

Regional Context Statement

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OVERVIEW

As the core municipality in the broader metropolitan Capital Region, the City of Victoria must work collaboratively with 12 partner municipalities and a single electoral area to achieve regional objectives. The City of Victoria is a partner in the implementation of the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), adopted by the CRD Board on March 14, 2018, and supports its vision, context, objectives, principles and policies. As the Capital Region's population continues to increase, growth must be managed to ensure that regional sustainability and livability are enhanced over time. Local Government Act sections 446 to 447 require member municipalities to include within their OCP, a regional context statement that indicates the OCP's relationship to the RGS.

This regional context statement illustrates how Victoria implements the ten strategic directions of the current RGS, where applicable:

1. Keep Urban Settlement Compact
2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities
3. Protect, Conserve and Manage Ecosystem Health
4. Manage Regional Infrastructure Services Sustainably
5. Create Safe and Complete Communities
6. Improve Housing Affordability
7. Improve Multi-Modal Connectivity and Mobility
8. Realize the Region's Economic Potential
9. Foster a Resilient Food and Agriculture System
10. Significantly Reduce Community-Based Greenhouse Gas Emissions

REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY CONSISTENCY

Figure 7 summarizes how this plan is consistent or working towards consistency with the RGS.

Figure 7: Regional Growth Strategy Consistency

RGS Strategic Direction	OCP Policy Response and Reference
<p>1. Keep Urban Settlement Compact</p>	<p>As the provincial capital, Victoria plays an important role in supporting the RGS target of accommodating 95% of new dwelling units within the regional urban containment policy area by 2038. The OCP identifies a 30-year (to 2041) growth management concept for Victoria and supporting policies that reinforce Victoria's compact urban form and human-scaled neighbourhoods including a strong downtown-focused Urban Core and a network of Town Centres and Urban Villages that are walkable, transit-focused and supported with mixed-use residential and employment centres (see Figure 3: Thirty Year Growth Management Concept).</p> <p>More specifically, the plan's growth management concept seeks to direct and accommodate 50% (approximately 10,000 new people) of Victoria's population growth within the Urban Core, 40% (approximately 8000 new people) in Town Centres and Large Urban Villages and 10% (approximately 2000 new people) within the remainder of the city including small urban villages (see Figure 3: Thirty Year Growth Management Concept). The plan's growth projections also align with overall RGS sub regional population projections for the core.</p> <p>The plan further reinforces the RGS objective of establishing a strong mix of uses focused around the downtown and harbour through specific policies (see 6.10 – 6.10.11) to maintain and implement a detailed local area plan that supports the development of the Downtown Core Area as a prominent centre for business, government, arts and culture on Vancouver Island and ensuring that neighbourhoods include centres of economic activity that serve the needs of residents within walking, wheeling or cycling distance.</p>
<p>2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities</p>	<p>Victoria is a built-out urban capital city with no rural areas and is completely located within the Urban Containment Policy Area. Therefore, the rural policies of the Regional Growth Strategy do not apply. However, the plan's land use planning and development policies do play a role in protecting the Capital Region's rural communities by housing a significant proportion of regional population growth in walkable, transit accessible communities in the region's most diverse housing stock (see Figure 3: Thirty Year Growth Management Concept).</p>
<p>3. Protect, Conserve and Manage Ecosystem Health</p>	<p>The plan supports the integration of environmental considerations into planning design and development at all scales throughout the city. The plan also supports environmental health, sustainability and stewardship through of the development of regulatory tools, policies and public awareness.</p> <p>The plan designates for protection all areas designated as Capital Green Lands in the RGS through Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space designations or Marine and Working Harbour designations (see Map 2). The plan also contains policies to address the protection and enhancement of parks and open space with specific attention to the management of shoreline and freshwater ecosystems, and urban forest management (see 9.1 – 9.6, 10.2, 10.9). More specifically, the plan implements the RGS target of reducing contaminants to fresh and marine water bodies by supporting an integrated and comprehensive approach for the management of surface water, rainwater and ground water resources to ensure healthy aquatic ecosystems (see 10.12).</p> <p>The plan also designates Sensitive Ecosystems (see Map 10) and includes policies to guide the establishment of Development Permit Area guidelines for the protection of identified sensitive ecosystems, urban forest and marine areas of high ecological importance (see 10.2.4, 10.2.5, 10.9.1). These various OCP directions support and align with the RGS policies to identify, protect, enhance and restore healthy ecosystems using regulatory tools such as policies, regulations, development permit areas, etc.</p>

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RGS Strategic Direction	OCP Policy Response and Reference
<p>CONTINUED:</p> <p>3. Protect, Conserve and Manage Ecosystem Health</p>	<p>The plan also implements an RGS policy directing municipalities to identify regionally significant parks through their regional context statement. Major parks identified as Capital Green Lands in Victoria, such as Beacon Hill Park, Summit Park and Gonzales Hill Regional Park, are designated Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space as identified on Map 2 and further defined on Map 9, with these designations supported by policy direction for their protection and enhancement (see 9.1 – 9.6). These policies have also guided the development of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan that provides strategic direction for the planning and management of, and investment into the City's parks system for the next 25 years.</p>
<p>4. Manage Regional Infrastructure Services Sustainably</p>	<p>The plan recognizes the importance of sustainable management and access to regional infrastructure services including drinking water, liquid and solid waste, and how these services are impacted through local land use planning and development. Therefore the plan has an overarching objective to focus higher density development in strategic areas to ensure compact land use patterns that manage growth through intensification to minimize the need for new infrastructure while also ensuring well-maintained infrastructure and facilities that meet the needs of residents and businesses through best management practices [see Broad Objectives 11(a)(b)]. This broader direction also aligns with the RGS principle of promoting settlement patterns that are cost-effective and efficient to service.</p> <p>The plan also recognizes that future increases to Victoria's population may have impacts on existing infrastructure, therefore the plan includes detailed policies to accommodate increased growth through the on-going inspection, maintenance, upgrade and replacement of key infrastructure systems (see 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7). The management of infrastructure and utilities is also supported through the City's various utility masterplans that consider forecast population growth and are updated periodically. The provision and update of the City's utility masterplans also aligns with the RGS target of preparing long-term capital plans for CRD utilities and major infrastructure.</p> <p>The plan also prioritizes policies that support closed loop systems in resource recovery, and focus on integrated rainwater management through landscape design and integration of small-scale technology (see 11.10 – 11.24). Together the plan's environmental and infrastructure policies support Victoria's move towards a zero net solid waste community in partnership with the CRD and the private sector, which in turn support the RGS objective of avoiding any negative impacts to the long-term availability of utility services for existing development and planned growth within the Urban Containment Policy Area, recognizing the impacts of climate change.</p>
<p>5. Create Safe and Complete Communities</p>	<p>Victoria is a very compact and complete community located within the Urban Containment Policy Area. It has an average density of approximately 40 persons per hectare, the highest population density in the Capital Region and the sixth highest in Canada, equivalent to Toronto. On only 2.8% of the Capital Region's land base, Victoria houses nearly one-quarter of the region's population. The plan includes policies to support a broad vision to build complete communities, in particular focusing 50% of forecast residential growth in the Urban Core, 40% in the Town Centres and Large Urban Villages linked by rapid or frequent transit, and situated near community and business services and employment centres (see Figure 3: Thirty Year Growth Management Concept).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CONTINUED ></p>

RGS Strategic Direction	OCP Policy Response and Reference
<p>CONTINUED:</p> <p>5. Create Safe and Complete Communities</p>	<p>Virtually all of Victoria is within 500 metres of a transit route and approximately 50% of residents live within 400 metres of one of four frequent transit routes (Douglas Street; Fort/Yates Streets; Hillside Avenue; and Craigflower Road). The plan contains policies to further focus new employment growth in the Urban Core, the Mayfair and Hillside Town Centres, and in employment districts served by rapid and frequent transit service. The plan also includes specific policies that establish urban place designations for the entire city that outline the desired built form, place character, land use and density. The urban place designation policies for the urban core, town centres and urban villages all support compact growth that integrates housing, employment, amenities and community services within walkable centres which provide the basis for complete communities (see 6.1.7, 6.1.8, 6.1.9 and 6.1.10). These policies and urban place designations align with and implement the RGS Complete Communities Criteria.</p> <p>The plan also includes a variety of policies for emergency management focused on preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery and identifies areas of seismic vulnerability on Map 17, and policies respecting additional development information requirements for these areas (see 18.1 – 18.22). These policies also align with RGS policies that support the well-being of residents, address potential risks on development from seismic activity and support the design and construction of climate change-adaptive and risk-adaptive development in the Growth management Planning Area.</p> <p>The development and maintenance of safe and complete communities is also largely accomplished through the development of local area plans that are a key instrument for achieving the goals of the OCP and the RGS (see 20.5.1).</p>
<p>6. Improve Housing Affordability</p>	<p>A key outcome of the plan is to support and maintain improved access to housing to improve quality of life, community health and vitality. In efforts to address housing affordability, Victoria participated in the development and approval of the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy, is a founding member of the Regional Housing Trust Fund, a funding partner in the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness and supports the Regional Housing First Program.</p> <p>More specifically, the plan establishes policies to encourage a range of housing choices and support services across the city and within every neighbourhood to meet the needs of residents at different life stages and circumstances, and to facilitate aging in place (see 13.1 – 13.39).</p> <p>The plan also contains detailed policies (see 13.2 – 13.2.5) that provide direction for the Victoria Housing Strategy, which outlines a local strategic response to address housing affordability. The Victoria Housing Strategy identifies policies and strategic initiatives that align with policy directions from the CRD Regional Housing Affordability Strategy and support the RGS targets to increase the supply of affordable housing, reduce the number of people in core housing need and reduce the number of people who are homeless.</p>
<p>7. Improve Multi-Modal Connectivity and Mobility</p>	<p>Victoria participated in the development and approval of the Regional Transportation Plan and has partnered with the CRD, BC Transit and others in subsequent implementation initiatives including BC Transit's 25 Year Transit Future Plan. The RGS identifies a target of achieving 42% of all trips made by walking, cycling and transit by 2038. According to the CRD Origin and Destination Survey (2017), 57% of all trips within Victoria were made by walking, cycling and transit. A key component in supporting alternate modes of transportation is the plan's transportation and mobility policies that collectively align with and support the CRD's regional multi-modal network as described in the Regional Transportation Plan including the provision of roads, trails and corridors that support seamless movement throughout the region. More specifically the plan provides a functional street classification map and related policies (see Map 4, 7.2 – 7.9) to guide the role, function and design of city streets. The plan also includes a cycling network map that identifies the existing and future network and policies to guide the development of a completed network in support of the CRD Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (see 7.16.2, 7.16.7).</p>

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RGS Strategic Direction	OCP Policy Response and Reference
<p>CONTINUED:</p> <p>7. Improve Multi-Modal Connectivity and Mobility</p>	<p>The plan supports integrated regional approaches to transportation planning and service delivery, and gives priority to walking, cycling, public transit and goods movement over single occupancy vehicle travel (see Broad Objectives 7(a) – 7(g) and 7.1). The plan's land management vision supports development of a walkable urban pattern composed of a strong downtown core, Town Centres, and Large Urban Villages linked by rapid and frequent transit service and a network of pedestrian and cycling priority greenways (see 6.10.7, 7.14.1, 7.16.3, 7.19.1). The land management and transportation policies of the plan focus on the broad objective that all residents of Victoria can reach goods and services to meet daily needs including public transit within a 15-minute walk of home [see Broad Objectives 6(f)].</p> <p>Policies of the plan explicitly endorse coordinated transportation planning at the regional scale, including alignment of local transportation plans and initiatives with regional initiatives and across municipal boundaries including those related to public transit, passenger and commuter rail, goods movement, emergency response, trip reduction and travel demand management, and travel mode connectivity (see 7.14.3 – 7.14.6, 7.25 – 7.29.4).</p>
<p>8. Realize the Region's Economic Potential</p>	<p>The plan's growth management framework and land use designations support Victoria's role as a capital city and ability to nurture the regional economy through attracting and accommodating growth in employment, new commercial and industrial development [see Broad Objectives 14(c) and 14(f)]. The RGS identifies a related target of achieving a jobs/population ratio of 0.60 in the Core Area, which Victoria is currently exceeding with a ratio of 0.92, based on the RGS population, dwelling and employment projections (2011). This strong jobs/population ratio supports the RGS target and reinforces Victoria's role as a capital city and centre of employment. The plan designates lands for employment on Map 2 which responds to the RGS objective of addressing the shortage of designated space-extensive industrial/business land in the region. The plan also provides related policies to achieve a more resilient economy through strengthening its core sectors such as government and business office, tourism and visitor services, marine, advanced technology, arts and culture, and health and education, as well as through increased diversification of business and employment (see 14.28 – 14.55). Together these policies align with RGS direction to enhance established employment centres, integrating high-value, clean industry and business in complete communities, attracting and maintain a highly skilled workforce and reducing poverty in the Capital Region.</p> <p>The plan also includes policy direction for the implementation and periodic updating of an economic strategy for Victoria with a focus on business incubation, growth and retention, and policy respecting poverty reduction and community economic development (see 14.5 – 14.5.3).</p>

RGS Strategic Direction	OCP Policy Response and Reference
<p>9. Foster a Resilient Food and Agriculture System</p>	<p>Although Victoria does not have any land designated as Agricultural Land Reserve, it does recognize the importance of urban agriculture through a set of comprehensive food system policies to support food system planning, production on public and private land and related infrastructure (see section 17 – Food Systems). Victoria also provides a significant market for local agricultural products and the plan establishes policies respecting food security and Victoria’s role in the regional food system.</p> <p>For example, the RGS target of increasing the amount of land in crop production to enhance food security is supported by specific policies that direct the City to review and develop City policies and regulations to increase the number of allotment gardens, common gardens, edible landscapes, food-bearing trees and other types of food production on public and private lands (see 17.4 – 17.9).</p> <p>The plan also seeks to improve citizen access to affordable, healthy and local foods (see 17.20 – 17.23) and reduce food waste (see 17.24 – 17.26.3).</p> <p>As an implementation measure, the City has also introduced updated zoning regulations that permit small-scale commercial urban agriculture in all zones as a means of supporting urban agriculture. Collectively, the plan policies align with the RGS target of increasing the amount of land for food production as well as aligning with RGS policies to increase local food security and supporting food waste management that is environmentally sustainable and benefits the regional economy.</p>
<p>10. Significantly Reduce Community-Based Greenhouse Gas Emissions</p>	<p>The plan establishes policies for sustainable resource management including policies with respect to mitigating the impacts of climate change, sustainable resource management, greenhouse gas reduction, renewable and district energy, green building and infrastructure, biodiversity, improved ecological function, air and water quality, marine and shoreline management and the urban forest. One of the key implementation strategies is the recent development of the Climate Leadership Plan which provides strategic direction for climate change mitigation and adaptation (see 12.3 – 12.3.6).</p> <p>The Climate Leadership Plan includes an overall goal to reduce community-wide greenhouse gasses by 80% by 2050 (from 2007 levels) and to shift away from fossil fuels to 100% renewable energy by 2050. These targets align with and exceed the RGS target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33% (from 2007 levels) by 2020, and by 61% by 2038. The plan also includes specific policies that support greenhouse gas reductions through the provision of compact land use patterns and walkable communities (see 12.4 – 12.4.3), working in partnership with the CRD, utility providers and the private sector to encourage energy conservation and efficiency (see 12.9). The plan also seeks to reduce GHG emissions through improved building performance of both public and private buildings through the integration of energy efficiency technologies and building systems, green construction, and district renewable energy systems (see 12.17 – 12.22).</p>

