on Fourth Street)
- Great Northern Railway (GNR) Trail: The sections of the GNR Trail that are publicly owned and maintained by the Regional District are designated Transportation Corridor (TC). Other portions of this historic trail are designated as park for potential future trail use.
- Provincial Recreation Areas: Cathedral Provincial Park, Cathedral Protected Area, Snowy Protected Area, Keremeos Columns Park, Stemwinder Park, Nickle Plate Provincial Park, Brent Mountain Protected Area and various recreation sites.

### **3.8.12 Natural Environment**

The South Okanagan-Similkameen is recognized as a region that combines a wide range of natural habitat areas with a large number of unique species, many of which are not found elsewhere in the province or in Canada. The area is also home to the largest number of endangered and threatened species of plants and animals in BC and Canada.

The variety of life (also called biodiversity) is very high in the South Okanagan-Similkameen, because of the region's milder climates and diversity of landscapes. Species at risk are linked to human settlement areas and land use. As the Plan Area contains significant developed areas and a variety of land uses including recreation, agriculture, forestry areas and the like, it also contains a high number of species at risk.

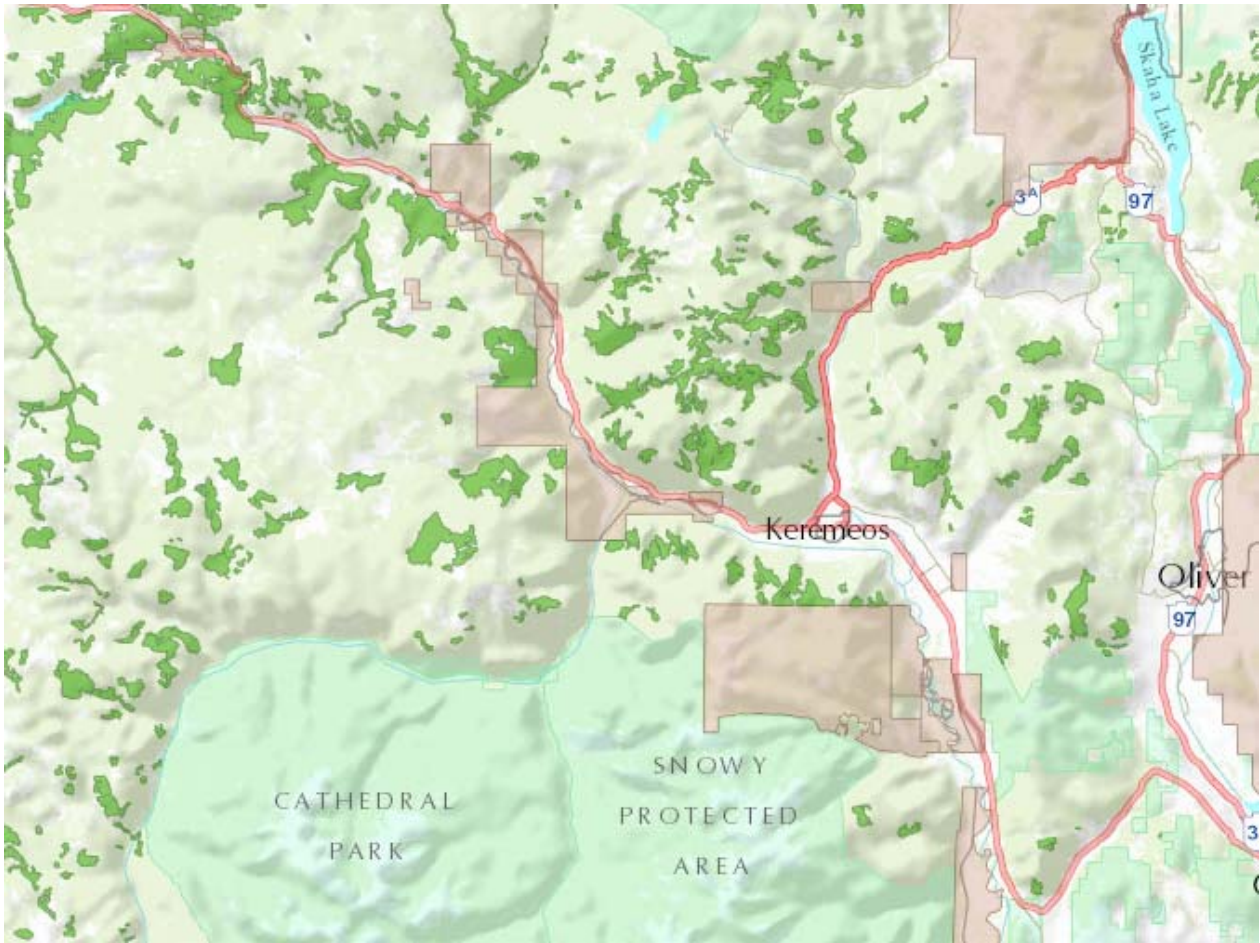
The RDOS participates in the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI) with the Provincial and Federal governments. The SEI is an inventory of rare and fragile ecosystems in the area which acts as a "flagging" tool to identify scientific information and support to help maintain biodiversity.



**Map 8: Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory Map (BC Habitat Wizard)**

The Similkameen Valley is situated in the rain shadow of the Coast and Cascade Mountains. The whole valley is seen to belong to the Southern Interior “Ecoprovince”, which has the greatest diversity of birds in the interior of British Columbia and the most breeding species of all the Ecoprovinces in the province. The low elevation areas of the Similkameen Valley are also home to the Bunchgrass (BG), Ponderosa Pine (PP), and, Interior Douglas Fir (IDF) zones. These three zones are comparatively rare within the province, and have been identified as areas of conservation concern.

The Okanagan Range Ecosystem of the Southern Interior “Ecoprovince” contains subalpine forests and sagebrush-steppe habitats in the wide, low elevation basin. Outside of protected areas, this ecosystem has been extensively logged, roaded and grazed and contains old growth management areas.



**Map 9: Old Growth Management Areas (shown in dark green)**

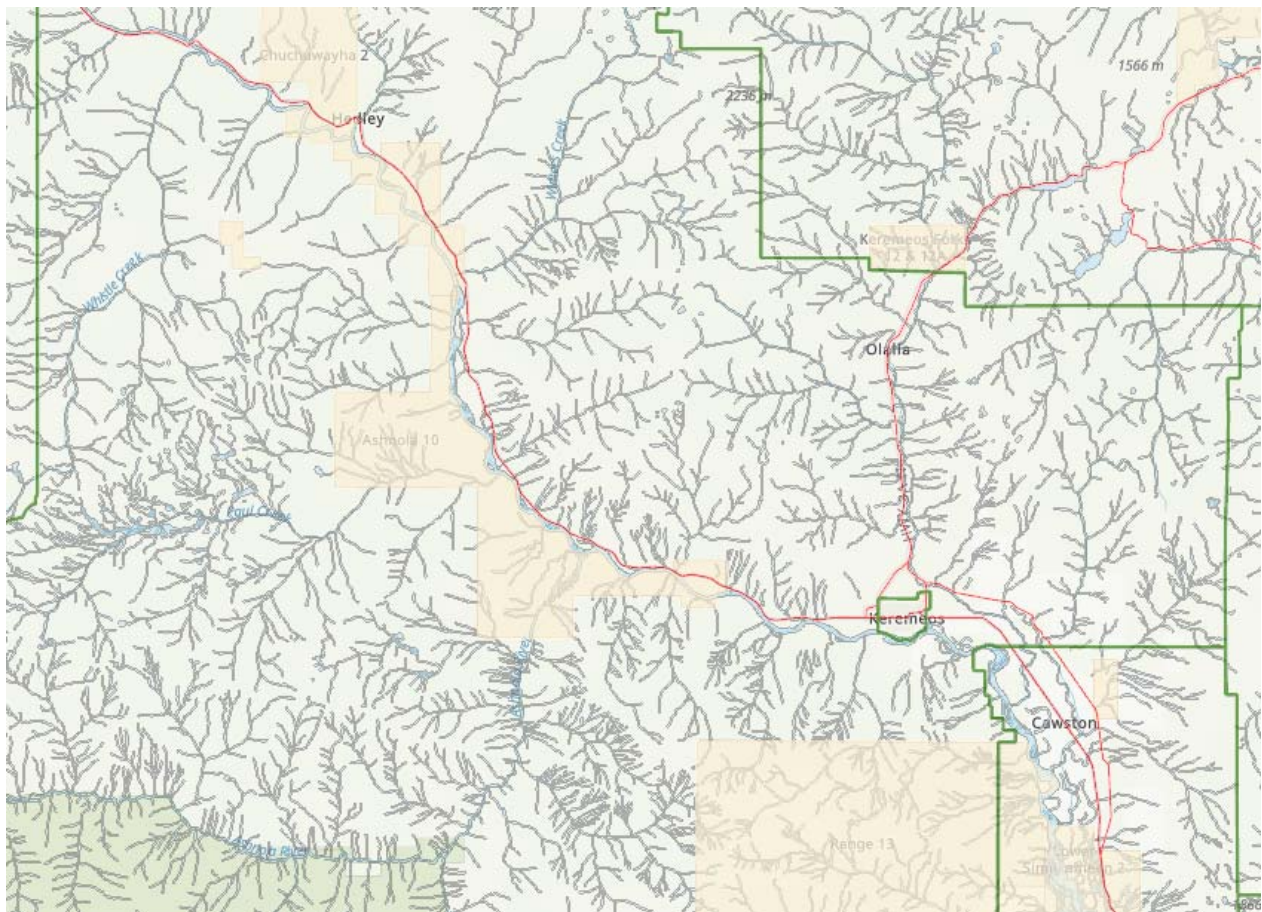
Electoral Area “G” contains many significant watercourses including the Similkameen River running adjacent to Hedley, Highway 3 and rural Keremeos (Figure 11). There are also many tributaries of the Similkameen River in Electoral Area “G” including Ashnola River, Whistle Creek, Paul Creek, McNully Creek, Hedley Creek, Broken Creek, Keremeos Creek, Olalla Creek, and Barrington Creek, among others.

Of note, Keremeos Creek runs east of Olalla, where several smaller tributaries join Keremeos Creek.



**Map 10: Larger tributaries of Similkameen River**

Riparian Areas within Electoral Area “G” are subject to Riparian Area Protection Regulation (RAPR), generally regulating development within 30 metres of a watercourse. Riparian areas have been identified throughout Electoral Area “G” (Figure 11) and are abutting or intersecting with each of the core communities of Electoral Area “G”.



**Map 11: Riparian Areas (30 m from watercourse) near Hedley, Olalla and rural Keremeos**

### **3.8.13 Infrastructure & Servicing**

#### Solid Waste Management:

In September of 2012, the Regional District Board adopted a Solid Waste Management Plan which specifies how the Regional District will manage solid waste in order to achieve a waste diversion rate of over 70% versus the diversion rate of 51% recorded in 2009.

Electoral Area “G” is part of the Campbell Mountain Landfill service area, with waste collected at the Keremeos Transfer Station. The Keremeos Transfer Station is located just north of Keremeos in Electoral Area ‘G’ off Keremeos Bypass Road on El Rancho Drive. The landfill, located at the same site, was closed in 2006 and a transfer station was constructed. Waste accepted at the transfer station is transported to and disposed of at the Campbell Mountain Landfill. The site is managed under a Crown Lease held by the RDOS. The facility accepts municipal solid waste and recyclable materials. There is a soil remediation facility on site which accepts contaminated soil which can be rehabilitated to an Urban Park standard.

The RDOS Curbside Recycling and Garbage Collection program is a mandatory service for the majority of rural residences in all Electoral Areas. The service consists of four main programs:

- Weekly garbage collection;
- Every other week recycling collection;

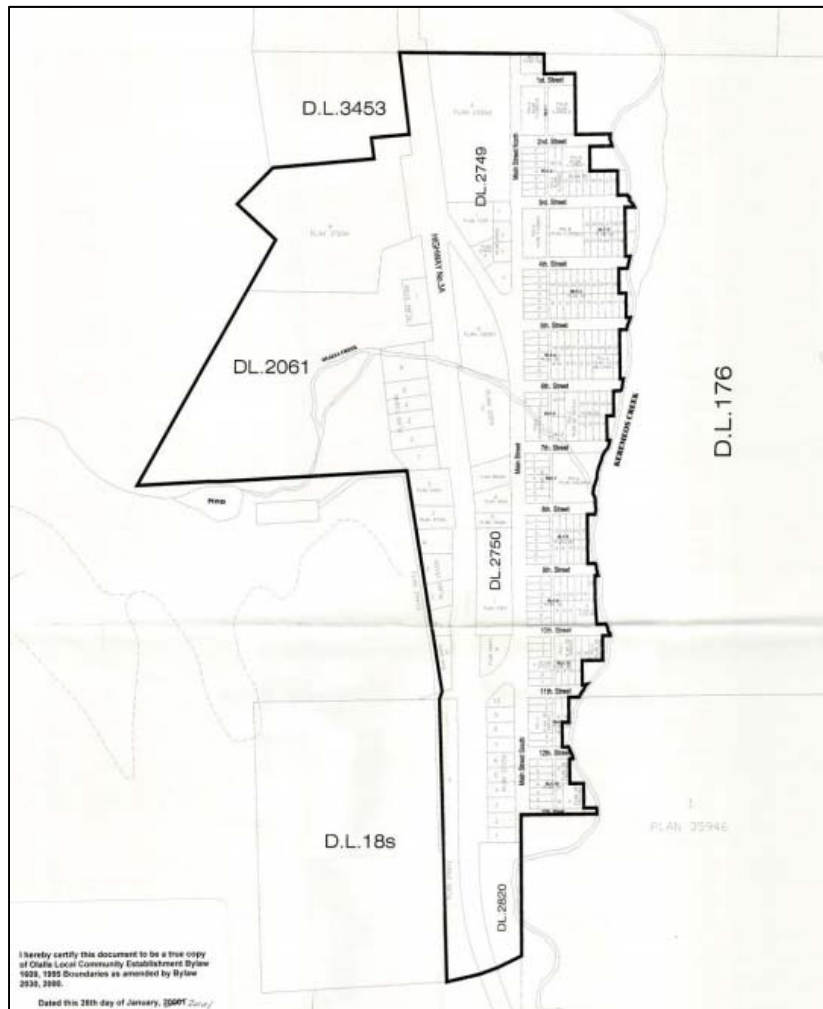


- Seasonal yard waste pickups; and
- Yearly pickup of two large items.

Water:

The Regional District currently administers the water system in the unincorporated community of Olalla, which is located approximately 7.0 km north of the Village of Keremeos. The water source for the community is a deep groundwater well, which currently supplies water to roughly 200 properties.

An upgrade of the system undertaken in 1999 included the development and construction of a new well supply pump station and concrete water reservoir as well as replacement of some of the water distribution mains.



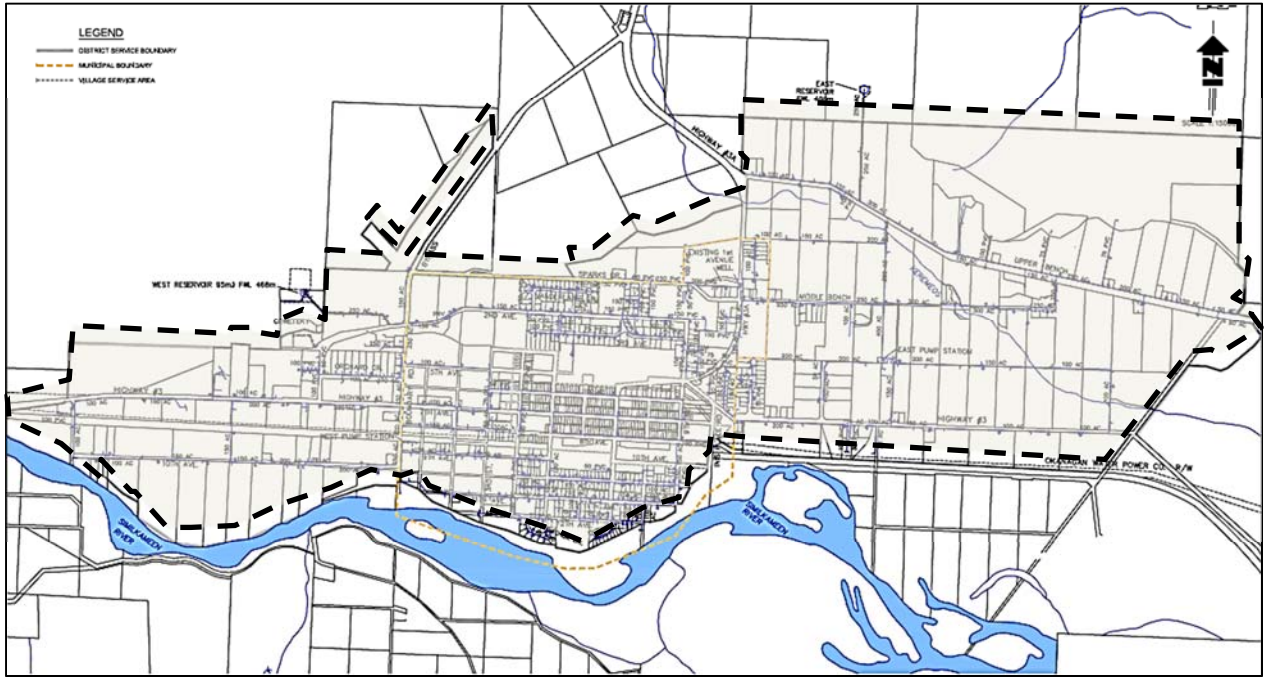
**Figure 16 – Olalla Water System Service Area Boundary (2001)**

*Keremeos Irrigation District*

The Keremeos Irrigation District (KID) supplies water to large parts of the “Rural Keremeos” area as shown on Figure 17 (below).

Groundwater has always been the main water source for the Keremeos Irrigation District. Water is pumped from the 13 wells and distributed for irrigation, stockwater, domestic indoor/outdoor, parks, institutional, commercial and industrial purposes.

Only one well is metered and actual monthly water withdrawal records are available for the period of record during 2003-2012, with annual water withdrawal volumes between 2006 and 2012 ranging from 52.4 to 103.5 ML, with an average of 79.8 ML.



**Figure 17– Keremeos Irrigation District Service Boundary (2020)**

### *Hedley Improvement District*

The Hedley Improvement District (HID) is an autonomous local government responsible for providing water distribution, fire protection, first response, and street lighting for the benefit of the residents of the town of Hedley.

Groundwater from two wells provides the main water supply for the Hedley Improvement District. Water is pumped through a distribution system to a reservoir and gravity fed to mostly domestic users (approximately 200 connections) and some commercial properties (approximately 6 connections). Surface water from Hedley Creek was used until 1972 when a flood destroyed some of the surface water infrastructure. As a result, the District decided to drill wells for groundwater. The surface licence on Hedley Creek was cancelled in 1998.

Monthly water withdrawal records (from groundwater) based on the period of record during 1991 to 2012, indicate annual water use ranging from 118 and 254 ML, and an average of 181 ML. Leakage throughout the system are estimated to be 30 ML annually.

### *Similkameen Improvement District*

The Similkameen Improvement District (SID) operates and maintains the dam and weir structure on Nickle Plate Lake. SID holds a storage licence on Nickle Plate Lake for a total of

4,071 ML and reports that they are currently (2017) storing 1,974 ML (1,850 ML for private surface water licence holders and 123 ML for Apex Mountain Ski Resorts).

During the low flow period between August 1 and October 31, SID gradually releases the 1,974 ML from Nickle Plate Lake into Nickle Plate Creek, which flows into Hedley Creek and eventually into the Similkameen River. The addition of flows from Nickle Plate Lake into the downstream creek system is intended to supplement the amount of water available to private licence holders for irrigation during the low flow period.

Additional water licences held by SID include irrigation (15,925 ML), mining-hydraulic (88.3 ML), waterworks (27,674 ML), and domestic (0.8 ML); however, these licences are not being used. The total licensed volume (including storage non-power) held by the SID is 47,760 ML.

#### *Lower Similkameen Indian Band*

The Lower Similkameen Indian Band is a license supplier of water for domestic use but information regarding their system is unknown.

#### *Other*

Many individuals also hold surface water licences for various purposes throughout the Similkameen Watershed, but there is no known information available on actual water use by these licencees.

Other private, small-scale water systems are found at the “The Crossing” facility (west of Keremeos).

All other areas are serviced through individual wells.

#### Liquid Waste Management:

There is no Liquid Waste Management Plan for Electoral Area “G”.

All properties are serviced with on-site septic or, it is assumed, package treatment plants for more intense uses, such as some of the mobile home parks that exist in the area.

### **3.8.14 Transportation**

Rural settlement areas within Electoral Area “G” are connected to the main service hubs of Princeton and Osoyoos via Highway 3 and to Penticton via Highway 3A. Highway 3 (Southern Trans-Provincial Highway) and Highway 3A (Keremeos-Kaleden Junction Highway) are designated as Controlled Access Highways by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

There are long distances between communities, particularly main hubs like Princeton and Penticton, and the rural settlement areas of Keremeos, Hedley and Ollala. Smaller communities in the Okanagan-Similkameen have a high dependency on Penticton and community hubs across the region, with long distances between communities, for daily errands, work, education and medical services. The long travel time is inconvenient for many residents to access, particularly if a vehicle is unavailable to them.

The South Okanagan Transit Future Plan, completed in 2015, provides a vision for transportation in the region. Connections within Electoral Area “G” are limited to a single Inter-

Regional route that runs between Princeton and Keremeos (via Hedley) and from Keremeos to Kaleden (via Olalla) and Keremeos to Osoyoos.

As a short-term implementation strategy (0 to 5 years), the Plan does call for the introduction a new service to run two days per week within Keremeos, and to Cawston and Olalla. This service would use a vehicle stationed in Princeton and would travel to the Keremeos area two days per week to enable access to daily needs, post office, and medical service for residents of Keremeos, Cawston and Olalla. Similarly, the Plan speaks to introducing a new service between Keremeos and Osoyoos.

The Plan also speaks to exploring options with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) for highway-side stops for manufactured home and Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) communities between Princeton and Keremeos (Hwy 3).

The 2006 RDOS Air Quality Management Plan calls for the promotion of transportation alternatives. They include the following:

- Inter-Municipal Transportation: Transit Committee should further examine the viability of inter-municipal transportation.
- Transit Schedules: Transit Committee is encouraged to regularly review schedules to make service more convenient for riders, and incorporate routes to and from significant employers.
- Car Share Programs: Communities should promote and provide facilities to support commuting options such as car share, park-and-ride, carpooling and vanpooling programs.
- Bike Paths and Trails: RDOS and local governments should prioritize the creation of inter-municipal networks of bike paths and trails systems, and encourage increased use by adding bike racks and bike lockers.
- Carpooling and Vanpooling: Individuals and businesses are encouraged to consider carpooling and vanpooling alternatives for transportation to and from work.
- Telecommuting: Encourage local government and local businesses to consider telecommuting as an option for employees

### **3.8.15 Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions**

In recognition of the importance of addressing climate change, the Regional District is a signatory to the BC Climate Action Charter, demonstrating a commitment to reducing GHG emissions.

Under the *Climate Change Accountability Act* (formerly called the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*), emission targets seek to reduce greenhouse gases by 40% below 2007 levels by 2030, and to further reduce these by 60% below 2007 levels by 2040. This complements the targets in the *Clean Energy Act*, which are a reduction of greenhouse gases of 33% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.

The *Clean Energy Act* also required designated public sector organizations to be carbon neutral by 2010 or pay offsets. To date, local governments have not been mandated to achieve carbon

neutrality under this legislation but have been encouraged to demonstrate progress towards this goal.

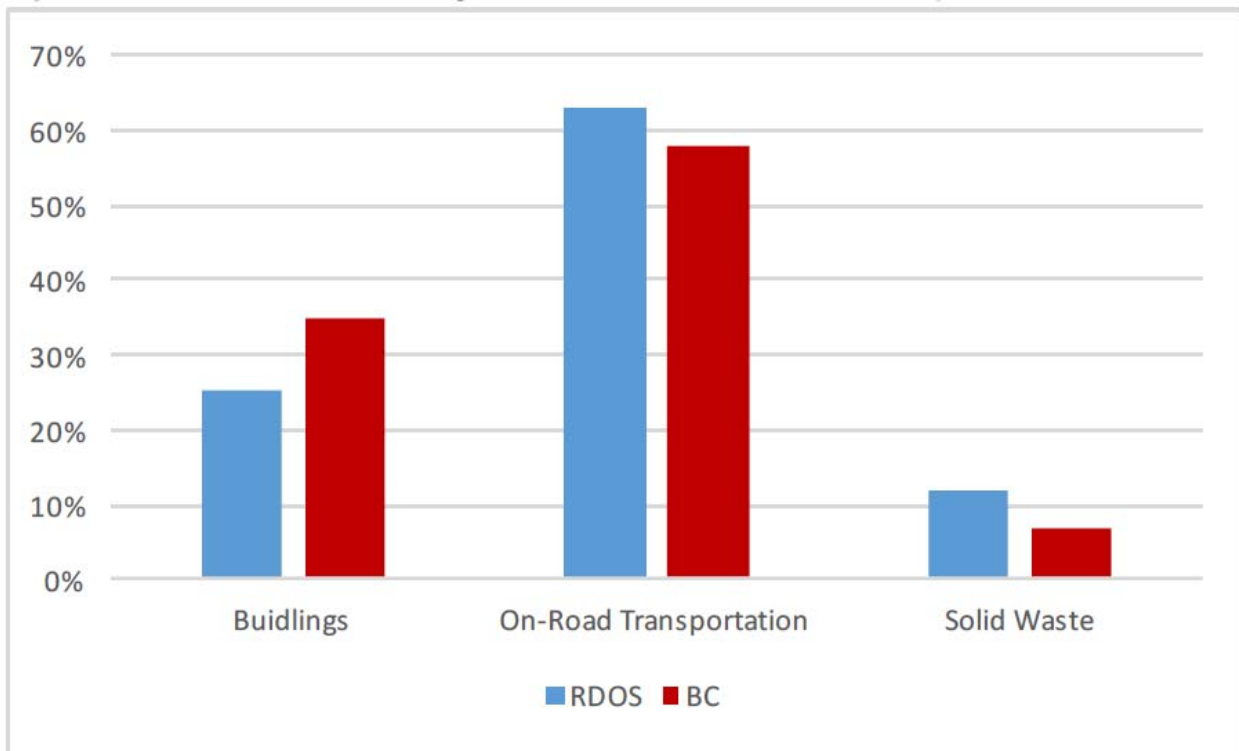
In 2011, the Regional District developed a Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP) for its member municipalities and rural areas and any new OCP Bylaw for Electoral Area “G” will have to reflect the information and recommendations contained within the CCAP.

In addition to providing important baseline emissions information, the CCAP provides more specific goals and strategic guidance on how to reduce community energy use and GHG emissions, including:

- Build energy efficient buildings:
  - 15% of new residences built to high efficiency standards; and
  - 15% of new commercial buildings built to efficiency standards.
- Improve energy efficiency of existing buildings:
  - 40% of existing dwellings and commercial buildings energy retrofitted.
- Increase use of alternative energy:
  - 15% of existing buildings will have solar panels for hot water.
- Build energy efficient developments / neighbourhoods / communities:
  - 20% of residents will live in development nodes that allow them to reduce vehicular travel.
- Improve alternative transportation amenities:
  - 10% of residents will use alternatives to vehicles one or more times per week.
- Promote more efficient vehicle use:
  - 50% of residents will not idle their vehicles;
  - 15% of residents will reduce vehicle emissions through efficient driving habits; and
  - 10% of residents will have purchased hybrid or all electric vehicles.
- Reduce and divert waste from landfills:
  - 80% of residents will be actively participating in the organics collection programs.
- Maximize value from agricultural wastes.

While the Regional District has not achieved its goal of carbon neutrality, it does conduct an annual review of emissions at the corporate level (most recently 628 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents in 2015), and has several policies and programs in place to reduce emissions at the corporate and community levels.

The latest year for which the Community Energy & Emissions Inventory (CEEI) data are available is 2010. (Note the last year for which this data was collected is 2012.). In 2010, 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in the RDOS came from buildings, 63% from on-road transportation, and 12% from solid waste. Emissions from buildings are low relative to the Provincial average, whereas emissions from transportation and solid waste are comparatively high. The slightly higher than average emissions from transportation may be explained by the relatively dispersed nature of development in the RDOS and lack of an extensive public transit network. Settlement patterns in Electoral Area “G” are highly dispersed compared to the RDOS as a whole.



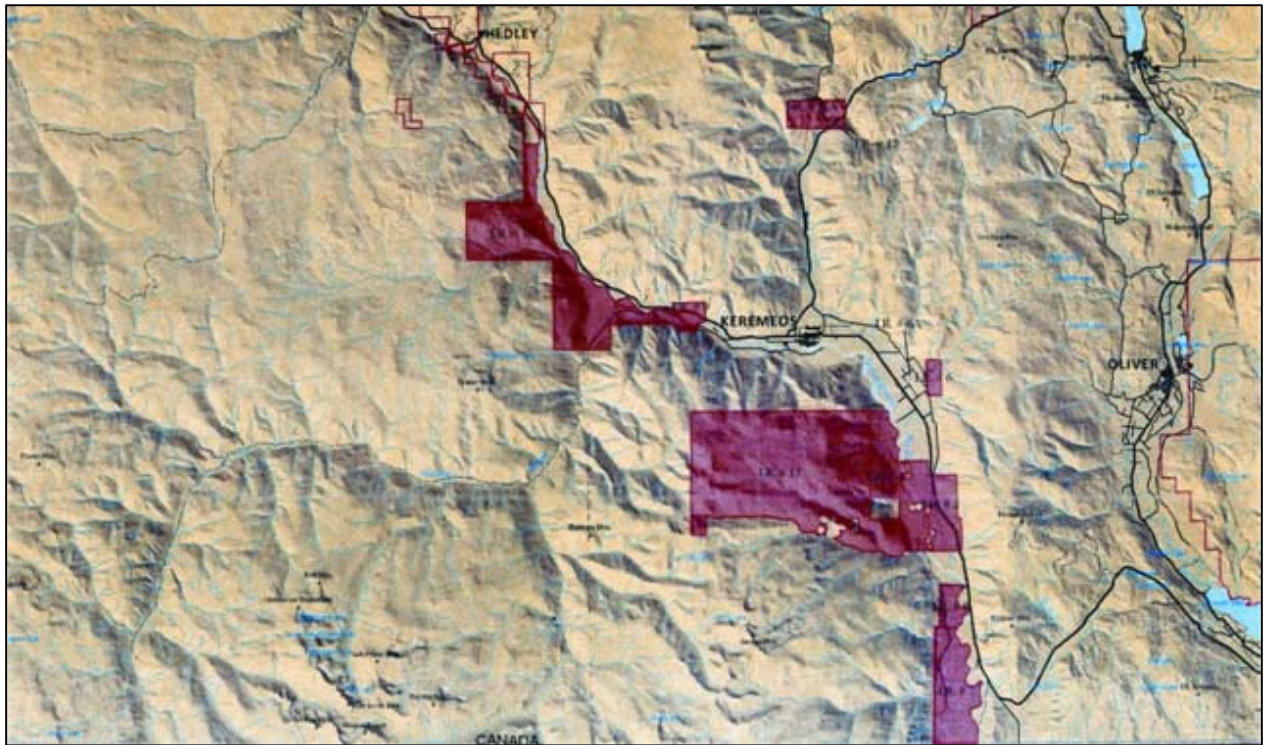
**Figure 18: Emissions from Buildings, Solid Waste, and on-Road-Transportation, RDOS & BC**

Emissions from energy used in buildings in the Regional District electoral areas collectively decreased by 2% between 2007 and 2010 (relative to a 1.5% increase in population) but increased by 1% from 2010 to 2012. In comparison, building emissions increased by 7% from 2007 to 2010 and 6% from 2010 – 2012 in the Regional District as a whole. The relatively low level of building emissions is likely due to the number of homes in Regional District electoral areas that are not connected to a gas line, and therefore are not heated with natural gas but either electricity or wood, which produce fewer emissions.

### 3.9 Indigenous peoples

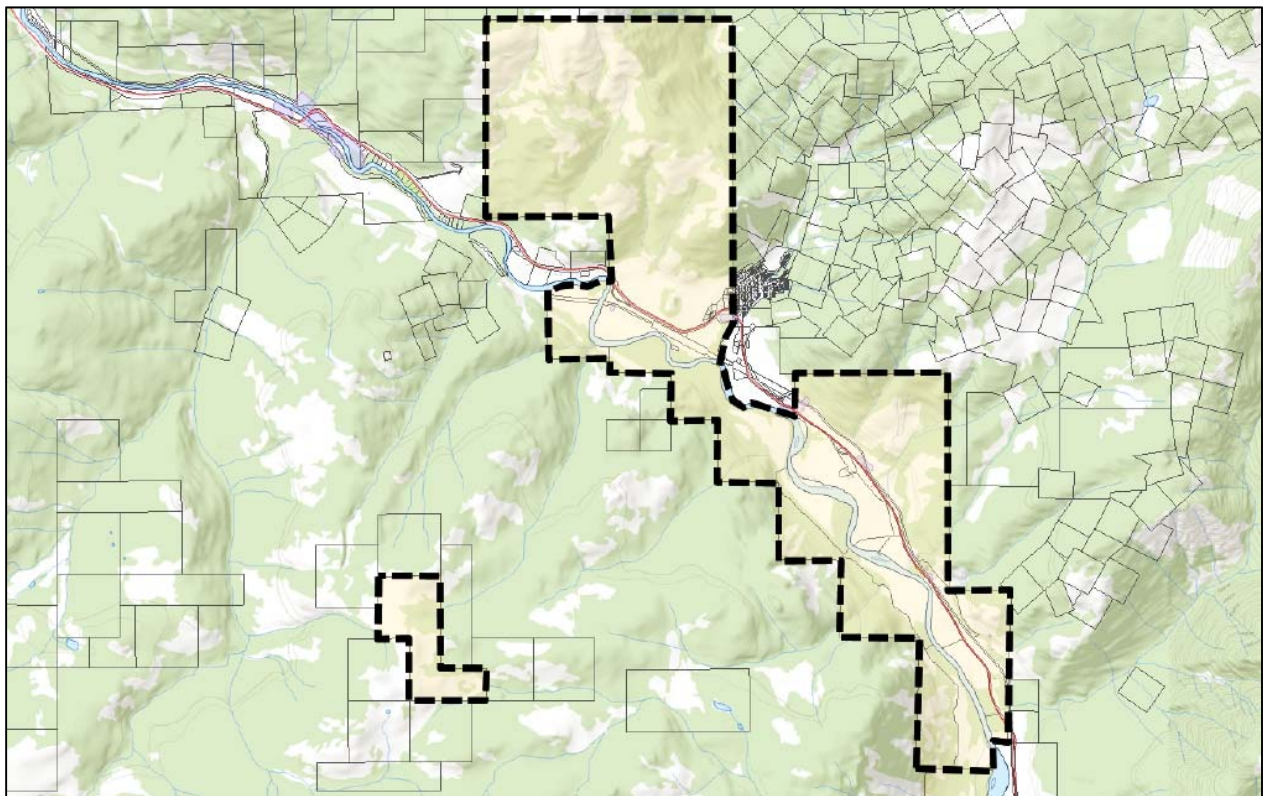
The Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) has a number of separate reserves within Electoral Area “G” that, collectively, represent a land area of 14,094.7 ha, including:

- Chopaka 7 & 8;
- Lower Similkameen 2;
- Range 13;
- Narcisse’s Farm 4;
- Blind Creek 6 & 6A;
- Alexis 9;
- Ashnola 10; and
- Chuchuwayha 2 & 2C.



**Map 12 – Lower Similkameen Indian Band Reserve Lands**

The Upper Similkameen Indian Band (USIB) has the Chuchuwayha 2 & 2C reserves within Electoral Area “G” that, collectively, represent a land area of approximately 2,292.5 ha.



**Map 13 – Upper Similkameen Indian Band Reserve Lands**

Both the LISB and USIB are members of the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), which was formed in 1981 as the inaugural Indigenous peoples government in the Okanagan. The ONA represents eight member communities including Okanagan Indian Band, Upper Nicola Band, Westbank First Nation, Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band and Lower and Upper Similkameen Indian Bands and the Colville Confederated Tribes on areas of common concern.

The ONA mandate is to work collectively to advance and assert Syilx/Okanagan nation Title and Rights over the Okanagan Nation Territory. The organization facilitates collaborative working in areas of shared interest including Title and Rights, natural resource management, social services and economic development. As equity and asset development for Indigenous peoples is being refocused across the country, there is an increasing interest from the private sector to do business with Indigenous communities.

Through a regional Economic Development function, the Chiefs' Executive Council and the Economic Development Working Group has been advancing a number of planning and development initiatives.

### **3.9.1 Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB)**

The following information is derived from the web-site of the Lower Similkameen Indian Band (<https://www.lsib.net>):

*The Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) is a small, geographically isolated community in the Similkameen Valley, located in the South Central Interior of British Columbia. The Lower Similkameen Indian Reserve covers 15,276.4 hectares and services a total of 11 reserves, divided into pockets of land stretching over 90 kilometres. The Bands current membership is 459 members, half of which reside on reserve.*

*Located in the Similkameen Valley, the land base of the Lower Similkameen Indian Band is a combination of distinctive desert lands, luscious valley lands, mountainous alpine and fertile wetlands. The mountainous region contains various streams, creeks, rivers and lakes. The pristine back country offers the beauty of nature as it should exist. The area is known for its diversity in agriculture through ranching, farming and orchards. Natural resource development in logging, restoration and forest management is also important in this area.*

#### *History*

*The Similkameen people have a history with the land that spans thousands of years in what is now Washington State and the Province of British Columbia. The Similkameen People were originally a nomadic people that moved from location to location, mainly due to the ever changing availability of foods and climates.*

*There were certain criteria that had to be met, for an encampment or village site to be located. The potential areas had to have Look-Out Points, Nearby Food and Water Sources, Wood Availability, and Hunting Grounds .*

*The original Native Encampment in the Keremeos area was located where Bear's Fruit Stand now presides.*

*The population of this encampment has been estimated to be between 800 – 1000 people. This encampment had a good water supply, had good look-out points, and was easily*



*defended. There was another encampment located nearby, at what is now the Rocking Chair Ranch. This encampment had an estimated 500 people living there. They had a fresh-water spring, that provided an excellent source of water. Also at this location, was a plentiful supply of reeds and tulies.*

*Before and upon Contact with Non-Natives, the Dwellings that the Similkameen people stayed in consisted of Pit Houses, Tulie Shelters, Ntamlken Lodges, and Winter Kickwillies. Pit Houses were made of wood and hemp. Tulie Shelters were made of reeds, wood and hemp. Ntamlken Lodges were made with reeds, wood and hemp rope. Summer Lodges were made of poles and fir boughs. Winter Kickwillies were made of poles, grass, bark, tulies, and skins of animals.*

*Originally, the Similkameen people had a social structure which was governed by a line of Hereditary Chiefs within the greater community. Each village was led by a Chief that cared for the particular needs of that village. Advisors known as Wise/Good Men and Women assisted the Chiefs with the difficult decisions that had to be made.*

*Prior to Contact with Non-Natives, the Similkameen people would gather seasonally to trade goods with Neighbouring Tribes. Depending on which season it was, the locations would vary. At these different sites, the number of people that gathered to trade could number anywhere from 2000 – 5000 people. At these trading sites, sometimes the different tribes would compete in games as a form of social gathering and also to demonstrate their strength as a people.*

*The coming of Non-Natives to the Similkameen can be mainly attributed to the expansion of the Hudson's Bay Trading Company, not to mention Missionaries that were sent to live amongst the native population. Sometime after this, more Non-Natives settled in the Similkameen area during the Gold Rush.*

### **3.9.2 Upper Similkameen Indian Band (USIB)**

The following information is derived from the web-site of the Upper Similkameen Indian Band (<http://www.mascotmine.com>):

*Today the Upper Similkameen Indian Band is a thriving community of over 200 Band members. The band manages its community affairs through the administration of diverse federal programs and services, such as health, education, social development, housing, counseling services and other governmental functions.*

*In recent years our band has increasingly become involved in the business community and we have become one of the largest employers in the area. In particular, we have interests in forestry in the Similkameen Valley: including ownership of a timber license, harvesting contracts, a woodlot, infrastructure development capabilities and a silviculture division.*

*The Band also has an active Natural Resources department which undertakes environmental and archaeological projects as well as research activities including the research for the interpretive program for the Mascot Mine Tours and the Snaza'ist Discovery Centre. Come and participate in our new archaeology program at the Snaza'ist Discovery Centre.*

*Our Territory*

*Oral tradition tells us that the Upper Similkameen people have lived in this valley since time immemorial. Our people live along the banks of the Similkameen and its tributaries. Our traditional territory is located in the upper Similkameen watershed between the US-Canada border (to the south), the Skagit Valley (to the west) and Aspen Grove (to the north).*

*Our name for the Hedley area is Snaza'ist (sna-za-ee-st), meaning striped rock place but there is more to it than just a name. Our elders tell us that chipmunk was teasing sasquatch and in his quest to get back at the chipmunk he kept swiping at the rocks and causing the stripes. Sasquatch finally got the chipmunk and that is why the chipmunk also has stripes like the rocks.*

The USB Band Office is located within the Snaza'ist Discovery Centre in Hedley.

### **3.9.3 Memorandum of Understanding**

The Upper Similkameen Indian Band, Town of Princeton and Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen Area (Electoral Area "H") originally entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2007 in order to provide a framework for increased collaboration and communications "so that a mutually beneficial relationship is maintained."

In 2019, this MoU was identified as requiring updating, primarily to include Electoral Area "G", and was endorsed by the Regional District Board at its meeting of June 20, 2019.

Amongst other things, the Regional District has committed to:

- i) To support the development and understanding of aboriginal issues including heritage, culture and economics.*
- ii) To create and maintain open and mutually beneficial communications, that will provide the foundation of trust and lead to expanded opportunities for the present and future residents of the Similkameen Valley.*

### **3.9.4 Archeological Sites**

There are a number of provincially registered archeological sites within Electoral Area "G" and sites of importance to local Indigenous peoples.

The Regional District does not maintain its own data on these sites, and anyone interested in more information is encouraged to contact the Province and local Indigenous Bands.