

**PREFACE**  
**CITY OF VICTORIA REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT**  
**(Adopted by Victoria City Council, October 27, 2005)**

The City of Victoria is a partner in the implementation of the Capital Regional District's *Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)*, and fully supports the actions and initiatives of the Growth Strategy. As the Capital Region's population continues to increase, growth must be properly managed so that future generations can enjoy the social, economic and environmental resources that the Region has to offer.

This section of the *Official Community Plan (OCP)* illustrates how the City of Victoria will implement each of the following eight strategic directions of the RGS:

1. Keep Urban Settlement Compact
2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities
3. Protect Regional Green and Blue Space
4. Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably
5. Build Complete Communities
6. Improve Housing Affordability
7. Increase Transportation Choice
8. Strengthen the Regional Economy

### **1. Keep Urban Settlement Compact**

The City of Victoria is contained in the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area and will manage the development of the core and surrounding neighbourhoods. Growth in the City will be transit oriented, pedestrian friendly, with a mix of businesses, housing, services, and public open space. The policies in the OCP provide for a compact and vital business district to service the residents of the metropolitan community and visitors to the area.

The OCP contains policies to ensure a mix of housing options suitable for a range of household types and income levels. (Please see Table 1 for a list of OCP References related to this strategy.)

Based on current growth and demographic trends, the Regional Growth Strategy forecasts that the number of single family, duplex and other ground oriented housing will be 18,000 units in the City, by 2026. This means that an additional 3,730 ground oriented units will be required to meet this forecast. This can be achieved throughout the City's neighbourhoods through new townhouse developments and townhouse units at the base of multi-level buildings, duplexes, small lot infill, secondary suites in standard single family houses and single family dwellings converted to three or more suites. Policies in the Official Community Plan support these actions.

Also based on the current growth and demographic trends, the RGS forecasts that the total number of apartments in the City will be 29,400. This means that an additional 3750 units are required. The majority of these 3750 units can be accommodated in the Downtown, Harris Green, on the edges of some of the adjacent neighbourhoods and in mixed use buildings throughout the City.

### **Metropolitan Core**

The RGS defines the Metropolitan Core as the area within 1000 metre radius, measured from the intersection of Douglas and View Street. It is approximately 276 hectares in area. The "Regional Growth Strategy Metropolitan Core and Major Centre Performance Guidelines" suggest 100 – 120 units per hectare in the Metro Core. The Official Community Plan

designates Downtown and its “shoulder precincts” such as Harris Green as “Developing Core”, “Primary Centre” and/or “Apartment (Developing).” These designations are consistent with the RGS and will be refined to more closely reflect the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy when policy updates occur beginning in 2005.

### **Major Centres**

The Regional Growth Strategy also designates two Major Centres (Hillside and Mayfair) which are partially within the City of Victoria’s boundaries. Some of the additional 3750 apartment units can be accommodated in these two Major Centres. The “Major Centre Performance Guidelines” define a “Major Centre” as the area within a 500 metre radius from a central point. The Average Gross Density Guidelines suggest 80 – 100 units per hectare. The Official Community Plan designates both Mayfair and Hillside as Primary Centres and there is unused density in each of these areas.

The City will undertake detailed planning of the Major Centres within 5 years to ensure that these centres develop as mixed use, pedestrian and transit focused areas. The City will engage the neighbouring municipalities in these planning exercises to ensure consistency and cooperation.

## **2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities**

While the City does not include rural communities, it plays a role in protecting the integrity of the region’s rural area by accommodating a significant proportion of development and a broad range of housing options. This reduces some of the development pressure on the rural communities.

## **3. Protect Regional Green and Blue Space**

The City supports the protection of green and blue spaces through its recreation and park policies and contribution to the regional park acquisition fund. Map 4 of the Regional Growth Strategy designates Beacon Hill Park, Holland Point Park to Clover Point, Banfield Park and Summit Hill Park as “Major Parks and Ecological Reserves.” This is consistent with their designation in the OCP as “Parks and Public Open Space.” (Please see Table 1 for a list of OCP References related to this strategy.)

Additionally, the City of Victoria adopted a *Greenways Plan, August 28, 2003*. This plan contains policies to link City greenways with the Regional Trail Network. The Official Community Plan will be amended to reflect the strategies and objectives of this document, which will advance the strategy of protecting green and blue space.

## **4. Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably**

By virtue of its unique geographic location, the City of Victoria is situated amidst a vibrant urban forest and is surrounded by a dynamic coastal shoreline, punctuated by a picturesque inland waterway. The OCP outlines Council commitment to stewardship of our environmental assets. (Please see Table 1 for a list of OCP References related to this strategy.) The City recognizes its responsibility towards the protection of the environment and will continue to implement sustainability initiatives, within its constitutional authority and in balance with its social and economic goals, that work towards:

- Reducing waste discharges to levels that do not exceed the assimilative capacity of the natural environment

- Reducing the depletion rate for natural resources below the regenerative capacity of the natural environment;
- Reducing the consumption of scarce renewable and non-renewable resources through conservation, efficiency and application of reduce, reuse and recycle practices; and,
- Supporting decision-making that gives first priority to options that maintain ecosystem health and support the ongoing ability of natural systems to sustain life.

## **5. Build Complete Communities**

The City of Victoria recognizes that it has a significant role to play in building complete communities. The City will continue to plan growth in an organized and sustainable manner. Complete communities refers to a mix of land uses, with a density that allows people to live in close proximity to work, school, services, recreation, parks and open space. The strengthening of the metropolitan core and neighbourhood commercial centres will occur by having more people, from all income groups, living in closer proximity to these service areas.

The Regional Growth Strategy proposes that new development contribute to greater community completeness. Urban development projects contribute to community completeness when, to the greatest extent possible all or some of the following criteria are satisfied:

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

The City will develop performance criteria based on the above to assess development applications.

The City also supports the building of complete communities by promoting intensification which is attractive and close to existing services, amenities and infrastructure and by encouraging the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings. (Please see Table 1 for a list of OCP References related to this strategy.)

## **6. Improve Housing Affordability**

The City of Victoria is working in partnership with the CRD in the development of the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy and is a partner in the Regional Housing Trust Fund. Victoria is one of the least affordable housing markets in Canada so it is crucial that the City works to address this issue. The City will continue to work with all parties in assuring an adequate supply of affordable housing. (Please see Table 1 for a list of OCP References related to this strategy.)

## 7. Increase Transportation Choice

The RGS contains transportation targets of:

- I. By 2026, achieve a minimum PM peak period region-wide transit mode share of 10% of trips;
- II. By 2026, achieve a minimum PM peak period mode share by non-auto modes of 40% for trips to, from and within the Metropolitan Core;
- III. By 2026, achieve a minimum region-wide transit mode share of 15% for journey-to-work trips;
- IV. By 2026, achieve a minimum cycling mode-share of 10% within the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area for journey-to-work trips, and 15% for journey-to-work trips for residents of the combined areas of Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and urban Saanich.

The City will meet these targets by:

- developing and implementing land use policy that creates complete communities.
- working closely with BC Transit and neighbouring municipalities to develop key infrastructure.
- continuing to implement the Bicycle Master Plan, Neighbourhood Transportation Demand Management Plans and the Greenways Plan
- actively working to improve the pedestrian and cyclist environment.

The City of Victoria supports the RGS vision of a balanced and sustainable transportation system providing residents with reasonable and affordable transportation choices that enhance overall regional quality of life. City policies such as the Bicycle Master Plan and the Greenways Plan, promote pedestrian and cyclist travel throughout the City. The regional public transit service also has a strong presence in Victoria, providing residents with an array of transportation options. (Please see Table 1 for a list of OCP References related to this strategy.)

Additionally, the City of Victoria adopted a *Greenways Plan, August 28, 2003*. The *Official Community Plan* will be amended to reflect the strategies and objectives of this document, which will support the RGS strategy of increasing transportation choice.

## 8. Strengthen the Regional Economy

A sustainable economy is important to the prosperity of the region. Achieving economic sustainability is attainable through a strong diversified economy, and through economic activities that are viable over the long-term. The City of Victoria already has a diversified economy. However, efforts should be made to strengthen this economic diversity in perpetuity. (Please see Table 1 for a list of OCP references related to this strategy.)

The RGS identifies the need to maintain and enhance the Metropolitan Core as the economic heart of the region to ensure that the City of Victoria achieves a minimum share of 20% of the region's employment growth by 2026. The Downtown Core has recently experienced an economic decline, however the following initiatives are underway to reverse this and to ensure that above target is achieved:

- Update of the Downtown Plan 2005-7
- Design Charrettes for Prominent Sites e.g. Downtown Inner Harbour

The RGS also identifies the need to find ways to include high-value, clean industry and business in the Metropolitan Core and Major Centres and finding ways to address the shortage of designated space for industry. The following actions by the City are aimed to address these targets:

- Update Burnside's Rock Bay Precinct Plan 2005
- Update Victoria West Alston-Bay-Tyee, Dockside
- Update Victoria West & Burnside Plans 2005-8.

**Table 1**

Regional Growth Strategy - Strategic Directions	Official Community Plan References
1. Keep Urban Settlement Compact	<u>Section 4</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic A(1) - (i) &amp; (iii)</li> <li>▪ Topic D(3) - (a) &amp; (ii)</li> <li>▪ Topic E(1) - (a) &amp; (b)</li> </ul>
2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities	N/A
3. Protect Regional Green and Blue Space	<u>Section 7</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic (4) – (a) (ii)</li> <li>▪ Topic (6) – (a) &amp; (b)</li> </ul> <u>Section 8</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic D – (a) (ii) &amp; (ii)</li> </ul> <u>Section 9</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic (1) - (iv) (a) &amp; (c)</li> </ul>
4. Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably	<u>Section 7</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic (3) – (a) &amp; (b)</li> <li>▪ Topic (4) – (a)</li> <li>▪ Topic (7)</li> </ul> <u>Section 9</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic D – (iv) &amp; (vi)</li> </ul>
5. Build Complete Communities	<u>Section 3</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic A</li> <li>▪ Topic C – (a)</li> </ul> <u>Section 4</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic D (1)</li> <li>▪ Topic B (6)</li> </ul> <u>Section 5</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic D – (b)</li> <li>▪ Topic E (a) &amp; (iii)</li> </ul> <u>Section 9</u>
6. Improve Housing Affordability	<u>Section 5</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic A(1) – (a), (b) &amp; (c)</li> <li>▪ Topic A(2) – (a) &amp; (b)</li> <li>▪ Topic B – (a), (b), (c), (d), (f), (g) &amp; (h)</li> </ul>
7. Increase Transportation Choice	<u>Section 6.1</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic A – (a) &amp; (c)</li> <li>▪ Topic C – (a) &amp; (b)</li> <li>▪ Topic D – (a) &amp; (c)</li> <li>▪ Topic E – (a), (b) &amp; (d)</li> </ul>
8. Strengthen the Regional Economy	<u>Section 4</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Topic A(1) – (a)</li> <li>▪ Topic A(2) – (b)</li> <li>▪ Topic B(4) – (a), (b) &amp; (e)</li> <li>▪ Topic B(5) – (a)</li> <li>▪ Topic B(6) – (a)</li> <li>▪ Topic C(1) - (a), (b) &amp; (c)</li> <li>▪ Topic D(1) – (b)</li> <li>▪ Topic D(3) – (a)</li> </ul>