

# South Okanagan

# Regional Growth Strategy

BYLAW 2770, 2017



*This Bylaw has been consolidated for  
Convenience only and includes all  
Amendments to the text up to:  
**October 18, 2018***



#### Bylaw History

Bylaw No. 2421, 2007 (RGS)

First and Second Reading – June 21, 2007

Reread – January 10, 2008

Reread – October 16, 2008

Reread – October 22, 2009

Public Hearing – December 8 and 9, 2009

Third Reading – March 18, 2010

Adopted – April 1, 2010

Bylaw No. 2421.01, 2011 (GHG)

Adopted – September 15, 2011

Bylaw 2770, 2017 (minor update)

Adopted – January 19, 2017

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# REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

## SOUTH OKANAGAN REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

### BYLAW NO. 2770, 2017

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A bylaw to adopt the South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy

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WHEREAS a regional board may develop, adopt, implement, monitor and a review a regional growth strategy under Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*;

AND WHEREAS the Regional Board of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, by resolution dated January 7, 2016, initiated the review of the “Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen Sub-regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2421, 2007”, pursuant to Section 433 of the *Local Government Act*;

AND WHEREAS the Board of Directors gave notice to affected local governments on November 4, 2016 that included information that the proposed amendment may be determined to be minor in nature;

NOW THEREFORE the Regional Board of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. the “Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen Sub-regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2421, 2007”, is hereby repealed;
2. pursuant to Section 443 of the *Local Government Act*, Schedule ‘A’ attached to and forming part of this bylaw is hereby designated as the “South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy”; and
3. this bylaw may be cited as the “South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2770, 2017”.

READ A FIRST TIME on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2017.

READ A SECOND TIME on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2017.

READ A THIRD TIME on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2017.

ADOPTED this 19<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2017.

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Chair

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Chief Administrative Officer



## Part 1: Introduction and Context

### INTRODUCTION

~~The South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was launched in 2004, adopted in 2010, amended in 2011, and updated in 2016 through a minor update process. The South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was launched in 2004, adopted in 2010, amended in 2011, updated in 2016 through a minor update process and was the subject of a major amendment in 2025 to update, amongst other things, the Housing and Development objectives and policies.~~

It is a partnership between the Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS), the City of Penticton, the Town of Oliver, the Town of Osoyoos, and the District of Summerland to manage growth in the South Okanagan in manner that is consistent with long-term social, environmental and economic objectives.

The South Okanagan RGS applies to the southern-most reaches of the Okanagan Valley (see map 1) and includes the municipalities of Oliver, Osoyoos, Penticton and Summerland, and Electoral Areas “A”, “C”, “D”, “E”, “F” and “I”.<sup>1</sup>

This RGS is comprised of three parts with supporting maps. Part one introduces the RGS process and planning context. Part two provides the seven RGS Goals and associated planning objectives and supporting policies. Part three provides details on the implementation and monitoring of the RGS.

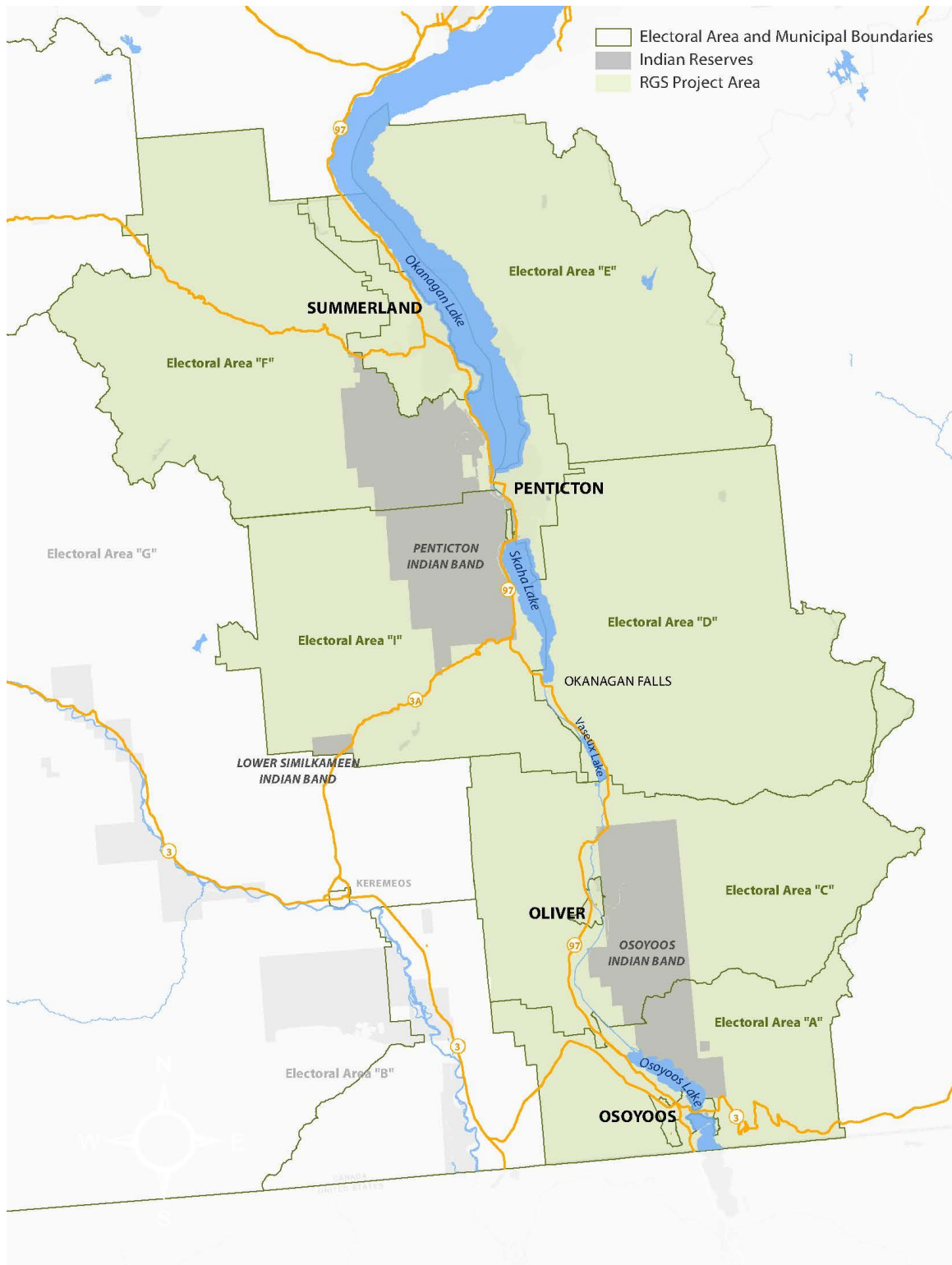


Kettle Valley Railway. © RDOS

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<sup>1</sup> Amendment Bylaw No. 2770.01, 2018 – adopted October 18, 2018.

**Map 1: South Okanagan RGS area<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> Amendment Bylaw No. 2770.01, 2018 – adopted October 18, 2018.

## PURPOSE

Part 13 of the *Local Government Act* establishes the purpose of an RGS: “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.”

The RGS provides the South Okanagan, and the communities that make up the area, a high-level framework for future decision-making and land use with the aim of preserving the region’s high quality of life and unique environmental features over the strategy’s 20-year period. It provides a shared regional vision of the South Okanagan and commits area municipalities and the RDOS to meet its broad, mutual social, economic and environmental goals.

This RGS also promotes coordination between area municipalities and the RDOS on achieving strategy goals that cross municipal boundaries. It also creates clear links with other regional partners (the Province, Okanagan Basin Water Board, South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program, Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, etc.) who should be engaged to help implement it.

At the core of this RGS is a commitment to broad-based, long-term sustainable development. The balancing of social, economic, and environmental dimensions of this commitment are clearly expressed in the seven policy areas and supporting goals:

1. ~~Housing and Development: Focus development to serviced areas in designated Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.~~  
Housing and Development: Focus development to serviced areas in designated Growth Areas and Resort Areas
2. **Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks:** Protect the health and biodiversity of ecosystems in the south Okanagan.
3. **Infrastructure and Transportation:** Support efficient and effective infrastructure services and an accessible multi-modal transportation network.
4. **Community Health and Wellbeing:** Foster healthy, safe communities that provide accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities.
5. **Regional Economic Development:** Achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous South Okanagan regional economy.
6. **Engagement and Collaboration:** Foster and support regional cooperation, collaboration and civic engagement.
7. **Energy Emissions and Climate Change:** Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate.

The input and engagement of residents who live, work and play in the South Okanagan was integral to developing the RGS and remains a fundamental ingredient to implementing it. In this context, residents have an important responsibility in the future to participate where possible to achieve the strategic actions, monitor and gauge whether the RGS vision is being met, and to support action and change where the RGS goals are not being met.

## **PLANNING CONTEXT**

~~The South Okanagan RGS was initiated in 2004 and involved several rounds of revisions and modification. It was developed over three phases and had First and Second Readings on June 21, 2007. The Draft RGS Bylaw was then re-read on January 10, 2008, October 16, 2008 and on October 22, 2009. The final Bylaw was adopted on April 1, 2010 and adopted again on September 15, 2011 with a minor amendment that included a section on greenhouse gas reductions as mandated by new Provincial legislation.~~

~~Regional Context Statements for RDOS member governments were developed and adopted beginning with the Town of Osoyoos in July 2011, the Town of Oliver in October 2011, and both the City of Penticton and the District of Summerland in July 2012.~~

~~The *Local Government Act* requires local governments to review their regional growth strategies for possible amendment at least once every five years. As 2015 marked five years since the RGS was adopted, the RDOS conducted a review of the RGS to determine whether the RGS required updating, and should it require updating, whether a “minor” or “major” update of the RGS was required.~~

~~A consultant team was engaged to conduct the preliminary review with senior planning staff from RDOS, the City of Penticton, the District of Summerland, and the Town of Osoyoos, who functioned as a project Steering Committee for the project. Based on the review, it was determined that there were significant opportunities to reorganize and improve the organization and structure of the RGS and to revise and edit policies to improve clarity and reduce redundancy.~~

~~The study findings were brought forward to the RDOS Board for their consideration with the understanding that the revisions would be accommodated through a “minor amendment” revision process, as outlined in the *Local Government Act*. The Board made the recommendation to proceed with the minor amendment in December 2015 and the project to carry out the work was launched in June 2016 and completed in October 2016.~~

## **PLANNING CONTEXT**

The South Okanagan RGS was initiated in 2004 and involved several rounds of revisions and modification.

Regional Context Statements for RDOS member governments were subsequently developed and adopted by the City of Penticton, District of Summerland, Town of Osoyoos and the Town of Oliver.

Since its adoption, the RGS has been the subject of a number of amendments, including:

- a minor amendment to include a section on greenhouse gas reduction targets as mandated by new Provincial legislation (2011);



- a minor amendment to improve its organization, improve the clarity of policies, and reduce redundancies (2017); and
- a minor amendment to reflect the creation of Electoral Area “I” (2018).

In 2025 it was determined to further amend the RGS to reflect new provincial legislative requirements, new policy directions contained in recent Electoral Area Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw reviews as well as the incorporation of Okanagan Falls as a municipality.



## REGIONAL CONTEXT

The South Okanagan is a special and valued area. Located in the south-central interior of British Columbia, it covers a large geographical area that extends south from the District of Summerland to the US border at the Town of Osoyoos, east to Anarchist Mountain and west to Apex.

The South Okanagan region is a mountainous, semi-arid, landscape with intensive agricultural production (tree fruits, grapes, vegetables) in the valley bottom and rangeland in the grasslands below the tree line. Housing and development is concentrated primarily in the valley bottoms, although there is now a small year-round population at Apex.

The larger 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.

With its mild and relatively dry climate, the region is home to a range of productive, but sensitive ecosystems, including wetlands, riparian areas, grasslands and shrub-steppe, and forests. Collectively and individually, these ecosystems support both provincially and nationally significant biodiversity, including many at-risk species.

Agriculture is a major contributor to the local economy, as the semi-arid region has exceptional growing conditions, with irrigation, fertile soil, hot summers and relatively mild winters. Tree fruits and grapes are two major crops in the South Okanagan, with major tree fruit processing facilities and a growing number (over 50) of well-known, award-winning vineyards that attract a significant number of tourists in the summer months.

With the area's lakes, climate and recreational activities, tourism is another major contributor to the regional economy, including agricultural, sport, and cultural tourism.

Community engagement carried out for the original RGS confirmed that residents strongly value the area's high quality of life and are committed to protecting and stewarding the region's unique environmental, agricultural and community assets. Other regional and municipal planning initiatives carried out since the original RGS was completed, including Official Community Plan updates and environmental planning programs, have strongly confirmed residents' values and commitments.



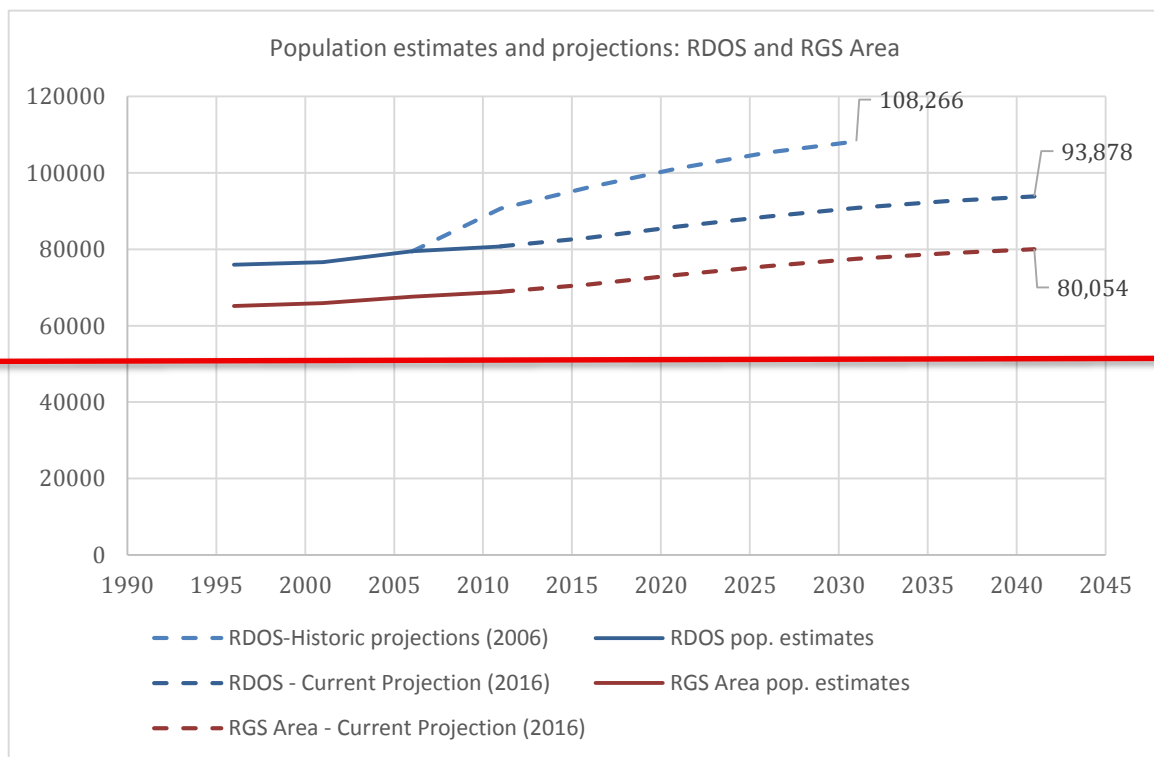
## POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Population growth in the RDOS since 2006 has been much lower than was originally projected when the RGS was developed. The projected growth at the time (for the RDOS as a whole) was based on an expected annual increase of 1.45%, which would result in an additional 29,000 residents by 2031; the projected average annual growth has been revised down considerably to approximately 0.6%.

Figure 2 shows past and current projections for the RDOS, and current projections for the RGS Study Area. The two solid lines illustrate how the South Okanagan's growth tracked fairly consistently with the RDOS as a whole from 1996 to 2011. According to the 2011 census, the RDOS numbered 80,742 and the RGS Study Area numbered 68,852.

The current projections by BC Stats resume assumptions for more robust growth from 2016 to 2041, with an annual rate of 0.84%; the areas are projected to add approximately 12,000 or 13,000 new residents by 2041.<sup>3</sup> These figures do not include population numbers for on-reserve First Nations in the RGS area (Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band).

**Figure 1: RDOS and RGS population estimates and projections**

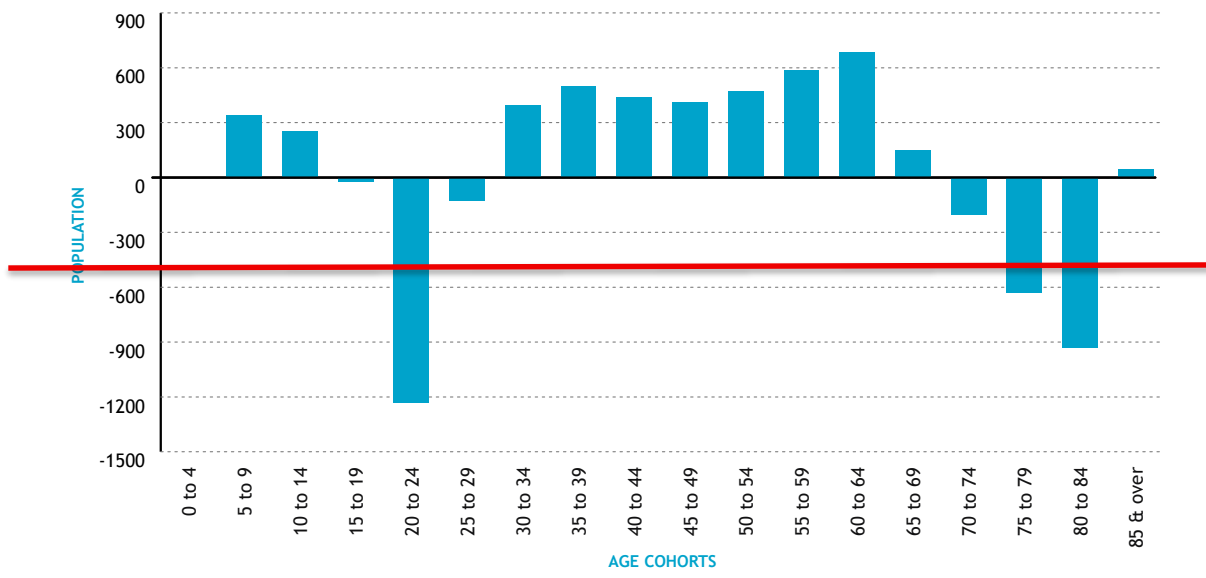


<sup>3</sup> Population projections from BC Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. are only available at certain scales; projections for the RDOS have been used to develop projections for the RGS study area.

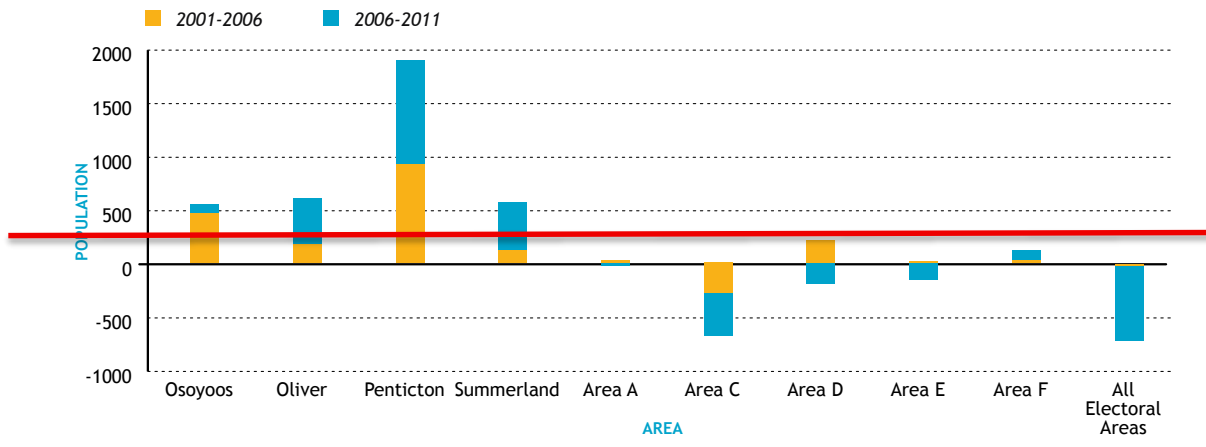
<sup>3</sup> Mortality rates also plays into this change, but is relatively small for most age groups, so changes are primarily a result of migration patterns

Figure 2 illustrates the change in population cohorts for the region from 2006 to 2011 and shows movement patterns among the population<sup>4</sup>. The data suggests that a significant number of individuals in the 20 to 24 age cohort are leaving the region (potentially to attend school), while a number of young families (ages 5 to 14 and 30 to 44) and middle age residents (45 to 64) are arriving. It also suggests that there has been significant movement in and out of the area by other age groups, including the group aged 55 to 59, which increased by almost 10% in 2011. The increase is likely due to a significant net in migration in that age group.

**Figure 2: RDOS net change by age cohort, 2006 to 2011**



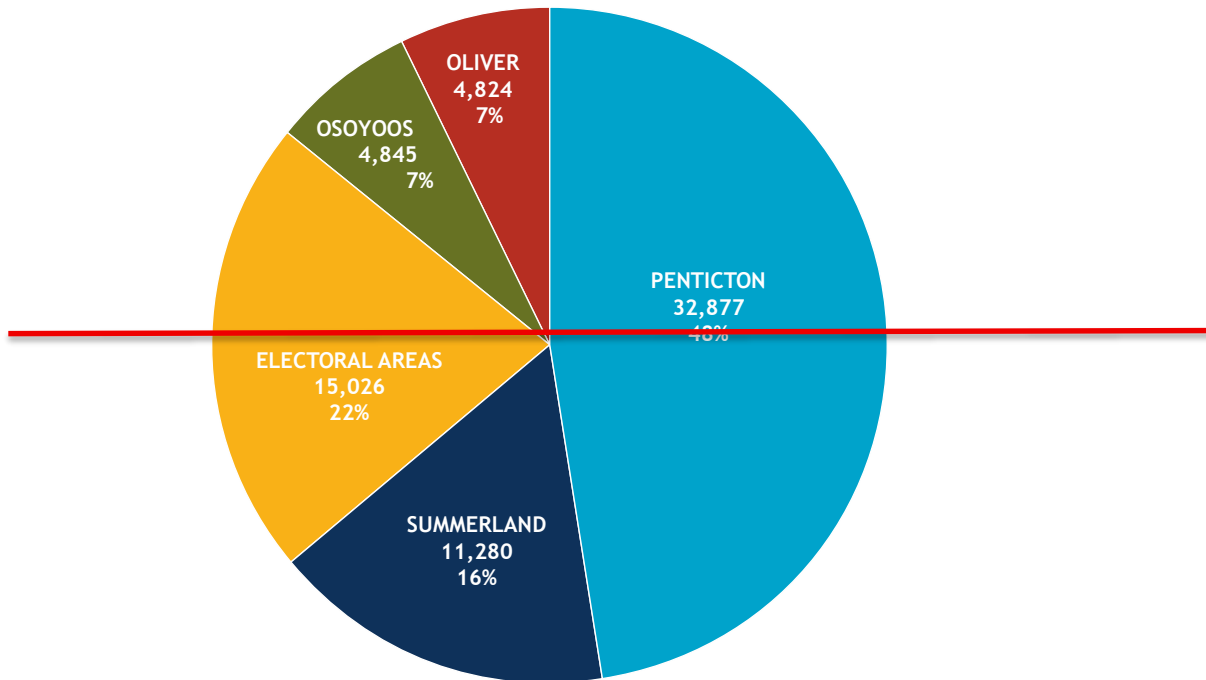
**Figure 3: 10-Year Growth by area, 2001 to 2011**





Within the RGS Study Area the population continues to urbanize. Penticton makes up approximately 48% of the population and 52% of growth from 2001 to 2011 (Figures 5 and 6); the Electoral Area populations have declined during the same time period by approximately 700 residents (4.5%).

**Figure 4:** RGS Study Area, population by sub-region, 2011



## POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

When the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted in 2010, it anticipated “a moderate population increase of more than 1.5% per year”, and a resultant total population of 101,188 by 2022. In hindsight, this estimate was overly optimistic as the average annual growth rate for the area covered by the Regional Growth Strategy was 0.63% per year.

A majority of this growth — 0.7% per year — occurred within the municipalities of Penticton, Summerland, Osoyoos and Oliver, while the Electoral Areas experienced a lesser average annual growth rate of 0.36%.

As of 2023, BC Stats population projections estimate a total population in the RGS area of 77,355, while the population of the RDOS as a whole is estimated to be 94,533.

At present, BC Stats is projecting an anticipated average annual growth for the RDOS as a whole of 0.7% between 2022 and 2046. This would result in a population of 112,834 in the RDOS region by 2046, or an increase of approximately 18,963 new residents. These

figures do not include population numbers for on-reserve First Nation communities in the South Okanagan (Penticton Indian Band and Osoyoos Indian Band).

Figure 1: RDOS and RGS population estimates and projections

Figure 2 illustrates the change in population groups for the region from 2006 to 2021 and shows movement patterns among the population. The data suggests that a number of individuals in the 14 to 24 age group are leaving the region (potentially to attend school), while a number of young adults (ages 25 to 39) are arriving. It also suggests that there has been significant movement into the area by people aged 55+, likely reflecting the appeal of the South Okanagan as a retirement destination.

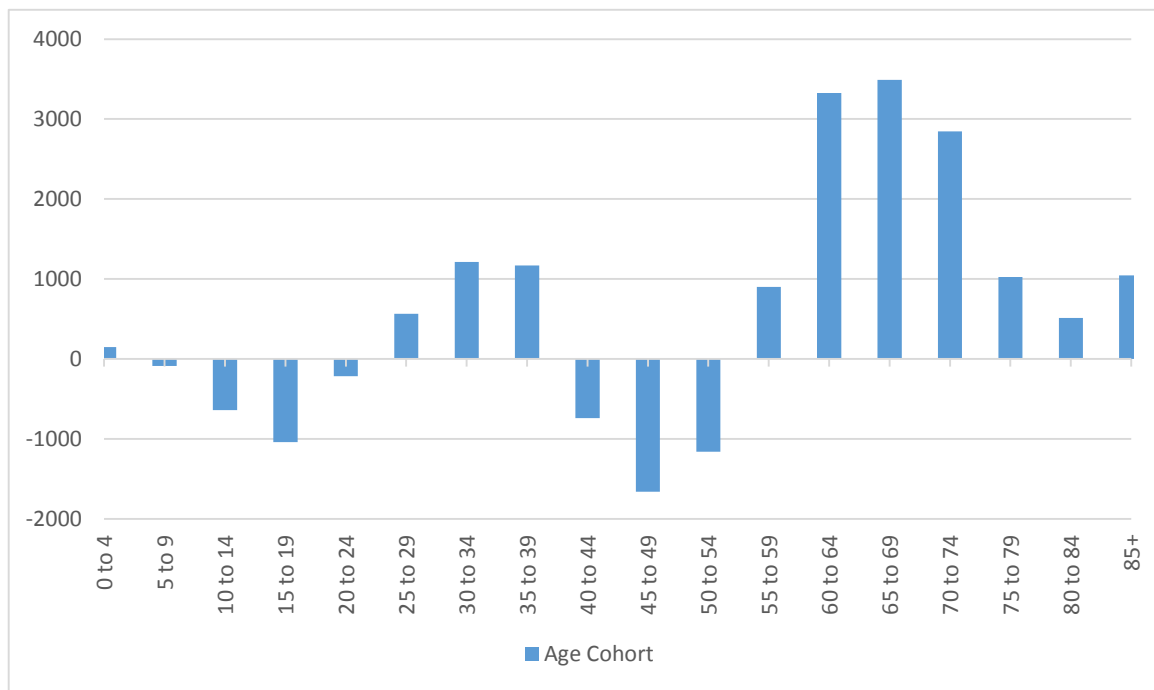


Figure 2: RDOS net change by age group, 2006 to 2021

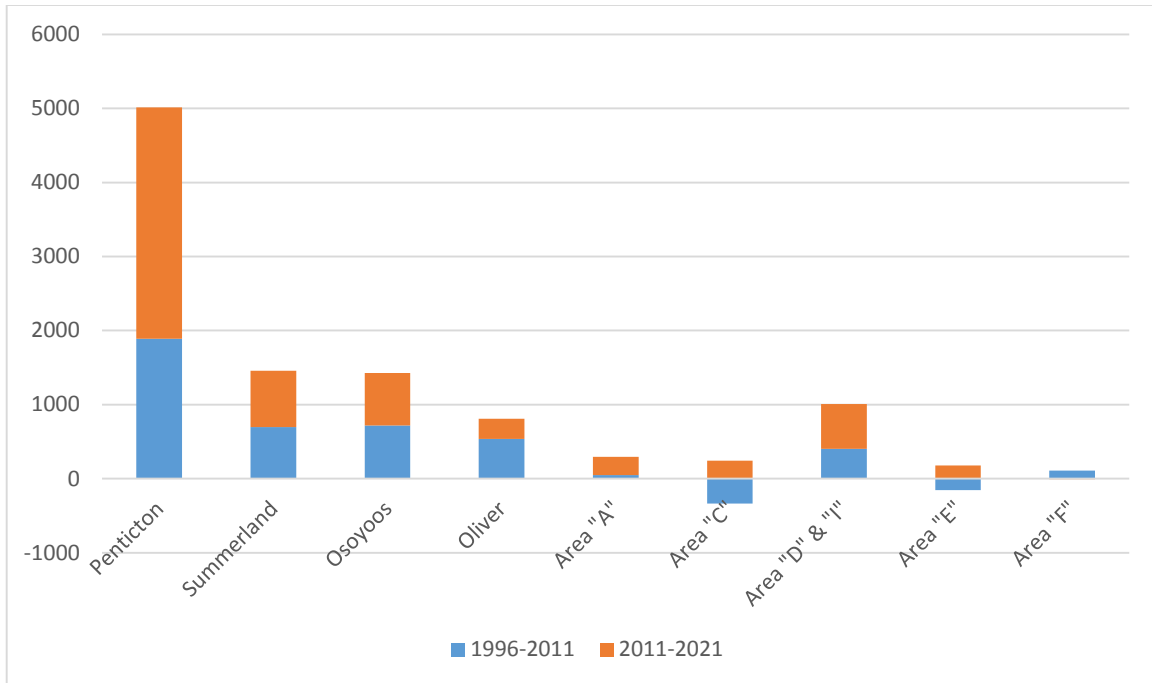


Figure 3: 25-Year Growth by area, 1996 to 2021

The South Okanagan continues to urbanize, with Penticton making up approximately 48.5% of the population and 49.9% of growth from 1996 to 2021. Whereas, the Electoral Area populations increased during the same time period by approximately 1,334 residents (13.3%).

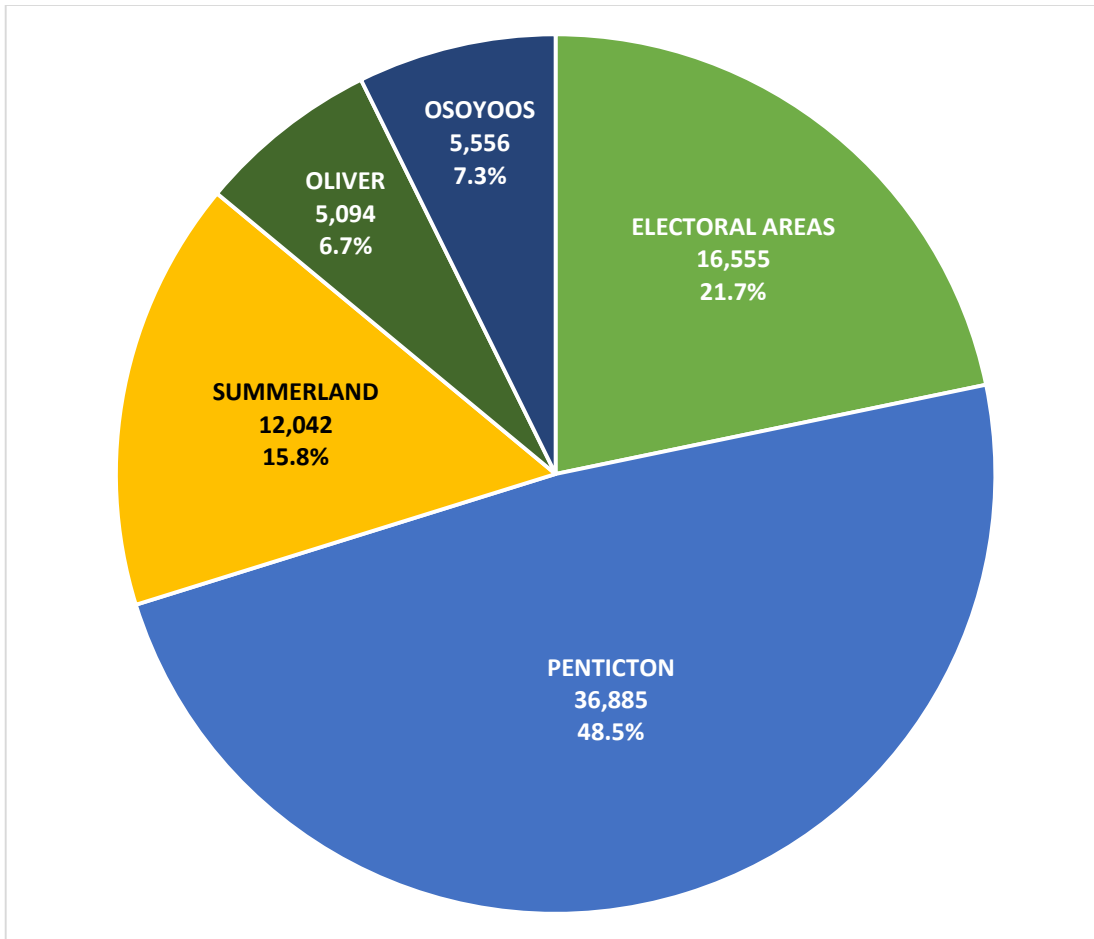


Figure 4: RGS Area, population by sub-region, 2021



## Part 2: REGIONAL POLICIES

### VISION

The RGS vision statement describes the desired future for the South Okanagan region and sets the basic direction for planning, policies and action. The vision statement was first developed through public consultation and engagement during the early RGS process.

Key elements of this regional vision expressed by South Okanagan residents during RGS engagement in 2006 and 2007 included:

*South Okanagan residents value and celebrate living in a sustainable region that balances environmental, social and economic considerations with a high quality of life and strong sense of community.*

- *The Agricultural Land Reserve is protected and respected;*
- *Rural areas experience limited population growth and maintain a strong agricultural and resource base;*
- *An integrated biodiversity conservation strategy protects priority sensitive ecosystems;*
- *The majority of future population is housed in existing urban areas;*
- *New urban development is predominantly mixed-use, higher density with reduced parking requirements;*
- *New employment is encouraged, and distributed primarily between Penticton, Oliver, Osoyoos, and Summerland;*
- *Transportation emphasizes carpooling, public transit and other alternatives to single occupant automobiles and roadway expansion;*
- *Opportunities to reduce and recycle waste are maximized; and*
- *Water and energy conservation and efficiency are supported by incentive programs and funding.*

The RGS vision, goals and strategic actions were derived from comprehensive public consultation during which residents and RGS Advisory Committees identified the community issues, values and priorities across the region. Engagement also identified two additional planning considerations:

- **Use the precautionary principle when evaluating growth management decisions:**  
The precautionary approach recognizes that when making many decisions, particularly those dealing with the natural environment and social fabric of communities, it is difficult to have perfect knowledge of all conditions and possible outcomes. When the effect of a decision is somewhat uncertain, that decision should be approached with caution with a view to mitigating any potential long-term negative impacts.

- **Establish a regional monitoring program for the RGS:** The long-term monitoring program should track a range of economic, environmental and social indicators over time. As RGS indicators are monitored annually, trends and conditions will be revealed, allowing a regional policy response when and where necessary. (Note: such monitoring program has been established and annual Regional Snapshots are produced. Snapshot structure, including indicators tracked was updated in 2016.)



Electoral Area C. © RDOS

## STRATEGY

The RGS is organized around seven policy areas and supporting goals that were derived in consultation with South Okanagan communities and RGS advisory committees. Each of the policy goals are in turn supported by a series of related policy objectives. There are a number of supporting RGS policies organized under each of the objectives.

### HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

~~Goal 1: Focus development to serviced areas in designated Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.~~

Goal 1: Focus development in designated Growth Areas.

### ECOSYSTEMS, NATURAL AREAS AND PARKS

**Goal 2:** Protect the health and biodiversity of ecosystems in the South Okanagan.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

**Goal 3:** Support efficient and effective infrastructure services and an accessible multi-modal transportation network.

### COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

**Goal 4:** Foster healthy, safe communities that provide accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities.

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Goal 5:** Achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous South Okanagan regional economy.

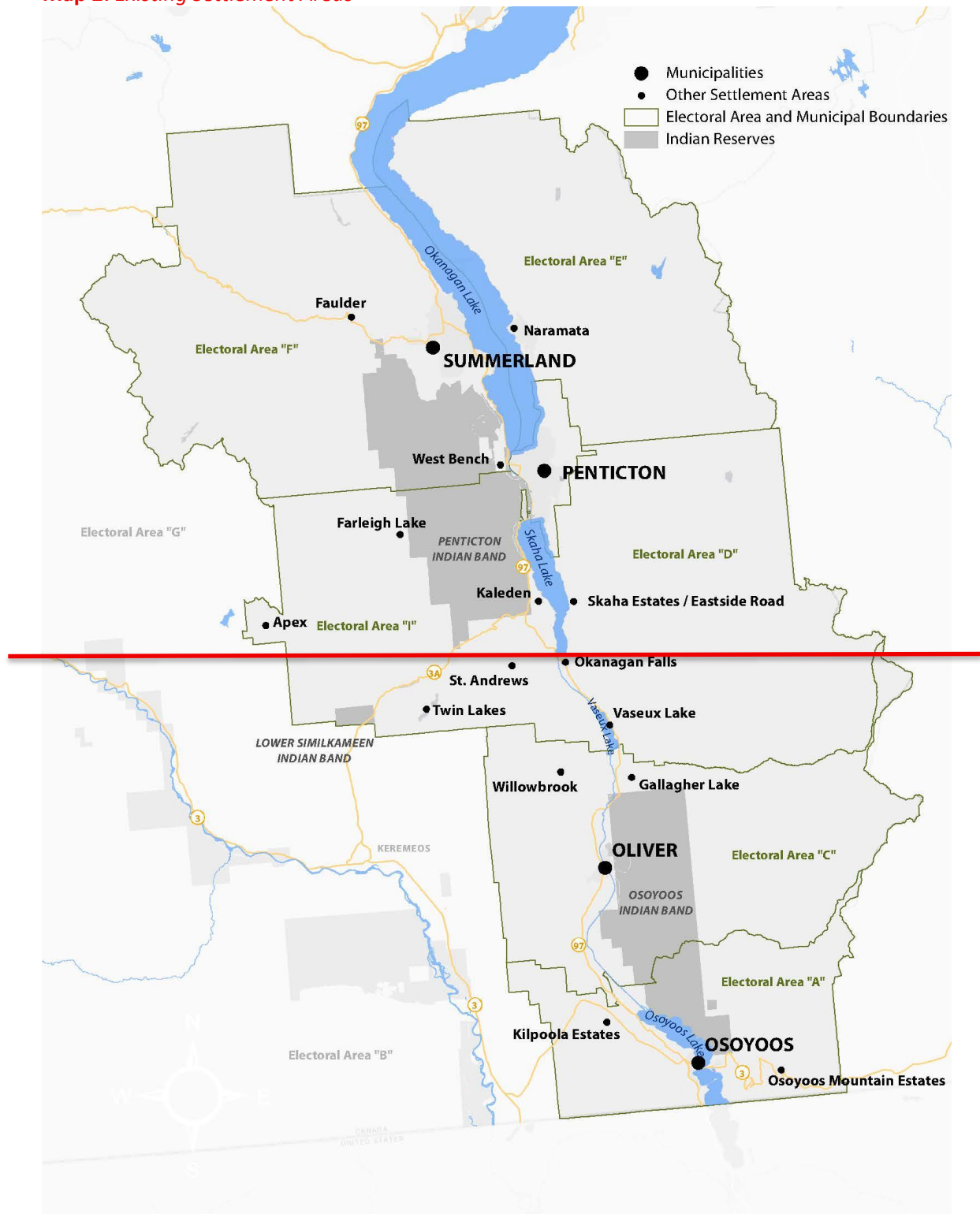
### ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

**Goal 6:** Foster and support regional cooperation, collaboration and civic engagement.

### ENERGY EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**Goal 7:** Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate.

**Map 2: Existing Settlement Areas<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>5</sup> Amendment Bylaw No. 2770.01, 2018 – adopted October 18, 2018.



**Map 3: Designated Regional Growth Strategy Primary and Rural Growth Areas<sup>6</sup>**



<sup>6</sup> Amendment Bylaw No. 2770.01, 2018 – adopted October 18, 2018.

## HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT

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**Goal 1:** ~~Focus development in serviced areas in designated Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.~~

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The South Okanagan is composed of diverse and distinct settlement areas, that range in size, type (i.e., urban to rural), and predominant uses (e.g., resort residential to low-density rural residential). These communities are indicated on the ~~Existing Settlement Areas Map.~~

As a guiding principle, land use decisions should take into account the broader values and needs of south Okanagan residents and the surrounding environment. The RGS recognizes that each community's land use decisions can have long term consequences on social health, ecosystem function, and the local economy.

Compact urban development and the protection of the integrity of rural areas, including agricultural and ecologically sensitive lands, is one of the chief means of supporting economic, ecological and community health. It is also a way to enhance servicing efficiency. That's why the RGS directs development to settlement areas where services are located. The ~~Growth Management Map~~ identifies those existing settlement areas where future growth should be directed.

Primary Growth Areas are larger communities with all the necessary services, infrastructure and amenities in place to accommodate future growth. The majority of future growth in the south Okanagan should be directed to Primary Growth Areas. Rural Growth Areas—established rural settlement areas with some infrastructure and/or amenities in place—are where limited future development is anticipated, or where development has been pre-determined through approved zoning.

For those communities not shown on the ~~Growth Management Map~~, it is understood that some infill development may be anticipated in rural areas, provided that such development:

- Does not significantly increase the number of units or the established density of the area; and
- Respects the character of the communities.

It is further acknowledged that in those areas not identified for growth, some resource, industrial, public and commercial uses may be considered, as specified in the policies of this section.

### Primary Growth Areas

- Essential services / amenities are in place to accommodate growth; and
- All necessary infrastructure is in place.

### Rural Growth Areas

- Established rural settlement areas with a minimum of 200 lots and/or dwelling units;
- Community water and/or community sewer services in place; and,
- Existing commercial, industrial or parks development.

Or,

- Where development has been pre-determined.

## OBJECTIVES

## **Objective**

~~1-A—Collaborate and coordinate among regional partners to direct most new development to Primary Growth Areas.~~

## **Supporting Policies**

~~1A-1—Establish growth containment boundaries around Primary Growth Areas in Official Community Plans.~~

~~1A-2—Coordinate RDOS and municipal planning around major development proposals in rural/municipal fringe areas.~~

~~1A-3—Develop a memorandum of understanding between the RDOS and local governments to address the process for municipal boundary extensions, as required.~~

~~1A-4—Encourage appropriately located accessible commercial, institutional, light and heavy industrial development in Primary Growth Areas.~~

## **Objective**

~~1-B—Create walkable, liveable, mixed-use neighbourhoods and communities.~~

## **Supporting Policies**

~~1C-1—Promote compact development in both Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.~~

~~1C-2—Give priority to infill development in both Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.~~

## **Objective**

~~1-C—Protect character of rural areas.~~

## **Supporting Policies**

~~1C-1—Establish growth containment boundaries around Rural Growth Areas in Official Community Plans (OCPs).~~

~~1C-2—Direct limited development to Rural Growth Areas.~~

~~1C-3—Discourage rezoning of large rural land parcels to smaller parcel sizes, outside of Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.~~

~~1C-4—Limit consideration for rezoning of large rural land parcels to smaller parcel sizes outside of Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas only where such growth is infill, does not significantly increase the number of units or the established density, and respects the character of its surroundings.~~

- ~~1C-5~~ Strengthen policies in OCPs to discourage incremental and additional rural growth outside of identified growth areas (see Designated Regional Growth Strategy Primary and Rural Growth Areas Map, pg. 17). Proposed developments that do not closely adhere to OCP guidelines for the protection of rural and resource areas will not be supported.
- ~~1C-6~~ Identify areas where rezoning to larger minimum lot sizes is necessary to protect agricultural uses and/or rural character.
- ~~1C-7~~ Support and encourage all OCPs to require a site specific report from a Qualified Professional for any new development in identified hazard areas.
- ~~1C-8~~ Communicate and work with Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, and Lower Similkameen Indian Band on potential cost sharing, delivery of services, capacity building and/or development plans for development abutting rural areas.
- ~~1C-9~~ Consider the following uses outside of identified Primary and Rural Growth Areas only where the uses are not feasible or appropriate in growth areas and where they will have minimal negative impacts on their surroundings: resource, industrial, resort (non-residential), small-scale commercial, public utility/institutional, parks and recreational development.

## **Objective**

### **1-D—Protect the agricultural land base.**

#### **Supporting Policies**

- ~~1F-1~~ Support the establishment of a South Okanagan Agricultural Advisory Committee to advise the Regional District Board on agricultural matters.
- ~~1F-2~~ Work collaboratively with regional partners to develop a Regional Agriculture Strategy.
- ~~1F-3~~ Discourage further subdivision of farm parcels.
- ~~1F-4~~ Encourage and support value-added agricultural activities that improve farm economic viability.
- ~~1F-5~~ Encourage and support agri-tourism activities that improve farm economic viability.
- ~~1F-6~~ Undertake edge planning to mitigate the impacts of non-farm uses on farming activities and vice versa when considering development adjacent to the Agricultural Land Reserve boundary and designated agricultural properties.
- ~~1F-7~~ Support urban growth boundaries that are consistent with the Agricultural Land Reserve boundaries.

## **Objective**



~~1-E — Recognize the critical links between social, environmental and economic sustainability and infrastructure in effective growth management.~~

~~Supporting Policies~~

~~1D-1 Continue to consult with the public, community leaders and professionals on growth management.~~

~~1D-2 Assess major development proposals against RDOS Sustainability Checklist.~~

**HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT**

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**Goal 1:** Focus development in designated Growth Areas.

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The South Okanagan is composed of diverse and distinct settlement areas that range in size, type (i.e., urban to rural), and predominant uses (e.g. resort, residential to rural-residential).

As a guiding principle, land use decisions should take into account the broader values and needs of South Okanagan residents and the surrounding environment. The South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) recognizes that each community's land use decisions can have long-term consequences on social health, ecosystem function, and the local economy.

Compact urban development and the protection of the integrity of rural areas, including agricultural and ecologically sensitive lands, is one of the chief means of supporting economic, ecological and community health. It also allows for the efficient operation of infrastructure and services to communities.

The most recent Housing Needs Assessment also identified that housing needs are most significant in the region's larger population centres, being the incorporated municipalities.

This is why the RGS generally directs development to incorporated municipalities of Penticton, Summerland, Osoyoos, Oliver and Okanagan Falls (see Schedule 'B' - Growth Management Map) in recognition that these are locations have the necessary services, infrastructure and amenities are in place to meet and accommodate the needs of future growth.

Prior to the adoption of the RGS in 2010, approximately 89% of residential growth in the South Okanagan between 2001 and 2011 occurred within incorporated municipalities. Following the adoption of the RGS, this figure declined to 85.9% between 2011 and 2021, partly due to the historic zoning adopted by the Regional District Board in previous decades.

A revised objective of the RGS is to realize 95% of new residential growth within designated "Growth Areas" by 2031, which will be measured by tracking population growth in the municipalities and Electoral Areas based on federal census data.

Outside of the designated “Growth Areas” are a number of other land use classifications shown on the Growth Management Map that include:

- ~~Resort Areas~~
- ~~Rural Residential Areas~~
- ~~Agricultural Areas~~
- ~~Radio Astronomy Research Area~~
- ~~Village Settlement Areas~~
- ~~Rural Areas~~
- ~~Resource Area and Open Space Areas~~

Future development and provisioning of community infrastructure (e.g. water and sewer) may be limited in these areas but some resource, industrial, public and commercial uses may be considered appropriate. The approval of new water and sewer utilities under private ownership will be discouraged and liability considerations will be reviewed as part of any transfer to public ownership. A description of all these land use classifications is included below:

## **GROWTH AREAS**

Growth Areas are urban centres identified for existing and future urban growth and contain a full range of commercial, institutional, and industrial land uses and all of the necessary infrastructure services and amenities to accommodate sustainable future growth.

Currently designated Growth Areas include the City of Penticton, District of Summerland, Town of Osoyoos, Town of Oliver and the District Municipality of Okanagan Falls.

For clarity, lands designated as a “Growth Area” on Schedule ‘B’ of this bylaw are not an “urban containment boundary” for the purposes of Section 481.3 of the Local Government Act. An “urban containment boundary” is to be established by an official community plan of a local government and may differ from the “Growth Area” shown on Schedule ‘B’ of this bylaw.

### **Objective**

**1-A**     Growth Areas function as the economic and social hubs of the South Okanagan.

### **Supporting Policies**

- 1A-1**   That land use and infrastructure decisions support 95% of residential growth occurring between 2026 and 2036 is within designated Growth Areas.
- 1A-2**   That services, amenities and infrastructure be focused within Growth Areas to allow for the majority of urban growth – residential, commercial, institutional and industrial – to be accommodated in these locations.
- 1A-3**   That urban containment boundaries for the City of Penticton, District of Summerland, Town of Osoyoos, Town of Oliver and District Municipality of Okanagan Falls be established in each respective community’s Official Community Plan Bylaw.

- 1A-4** That the re-development of lands in an electoral area that are adjacent to or nearby an incorporated municipality be discouraged.
- 1A-5** That municipal boundary extensions be considered a regional issue requiring the support of participating members at the Regional District Board.

## **RESORT AREAS**

Resort Areas are small resort-based communities offering a mix of commercial services, institutional uses, tourism accommodations, and diverse housing options, ranging from low to high-density. Such communities have generally been settled as a result of a nearby recreation area and are serviced with limited water and sewer systems.

Apex Mountain Resort is currently the only designated Resort Area in the Regional Growth Strategy. While the Town of Osoyoos is considered a “Resort Municipality”, it is currently designated as a “Growth Area” rather than a “Resort Area” in this bylaw.

For clarity, a Resort Area is equivalent to a designated “Growth Area” at Schedule ‘B’ to this bylaw and, in accordance with Section 481.3 of the Local Government Act, shall be delineated by an “urban containment boundary” established by an official community plan of a local government.

### **Objective**

- 1-B** To support the development of land designated Resort Areas as year-round resort destinations.

### **Supporting Policies**

- 1B-1** That an urban containment boundary for a Resort Area be established in the applicable Official Community Plan Bylaw.
- 1B-2** That the development of a new Master Development Agreement between Apex Mountain Resort and the provincial government to allow for future ski area and resort expansion is supported.
- 1B-3** That Apex Mountain Resort collaborating with the Penticton Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band and Upper Similkameen Indian Band regarding any proposed expansion of the resort is supported.
- 1B-4** That the provision of community services, such as water, sewer and fire protection to all lands designated Resort Area under this Bylaw is supported.
- 1B-5** That consideration will be given to the application of the Resort Area designation to new sites subject to the completion of the Provincial Governments All-Season Resort Application process as outlined in the All Seasons Resort Policy.
- 1C-10** That a review of this Regional Growth Strategy for consistency with any new or expanded resort use(s) approved by the Provincial government be considered.

## VILLAGE SETTLEMENT AREAS

Village Settlement Areas are generally historic communities that were established to serve as the local hub for surrounding agricultural land development in the early 20th Century, but were never incorporated. There are currently three Village Settlement Areas which include Naramata, Kaleden and Gallagher Lake.

These areas have retained a village-like character and offer a very limited mix of commercial and institutional uses, with generally low-density housing options. However, Gallagher Lake differs from the other Village Settlement Areas, as it emerged in the mid-20th Century to cater to post-war car culture and highway-based tourism.

The level of servicing in a Village Settlement Area is varied but generally includes a limited community water service. In the case of Gallagher Lake, a limited community sewer service exists. (a “limited service” is one that has not yet been extended to the entirety of the Village Settlement Area).

While existing services can be improved or extended within a Village Settlement Area to support modest infill development, such services should not be extended beyond the boundary of a Village Settlement Area as shown on Schedule ‘B’ and new services (e.g. community sewer systems) should not be introduced.

### **Objective**

- 1-C** To maintain the small-town character of Village Settlement Areas by limiting the provision of housing, services, and amenities.

### **Supporting Policies**

- 1C-1** That development in Village Settlement Areas be limited by restricting the introduction of new infrastructure, such as a community sewer system.
- 1C-2** That service containment boundaries for Naramata, Kaleden and Gallagher Lake be established in the applicable official community plan bylaw(s) to protect surrounding landscapes from rural-sprawl and fragmentation.
- 1C-3** That the expansion of Village Settlement Areas beyond existing boundaries established in the respective official community plan bylaw(s) is not supported.
- 1C-4** That the improvement of existing community services, such as water, sewer and fire protection is supported within Village Settlement Areas.
- 1C-5** That the introduction of new community services, such as sewer is not supported within Village Settlement Areas.
- 1C-6** That the extension of water services to lands outside of Village Settlement Areas that are in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is supported provided the water service has capacity and is to be used for agricultural purposes.

- 1C-7** That existing primary school facilities within Village Settlement Areas be maintained as essential parts of a community.
- 1C-8** That industrial development be discouraged in Village Settlement Areas and directed to designated Growth Areas or the Osoyoos Indian Band's Senkulmen Business Park.
- 1C-9** That small-scale commercial opportunities be supported within Village Settlement Areas.
- 1C-10** That a range of low-density housing types and tenures be supported to meet the needs of residents, subject to servicing.

## **RURAL-RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

The Rural-Residential designation has primarily been applied to lands that have previously been subdivided into relatively small parcels outside of a municipality or surveyed townsite that are serviced with community water and/or sewer.

The predominant form of housing is single detached dwelling but other forms of housing can occur, subject to servicing requirements.

Examples of Rural-Residential areas include Willow Beach, Willowbrook, Heritage Hills, Skaha Estates, Faulder, West Bench, Greata Ranch, Twin Lakes and St. Andrews, and Lakeshore Highlands.

Lands designated as Rural-Residential may be capable of accommodating a modest amount of future rural-residential growth, subject to the provision of community water and sewer, and absence of other constraining factors, without being inconsistent with this bylaw.

### **Objective**

- 1-D** To maintain rural-residential areas by limiting development to low density residential forms in areas with existing services, infrastructure and amenities.

### **Supporting Policies**

- 1D-1** That rezoning lands classified as Rural-Residential Area beyond densities established in the respective Official Community Plans is discouraged.
- 1D-2** That the rural, low-density character of Rural-Residential Areas be maintained.
- 1D-3** That consideration of new development in Rural-Residential be limited to lands where existing servicing capacity can support development.
- 1D-4** That the expansion of the Rural Residential Area classification beyond existing boundaries established in this Regional Growth Strategy is discouraged.

## **RURAL AREAS**

Rural Areas are characterized by moderately sized parcels (e.g. between 1.0 ha and 8.0 ha in area) that are provided with on-site services (e.g. groundwater well and septic). These areas typically feature a single principal dwelling and are characterized by a landscape of forest, grassland or agricultural usage. Community services are limited, often to solid waste collection and fire protection, though these may not be available in all instances.

Examples of Rural Areas include Regal Ridge, Kilpoola, Vaseux Lake, Upper Carmi, Falcon Ridge, Prairie Valley, Meadow Valley, Farleigh Lake, Indian Rock, and Green Mountain Road.

Lands designated as Rural Areas are generally unsuitable for increased residential redevelopment.

### **Objective**

**1-E** To preserve the rural character of lands designated as Rural Areas.

### **Supporting Policies**

**1E-1** That lands designated Rural Area are to remain un-serviced (e.g. community water or sewer services are not to be extended to such lands).

**1E-2** That the rezoning of lands designated Rural Area is discouraged in order to avoid rural-sprawl and extension of community services.

**1E-3** That the development of lands designated Rural Area beyond densities established in the respective Official Community Plans is discouraged.

## **AGRICULTURAL AREAS**

Agriculture Area means lands predominantly used for agriculture and lands identified as part of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), including non-farm uses approved by the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) in accordance with the Agricultural Land Commission Act and Agricultural Land Commission Use Regulation.

As of 2025, approximately 13.37% of the land base in the South Okanagan is within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

### **Objective**

**1-F** To protect the agricultural land base.

### **Supporting Policies**

**1F-1** That lands designated as Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) under the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* should not be included within a growth containment boundary.



- 1F-2** That the extension of water services to lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve is supported only when the water service has capacity and is to be used for agricultural purposes.
- 1F-3** That, despite 1F-2, the provision of water to residential parcels along a serviced line in the ALR is supported provided Official Community Plan policies and zoning regulations are in place to prevent further subdivision or an increase in permitted residential densities.
- 1F-4** That the extension of sewer services to lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve is not supported.
- 1F-5** That municipal boundary extensions should not include lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- 1F-6** That the subdivision of lands in the Agricultural Land Reserve is generally discouraged.
- 1F-7** That minimum parcel size requirements for subdivision in agricultural zones be explored as a regional project to determine if larger parcels sizes are necessary to protect the agricultural land base and uses.
- 1F-8** That the development of a Regional Agriculture Strategy for the South Okanagan as a regional project is supported.
- 1F-9** That value-added agricultural activities that improve farm economic viability, including agri-tourism activities and accommodations is supported.
- 1F-10** That efforts to minimize conflicts between farm and non-farm uses through edge planning is supported.

## **RESOURCE AREA & OPEN SPACE AREAS**

As of 2025, approximately 82.3% of the land base in the South Okanagan is comprised of Crown land that is not only a major source of timber but also comprises various community watersheds, Provincial Parks and Protected Areas, environmentally sensitive habitat, ranching and grazing land, natural resource extraction, independent power production and recreation opportunities.

Some Resource Area lands are also privately held and can comprise large parcels, sometimes in the form of District Lots and occasionally without direct access to a publicly dedicated road.

### **Objective**

- 1-G** To retain Resource Area and Open Space Areas for natural resource extraction.

### **Supporting Policies**

- 1G-1** That lands designated Resource Area and Open Space Areas are to remain unserved (e.g. community water or sewer services are not to be extended to such lands).
- 1G-2** That a review of minimum parcel size requirements for subdivision in resource area zones is supported as a regional project to determine if larger parcels sizes are required to protect the land base for extensive uses (e.g. forestry, grazing or rangelands, natural resource extraction, conservation land, etc.).
- 1G-3** That a review of the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw for consistency with any National Park Reserve proposal approved by the Federal Government for the South Okanagan is supported.
- 1G-4** That supportive zoning be applied to designated community watersheds under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, to maintain and manage local water quality and quantity.

## **RADIO ASTRONOMY RESEARCH AREA**

The Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory (DRAO) is the only research facility of its kind in Canada and a significant contributor to the regional economy that also provides critical ongoing contributions to national and international research initiatives.

The successful operation of the Observatory is, however, dependent on sources of Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) being minimized within the lines-of sight of its radio-telescope equipment.

Radio Astronomy Research Area Land is identifies as Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory Radio Frequency Interference Area within the Electoral Area “C” and “D” Official Community Plan Bylaws.

### **Objective**

- 1-H** To minimize the levels of Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) on the operation of the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory (DRAO).

### **Supporting Policies**

- 1H-1** That objectives, policies and regulations be included in the Electoral Area “C” & “I” Official Community Plans and applicable zoning bylaw to prevent the creation of additional development or intensification of development within lands designated as Radio Astronomy Research Area under this bylaw.
- 1H-2** That proposals seeking to introduce new land use categories other than Agriculture or Resource Area and Open Space within the area designated as Radio Astronomy Research Area should be considered inconsistent with this Regional Growth Strategy.

**1H-3** That the Federal government and conservation organizations are encouraged to acquire lands designated Radio Astronomy Research Area and retaining these in a state that will either reduce or not result in an increase in RFI.

**1H-4** Where Radio Astronomy Research Area overlaps with other settlement categories or lands are only partially within the Radio Astronomy Research Area, the land use policies for the Radio Astronomy Research Area shall take precedence.



Summerland. © Chamber of Commerce

## ECOSYSTEMS, NATURAL AREAS AND PARKS

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### **Goal 2:**     *Protect the health and biodiversity of ecosystems in the south Okanagan.*

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The South Okanagan-Similkameen is a truly unique and special place with species and ecosystems that do not occur elsewhere in BC, or in Canada. The South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program's 2012 strategy, *Keeping Nature in our Future: A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the South Okanagan-Similkameen*, identified approximately 20% of the RGS area as having *high* or *very high* relative biodiversity value.

Over time, these valuable ecosystems and species have been impacted by population growth and residential, agricultural and commercial development in the region. Despite great efforts in the region and improving systems and planning, ecosystems have nonetheless been fragmented, habitat areas lost, and biodiversity remains threatened.

With most of the *high* or *very high* value habitat areas located within the South Okanagan's relatively narrow valley bottoms and bench lands, these pressures will remain as developable lands are clustered in the same areas.

In recognition of these ongoing challenges, the RGS environment goal was built upon two fundamental principles from public engagement:

- The environment should be respected for the ecosystem services it provides that entirely support human health and wellbeing; and
- Water supply, conservation, and quality are key environmental concerns and priority considerations for environment resource management initiatives.



Spotted Lake. © RDOS

## OBJECTIVES

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### Objective

#### **2-A Coordinate regional biodiversity conservation and management.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 2A-1** Work with partners to maintain a regional approach to biodiversity conservation (*Keeping Nature in our Future: A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Okanagan Region*).
- 2A-2** Work with the RDOS Board and environmental partners on continued biodiversity conservation coordination and ecosystems protection.
- 2A-3** Work with Syilx leaders to develop partnerships for regional ecosystem health.
- 2A-4** Monitor the effectiveness of RGS regional biodiversity conservation and management actions.
- ~~**2A-5** Respect and protect the ecosystem and environment by directing urban growth to Primary Growth Areas.~~
- 2A-5** Respect and protect the ecosystem and environment by directing urban type development to designated Growth Areas.

### Objective

#### **2-B Support environmental stewardship.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 2B-1** Develop policy to protect the natural environment including updated development permit areas to protect sensitive ecosystems.
- 2B-2** Work with the RDOS Board and environmental partners on continued coordinated biodiversity conservation coordination and ecosystems protection.
- 2B-3** Conserve, protect and steward watersheds, wetlands, riparian areas, and open spaces.
- 2B-4** Seek opportunities to connect wetlands, riparian areas, and open spaces as wildlife corridors.
- 2B-5** Encourage best environmental management practices on farms.
- 2B-6** Restore and manage prime habitat areas, including lakeshores.



## Objective

### **2-C Protect regional air quality.**

#### Supporting Policies

- 2C-1** Develop a Regional Air Quality Management Plan.
- 2C-2** Ensure that a Regional Air Quality Management Plan identifies best management practices for reducing or eliminating residential and industrial burning, chemical spraying, and controlling air emissions.
- 2C-3** Support ongoing public awareness and education around air quality management practices.

## Objective

### **2-D Promote and enhance water conservation and sustainability.**

#### Supporting Policies

- 2D-1** Apply and promote best management practices for residential, commercial, institutional, industrial and agricultural uses.
- 2D-2** Maintain environmental flows to support ecological functions and groundwater recharge.
- 2D-3** Support continued implementation and future updates of the Okanagan Basin Water Board's *Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy*, including consideration of long term plans for upper level water storage / source water protection.
- 2D-4** Work collaboratively with the Okanagan Basin Water Board and other agencies and levels of government to utilize the data and findings from the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand study.
- 2D-5** Continue collaborating with the Water Sustainability Committee of the BC Water and Waste Association, the Okanagan Basin Water Board, local governments and other local stakeholders on basin-wide water management and conservation initiatives.
- 2D-6** Support the continued provision of adequate water resources for the agriculture sector, and ensure that adequate and secure access to water for the agriculture sector is a priority over non-essential urban uses.
- 2D-7** Recognize that each jurisdiction has a responsibility to sustainably manage and conserve water resources in times of drought, or where stream health is threatened.
- 2D-8** Promote the implementation of universal metering for water service connections, in collaboration with the Okanagan Basin Water Board.



## INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION

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**Goal 3:** *Support efficient, effective and affordable infrastructure services and an accessible multi-modal transportation network.*

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Well-planned infrastructure services are important to the overall health, safety and livability of communities. More dispersed settlement patterns require servicing infrastructure extensions, which are expensive to build, operate and maintain, and can produce greater environmental impacts than development in existing serviced areas.

South Okanagan residents depend on a municipal and provincial transportation network and services for work, recreation and day-to-day travel, while the local economy depend upon the network for safe and efficient goods movement. Building more compact communities makes it easier to provide transportation services, including transit, bicycle and pedestrian options.

In partnership with all RGS local government partners, the Regional District is committed to the following guiding principles on transportation and infrastructure:

- The relationship between land use and the provision of efficient and affordable services must be considered, particularly for the identification of any future growth areas;
- Managing water quality and quantity for residential, commercial, and agricultural uses, while maintaining sustainable environmental flows, remains an ongoing priority for the future; and
- Coordinated inter-regional planning and management of infrastructure upgrades and services can maximize service efficiency and effectiveness.



Infrastructure pipe. © RDOS

## OBJECTIVES

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### Objective

#### **3-A Direct development to areas with publically operated services and infrastructure.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

**3A-1** Promote ongoing dialogue between rural and urban communities to coordinate and collaborate on new service and infrastructure development and ongoing operation and maintenance.

~~**3A-2** Direct new development to Primary Growth Areas to provide more cost-effective infrastructure, facilities and services.~~

**3A-2** Direct new development to designated Growth Areas to provide more cost-effective infrastructure, facilities, and services.

**3A-3** Encourage publically operated utilities and discourage the establishment of private utilities and services.

### Objective

#### **3-B Reduce solid and liquid waste.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

**3B-1** Continue to implement and monitor RDOS *Solid Waste Management Plan* (2012).

**3B-2** Continue to implement and monitor regional Liquid Waste Management Plans.

**3B-3** Continue to research and implement best practices for effective solid and liquid waste management.

**3B-4** Support and promote public waste reduction and education programs.

~~**3B-5** Support sewer service within Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas where such services are not currently available.~~

**3B-5** Supports sewer service within Growth Areas and Resort Areas where such services are not currently available.

**3B-6** Minimize environmental impacts of solid and liquid waste management.

**3B-7** Consider extension of sewer service in extenuating circumstances related to environmental cleanup to minimize the environmental impact.

### Objective

#### **3-C Minimize environmental impacts of infrastructure and services.**

### Supporting Policies

- 3C-1** Ensure storm water management satisfies the requirements of Federal and Provincial legislation, including the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) *Fisheries Act*, Federal *Species at Risk Act* and the Provincial *Water Sustainability Act*.
- 3C-2** Support projects to improve water resource management, including water conservation and reuse, ground water management, and stormwater.
- 3C-3** Consider guidelines and alternative development standards to reduce environmental impacts of hillside development.
- 3C-4** Minimize infrastructure development impacts by avoiding hazard areas and environmentally sensitive areas.
- 3C-5** Work with other stakeholders to identify potential small-scale hydro and wind power sites.

### Objective

- 3-D Expand safe, accessible efficient transportation options and connections, including transit, cycling and walking.**

### Supporting Policies

- 3D-1** Support the creation of a Regional Transportation Plan.
- 3D-2** Support the creation of compact, walkable neighbourhoods with pedestrian and cycling connections and linkages.
- ~~**3D-3** Support the development of an integrated active transportation (cycling, walking, scooters, etc.) network and connections in Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.~~
- 3D-3** Supports the development of an integrated activate transportation (cycling, walking, scooters, etc.) network and connections in designated Growth Areas, Village Settlement Areas and Resort Areas.
- ~~**3D-4** Work with the Province to further develop a regional active transportation network with connections between Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas in conjunction with highway improvements.~~
- 3D-4** Work with the Province to further develop a regional active transportation network with connections between designated Growth Areas, Village Settlement Areas and Resort Areas in conjunction with highway improvements.
- 3D-5** Continue working with BC Transit to enhance and expand transit options in the region.
- ~~**3D-6** Work with partners, including BC Transit, to identify potential community transit hubs in Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.~~

**3D-6** Work with partners, including BC Transit, to identify potential community transit hubs in designated Growth Areas, Village Settlement Areas and Resort Areas.

**3D-7** Encourage well-connected, accessible transportation networks that reduce GHG emissions, by supporting alternate and active transportation modes within and between both the region's designated Growth Areas, Village Settlement Areas and Resort Areas.

## **Objective**

**3-E Protect and improve Highway 97 as a key transportation corridor.**

### **Supporting Policies**

- 3E-1** Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to identify road network improvements as needed.
- 3E-2** Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure public safety and mitigate traffic impacts from Provincial highways and major network links.
- 3E-3** Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to identify areas where limited access highways outside of urban centres are needed to ensure public safety and transportation efficiency.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

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**Goal 4:** *Foster healthy, safe communities that provide accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities.*

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Planning, land use and transportation decisions have public health consequences for people living, working, learning and playing in the South Okanagan RGS Plan Area. Numerous studies from Canada and around the world have demonstrated the relationship between the physical design and layout of cities, towns and communities – also known as the “built environment” – and the health and wellbeing of the people living in them. Community form is associated to varying degrees with physical activity, diet, safety and injury rates, exposure to pollutants and how easily people can access work, shops, services and schools.

Research on the associations between health and the built environment is expanding and becoming increasingly sophisticated<sup>7</sup>. While much work remains to unravel the complex relationship between health outcomes and the built environment, the research is at a point where the broad-based planning implications are clear – healthy community design matters.

The relationship between the built environment in the South Okanagan is becoming increasingly important, as the region’s population ages more quickly than other places in the province. Regional planning concerns around supportive housing options, enhanced mobility and accessibility, and access to services will continue to grow.



Kayaks on Okanagan Lake, cc-by-nc Amanda Coolidge, flickr.com

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<sup>7</sup> Health Impact Assessment of Transportation and Land Use Planning Activities. Metro Vancouver. 2015.

## OBJECTIVES

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### Objective

#### **4-A Support regional partnerships and collaborate for safe, healthy and active communities.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 4A-1** Support development of a South Okanagan Health and Wellness Strategy for coordinated, multi-agency action on regional health and wellbeing and social development.
- 4A-2** Support the coordination of regional parks, recreation services, and trail networks to improve accessibility of recreational opportunities.
- 4A-3** Support the Interior Health Authority to expand regional health promotion programs and to develop a proactive recruitment program to increase medical services in the south Okanagan.
- 4A-4** Work with regional partners to support downtown and neighbourhood planning efforts that foster a sense of public ownership.
- 4A-5** Support emergency planning and networking of response services both regionally and inter-regionally.
- 4A-6** Support the RCMP in raising awareness for crime watch and prevention programs.
- 4A-7** Work with School Districts No 53 (Okanagan Similkameen) and No 67 (Okanagan Skaha) to recognize and support school facilities as a valuable neighbourhood resource and to share and utilize school resources.
- 4A-8** Collaborate with regional partners to improve accessibility of public spaces.
- 4A-9** Collaborate with regional partners to ensure public spaces and events are consistent with changing demographics and community needs.

### Objective

#### **4-B Enhance community wellbeing by supporting diversity.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 4B-1** Support economic opportunities that attract and retain young families.
- 4B-2** Encourage new housing to provide accessibility features.
- 4B-3** Support a range of accessible and affordable housing.
- 4B-4** Support non-market housing opportunities, including emergency and transitional housing, particularly in those communities where additional supportive services exist.



**4B-5** Explore the benefits of creating of a Regional Housing Plan.

### **Objective**

**4-C Support regional arts and culture and educational opportunities.**

### **Supporting Policies**

**4C-1** Encourage education institutes to locate in urban areas.

**4C-2** Support collaboration between educational providers, regional businesses and agencies.

**4C-3** Support the celebration of community and local festivals, including cultural events and programs.

**4C-4** Support and encourage community arts, culture and heritage programs and celebrations.

**4C-5** Improve accessibility to public places.

**4C-6** Identify and protect important cultural places and structures.

**4C-7** Work with agencies, stakeholders and the arts and culture community to develop a Regional Arts and Culture Strategy.



Busking at Penticton Farmers' Market, cc-by-nc Jeremy Hiebert, flickr.com

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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**Goal 5:** *Achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous South Okanagan regional economy.*

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A healthy, diverse regional economy is one of the cornerstones of more sustainable, resilient communities. The RGS provides an opportunity to encourage and support the development of a more diverse and healthier regional economy, which in turn will help support the South Okanagan on its journey to become a more sustainable region.

As a region, the South Okanagan offers a great deal of economic diversity. Public sector employment is significant, with government, health, and education services clustered in Penticton and, to a lesser degree, Oliver, Osoyoos, Summerland and smaller centres in the RDOS.

Agriculture, including viticulture and value-added processing, are major contributors, while manufacturing, value-added forestry, and tourism form other key sectors. In the region, Penticton functions as the regional employment centre and hub for the area, while Oliver, Osoyoos and Summerland also function as smaller scale employment centres.

Public consultation carried out at the beginning of the RGS identified jobs and the local economy as areas of critical concern to the region. This focus remains based on feedback from other regional and municipal planning initiatives carried out since the original RGS was completed, and in light of regional demographic trends and issues, including its aging population and diminishing youth employment opportunities.



Penticton Farmers' Market, cc-by-nc-nd, Province of BC, flickr.com

## OBJECTIVES

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### Objective

#### **5-A Coordinate and cooperate to support regional economic diversification.**

#### **Supporting Policies**

- 5A-1** Work with economic development partners, including the RDOS Board, to develop a coordinated and collaborative regional business-enabling environment.
- 5A-2** Work with economic development partners, including the RDOS Board, to develop a diversified regional economy.
- 5A-3** Support the development of a Regional Economic Development Strategy.
- 5A-4** Encourage business retention, expansion and attraction activities with special focus on green, sustainable businesses.
- 5A-5** Explore economic opportunities and collaborate on projects of mutual interest and benefit with Syilx communities (Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band) as identified in the 2013 Protocol Agreement.
- 5A-6** Maintain and enhance the economic contributions of agricultural land and industries.
- 5A-7** Recognize the regional economic contributions provided by the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory and continue to work with the facility to minimize impacts of radio frequency interference on the facility.
- 5A-8** Support and encourage research and development initiatives and programs in conjunction with UBC Okanagan and Okanagan College, including agriculture, viticulture, food processing, water management, and tourism.
- 5A-9** Support the development of a targeted regional work-force attraction program in collaboration with Okanagan educational institutions.
- 5A-10** Support primary and secondary value-added industry in all sectors where feasible and appropriate.
- 5A-11** Collaborate with regional partners to attract high-tech, knowledge-based industries.

### **Objective**

#### **5-B Encourage business development in employment lands.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 5B-1** Develop a Regional Employment Lands Strategy for accommodating diverse business needs.
- 5B-2** Identify development opportunity sites for different business types.
- 5B-3** Protect the existing industrial land base from conversion to other uses.
- 5B-4** Direct new industrial development to existing industrial areas.

### **Objective**

#### **5-C Support and promote tourism and tourism-related activity.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 5C-1** Support regional tourism marketing efforts.
- 5C-2** Support agri-tourism and other rural tourism initiatives.
- 5C-3** Direct commercial tourist activities to appropriate areas.

### **Objective**

#### **5-D Support local agriculture and related businesses.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 5D-1** Support the local agriculture industry and associated value-added agricultural processing and production.
- 5D-2** Encourage sustainable agricultural production and methods.
- 5D-3** Support preservation of the Agricultural Land Reserve for long-term agricultural uses.
- 5D-4** Support the development of coordinated Local Agriculture Plans for the region.



## ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

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**Goal 6:** *Foster and support regional cooperation, collaboration and civic engagement.*

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Ongoing coordination, collaboration, and communication remain critical ingredients to RGS implementation and planning. Inclusive, transparent regional planning and governance also supports and facilitates community engagement and involvement, another critical ingredient to effective, accountable regional planning and development.

In partnership with all RGS local government partners, the Regional District is committed to the following guiding principles on engagement and collaboration:

- Effective governance is integral to the health of the region;
- Leadership demonstrated in an open and respectful manner can improve regional and inter-regional cooperation between member municipalities, electoral areas, Aboriginal communities, and the Province; and
- Enhanced citizen engagement and participation contributes to effective governance.



Protocol Agreement signing between Penticton, Osoyoos, and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands and the RDOS. © RDOS

## OBJECTIVES

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### Objective

#### **6-A Enhance regional-local government partnerships.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 6A-1** Foster dialogue between electoral areas, municipalities and other organizations for cost sharing, delivery of services, capacity building, and development.
- 6A-2** Continue to foster dialogue between communities around shared goals, while recognizing and supporting unique community goals.
- 6A-3** Request that transfers of responsibilities to local government are matched with adequate resources.

### Objective

#### **6-B Build and enhance communication and relationship with regional Syilx / Okanagan Nation communities.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 6B-1** Develop protocol agreements with Osoyoos Indian Band and Penticton Indian Band for communications, service delivery and joint services, and joint capacity building initiatives.
- 6B-2** Continue to implement the *Protocol Agreement between the Penticton Indian Band, Osoyoos Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band and RDOS (2013)*.
- 6B-3** Support development of an indigenous cultural awareness program for local communities and governments.

### Objective

#### **6-C Facilitate ongoing public participation and engagement in local and regional governance.**

##### **Supporting Policies**

- 6C-1** Support governance education and awareness initiatives within the region.
- 6C-2** Facilitate community engagement and civic participation by providing enhanced public information on local governance, including opportunities for involvement on committees and community planning meetings and events.



## Objective

**6-D Cultivate effective, accountable, accessible, and transparent regional governance.**

## Supporting Policies

**6D-1** Continue to enhance local governance transparency and accessibility.

**6D-2** Measure progress toward achieving RGS goals and implementation of policies through annual base-line reports on RGS indicators and five-year evaluations.



RDOS public open house in Kaleden. © RDOS

## ENERGY EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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**Goal 7:** ~~Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate.~~

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~~The global scientific community has reached consensus that the increasing emissions of human-caused greenhouse gases (GHGs) are rapidly changing the earth's climate. With more extreme weather conditions, including more intense drought years and heavier rainfalls, the South Okanagan is particularly vulnerable to the anticipated impacts a warming climate will have.~~

~~Under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act, B.C.'s GHG emissions are to be reduced by at least 33% below 2007 levels by 2020. A further emission reduction target of 80% below 2007 levels is required for the year 2050. B.C.'s Local Government Act was then amended in 2008 to require all Official Community Plans to set targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases, as well as policies and actions to achieve the targets set.~~

~~The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, City of Penticton, Town of Oliver, Town of Osoyoos, and District of Summerland are all signatories to the B.C. Climate Action Charter, which includes commitments to reducing GHGs and taking actions to prepare for a changing climate.~~

~~In 2010, the Regional District and member municipalities collaboratively developed Community Climate Action Plans (CCAP). The CCAPs provide strategic direction on how to reduce community energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Each community has its own CCAP that includes both regional strategies and local actions. Each community and RDOS electoral area also has its own targets set to reach the overall goal of a 35 percent reduction per person by 2030 across the region. In 2011, the RGS was amended and seventh policy goal on climate added.~~



Cycling in the RDOS. © RDOS

## OBJECTIVES

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### Objective

~~7-A— Plan for climate change adaptation and support ongoing mitigation efforts.~~

### Supporting Policies

~~7A-1— Reduce regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 15% from 2007 levels by 2030.~~

~~7A-2— Develop a green building policy for local government buildings.~~

~~7A-3— Work with local businesses to adopt and apply green energy technologies and energy efficiency practices.~~

~~7A-4— Work with agricultural stakeholders to adopt and apply green energy technologies and energy efficiency practices.~~

~~7A-5— Support rebate programs for energy efficient and water conservation fixtures and appliances.~~

~~7A-6— Consider climate change adaptation/resiliency measures in existing and proposed activities and development.~~

~~7A-7— Support climate change adaptation and the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in existing and proposed activities and development.~~

~~7A-8— Support public awareness and education on climate change and its current and likely potential future impacts in the region.~~

## CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTION

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Goal 7: *Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate.*

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The scientific community has reached consensus that the increasing emissions of human-caused greenhouse gases (GHGs) are rapidly changing the earth's climate. Greenhouse gases refer to any or all of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydro fluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulphur hexafluoride and any other substance prescribed by regulation.

Globally, the impacts of climate change will be significant, and are already evident in some areas. Locally, the potential impacts and vulnerabilities are less well documented; however, they are a growing concern.

As one of 187 local governments that are signatory to the B.C. Climate Action Charter, the RDOS along with the City of Penticton, District of Summerland, Town of Osoyoos and Town of Oliver are committed to reducing GHGs and has agreed to take actions to achieve certain goals. Under the Climate Change Accountability Act, B.C.'s GHG

emissions are to be reduced by at least 40% below 2007 levels by 2030, at least 60% below 2007 levels by 2040 and by at least 80% by 2050. The three areas where local government can play a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions are in the transportation, waste management and building sectors.

The three Okanagan regional districts commissioned a climate change report to assist in medium- and long-term planning. The February 2020 report, termed Climate Change for the Okanagan Region, provided information on anticipated climate change for the medium-term future (2050s) and the long-term future (2080s).

In the past, the Okanagan region experienced just under a week per year, on average, of days above 30°C. By the 2050s, the region can expect an average of over three weeks above 30°C per year and over five weeks per year by the 2080s. The valley bottoms are projected to experience the greatest changes, with approximately 50 additional days above 30°C projected by the 2080s, compared to the past.

In the past, the coldest winter night for the Okanagan region was about -25°C. By the 2050s, the coldest night is expected to warm by 6°C to -19°C, and by the 2080s, temperatures are projected to warm by 10°C to -15°C. While the coldest night is projected to warm in all seasons, the coldest night in winter is projected to warm more rapidly than other seasons.

The largest precipitation increases are expected to occur during the spring and autumn months with between 10% and 20% more precipitation during these seasons by the 2080s. Summer will remain the driest season and become even drier. By the 2080s, the region can expect about one quarter less precipitation than in the past. Natural year-to-year variation could result in some years experiencing extended periods without (or with low) precipitation.

For the Okanagan as a whole, climate change is anticipated to cause far-reaching impacts and generate new risks. This includes heat waves and droughts and reduced precipitation, combined with warmer summer temperatures, which will likely result in the depletion of water resources, loss of wetlands, stress on local fisheries, and depletion of aquatic species. Warmer winters will on average result in less snow accumulation on the valley uplands, reducing water availability and increasing the need for water storage. Groundwater and aquifer recharge will also be compromised as drought conditions increase. In addition, warmer temperatures will enhance the potential for invasive species, pests, and pathogens across the region. Extreme events such as flooding, wildfires, and landslides will increase in intensity.

Inter-jurisdictional collaboration is necessary to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to make efforts to adapt to the change in weather and environmental conditions.

## **Objective**

**7-A** Plan for climate change adaption and support ongoing mitigation efforts.

### **Supporting Policies**

- 7A-1** That regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions be reduced by 80% below 2007 levels by 2050.
- 7A-2** That a green building policy be developed for local government buildings.
- 7A-3** That local businesses be encouraged to adopt and apply green energy technologies and energy efficiency practices.
- 7A-4** That the agricultural industry be encouraged to adopt and apply green energy technologies and energy efficiency practices.
- 7A-5** That the federal and provincial governments be encouraged to extend and expand rebate programs for energy efficient and water conservation fixtures and appliances.
- 7A-6** That climate change adaptation and the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in existing and proposed activities and development is supported.
- 7A-7** That public awareness and education on climate change and its current and likely potential future impacts in the region be encouraged.

## Part 3: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND AMENDMENTS

### INDICATORS AND MONITORING

The *Local Government Act* requires a regional district to measure its progress on an RGS. Performance indicators selected for the South Okanagan RGS will allow the RDOS to monitor its implementation and progress towards the vision articulated by the community.

A set of indicators was first developed as part of the RGS development in 2010. The selected indicators were based on the seven goals of the RGS. A long list of indicators, derived from a literature review of existing or proposed regional growth strategy monitoring programs from regional districts in British Columbia and other indicator programs, was refined based on how well they suited RGS goals, data availability, and reliability. Since 2010, some indicators have proven to be difficult to track, suffer from data challenges, or poorly represent the goal with which they are associated. These have been updated and replaced as necessary as part of the 2016 revisions.

There are now 16 indicators tracking the performance of the goals of the seven policy areas. Two additional context indicators show population growth trends against which change in other indicators can be made more meaningful. Indicators have been selected to balance fidelity to the goals with pragmatic concerns of data collection and reporting frequency. Data for all the indicators are available freely from trusted sources (including internal regional district processes), at least every two years.

The indicators will be used as regular reporting on progress towards RGS goals. A state of the region 'Snapshot' will be prepared annually.

With the monitoring program, the RDOS and its south Okanagan member municipalities will have added insight into what is working and where improvements can be made, allowing them to update RGS actions and policies accordingly.



Figure 6: RGS Indicators and Measures

Policy Area/Goal	Indicator	Measure
<b>Context</b>	Population growth	% annual change in population estimates/projections
	Population	Total regional population estimate/ projections
<b>Housing and Development:</b> <del>Focus development to serviced areas in designated Primary Growth Areas and Rural Growth Areas.</del> <b>Housing and Development:</b> <u>Focus development in designated Growth Areas</u>	Growth containment	<del>% of housing starts in primary/ rural growth areas</del> <u>% of housing starts in growth areas and resort areas</u>
	Agricultural land protection	Hectares change to ALR, mapped
	Housing affordability	Median home price
		Affordability ratio: Median salary to median home price
	Housing diversity/ choice	<u>% of people who spend more than 30% of their income on accommodation.</u> # of new homes by type
<b>Ecosystems, Natural Areas and Parks:</b> Protect the health and biodiversity of ecosystems in the south Okanagan.	Amount of land protected	Annual cumulative area of parkland and protected areas
	Water stewardship	Water usage per capita
	Solid waste to landfill	Average tons of daily waste landfilled per person
<b>Infrastructure and Transportation:</b> Support efficient and effective infrastructure services and an accessible multi-modal transportation network.	Mode share/ auto dependence	Total annual regional bus ridership
		% of ICBC insurance holders by type (daily commuter, non-commuter)
<b>Community Health and Wellbeing:</b> Foster healthy, safe communities that provide accessible recreational, educational and cultural opportunities.	Community safety	Annual crime rates per 1000 residents
	Regional health outcomes	Based on Canadian Community Health Survey and annual reporting from Interior Healthy Authority
<b>Regional Economic Development:</b> Achieve a sustainable, resilient and prosperous South Okanagan regional economy.	Economic growth	% growth in # of businesses with employees
		Total value of building permits issued for residential, commercial, industrial and institutional
<b>Engagement and Collaboration:</b> Foster and support regional cooperation, collaboration and civic engagement.	Regional engagement and collaboration activity	Self-reporting annual survey for member communities and Regional Directors on collaborative planning and projects, including servicing agreements, protocol agreement activities with First Nations, and regional planning initiatives
<b>Energy Emissions and Climate Change:</b> Reduce energy emissions and ensure the South	Total GHG emissions	Tonnes of GHGs by source type (residential/ commercial buildings, vehicles)
	Energy efficiency	Average residential energy consumption/home

Okanagan is prepared for a changing climate		
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## AMENDMENTS TO THE RGS

There are two types of amendments to an RGS, minor and major. Both must follow the process set out in Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*.

### Minor Amendments

Recognizing that the RGS requires some flexibility to respond to changing conditions in the South Okanagan region, the minor amendment process provides a process for minor changes, while ensuring that amendments which substantially change the vision and direction of the strategy remain subject to acceptance by all affected local governments.

The *Local Government Act* enables minor amendments pursuant to section 437 (3) in accordance with the following:

- The board must give notice, including notice that the proposed amendment may be determined to be a minor amendment and the date, time and place of the board meeting at which the amending bylaw is to be considered for first reading, to each affected local government at least 30 days before the meeting;
- Before first reading of the amending bylaw, the board must allow an affected local government that is not represented on the board an opportunity to make representations to the board;
- If, at first reading, the amending bylaw receives an affirmative vote of all board members attending the meeting, the bylaw may be adopted in accordance with the procedures that apply to the adoption of a regional growth strategy bylaw under Division 3 [Voting and Voting Rights] of Part 6 [Regional Districts: Governance and Procedures] and the board's procedure bylaw;
- If, at first reading, the amending bylaw does not receive an affirmative vote of all board members attending the meeting, the bylaw may be adopted only in accordance with the procedure established by section 436 [acceptance by affected local governments required].

Criteria under which a proposed amendment to the RGS may be considered a minor amendment include the following:

- Where a land use or development proposal is inconsistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, and, in the opinion of the RDOS Board:
- Is not to be of regional significance in terms of scale, impacts or precedence; and
- Contributes to achieving the goals and objectives set out in Part 2: Regional Policies in this RGS.

- Text and map amendments that are not directly related to enabling specific proposed developments may be considered minor if, in the opinion of the Board, the amendment is not of regional significance.
- Any proposal that does not meet the criteria set out above would be considered a major amendment and will be required to follow the regular process as outlined in the *Local Government Act*, Part 13.

## Major Amendments

~~Where proposals substantially change the vision and direction of the RGS, or where the addition of one or more new Primary or Rural Growth Areas is considered, a major amendment to the RGS, subject to the acceptance of all affected local governments, is required.~~

Where proposals substantially change the vision and direction of the RGS, a major amendment to the RGS, subject to the acceptance of all affected local governments is required. This could include:

- the addition of one or more new Growth Areas, Village Settlement Areas, or Resort Areas;
- the introduction of significant residential development areas outside of existing designated or Growth Areas, Village Settlement Areas, or Resort Areas; or
- proposals seeking to introduce new land use categories other than Agriculture or Resource Area and Open Space within the area designated as Radio Astronomy Research Area.