



# Regional Board Report

## Information

**To:** Regional Board  
**From:** Director of Development and Engineering Services  
**Date:** September 26, 2024  
**Subject:** Central Okanagan Demographic and Housing Projections

**Voting Entitlement:** All Directors - Unweighted Corporate Vote - Simple Majority (LGA s.208)

---

**Purpose:** To receive for information an overview of demographic and housing projection scenarios for the Central Okanagan in preparation for the Regional Employment Lands Inventory Project to be presented to the RDCO Board prior to December 31, 2025.

### Executive Summary:

The Central Okanagan is the fastest growing region in Canada hence it is important that we are proactive in planning for further anticipated growth. The Regional Employment Lands Inventory (RELI) is currently underway to assess the current supply of employment lands in the Central Okanagan and projected future land use requirements, impacted by population growth and the evolving regional economy. Demographic population and housing projections are a key deliverable of the RELI.

A consulting contract was awarded to rennie to develop a range of population and housing projection scenarios for the RELI, which will also support upcoming planning projects and initiatives. The projections will provide regional consistency across the Central Okanagan and help develop a better understanding of change drivers shaping the region's future. Growth within our region will be an economic catalyst, brings an increase of workers and young adults, with support to our aging population. Proactive planning is critical to ensure housing supply keeps up with the needs of our growing population.

### Recommendation(s):

**THAT** the Regional Board receives the demographic and housing projections overview from the Director of Development and Engineering Services, dated September 26, 2024, for information.

---

Respectfully submitted by: Danika LeBlanc, Senior Planner

Report Approved by: Danielle Noble-Brandt, Director of Development and Engineering Services

Approved for Agenda: Sally Ginter, Chief Administrative Officer

---

**Strategic Plan Alignment:**

- Emergency preparedness
- Health and wellness
- Regional transportation
- Truth and reconciliation
- Environment and climate
- Growth and development

**Background:**

Regional Growth Strategy

The RDCO adopted Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Bylaw No. 1336 on June 23, 2014. A Regional Growth Strategy is a long-range planning tool governed by Part 13 of the *Local Government Act* that assists local governments to plan a coordinated future for their communities while dealing with regional issues and decisions that cross local political boundaries. As there have not been any amendments to the RGS, demographic and employment projections have not been updated since its adoption.

RGS Priority Projects Plan

In accordance with the RGS and through a collaborative process, an action plan to outline priority initiatives was completed. The Priority Projects Plan is the framework for RGS implementation and was based on the regional initiatives identified within the RGS. The Priority Projects Plan was endorsed by the Regional Board on July 24, 2017.

Several successful initiatives and projects related to the implementation of the RGS have been completed that have had significant strategic investment value supporting various goals and policies. Projects were selected and scoped to provide regional coordination and collaboration with our partners in support of shared regional needs. The Regional Employment Lands Inventory is the ninth and final project of the Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan.

Regional Employment Lands Inventory

The Regional Employment Lands Inventory (RELI) project is currently in process which will assess current and future usage of employment-supporting lands in the Central Okanagan. From this, projected demand, future supply, and impending shortages by sector will be estimated. This information will then be used to direct future commercial and land use development in the region, such as through intensifying existing lands.

The objective of the RELI is to gain an understanding of the current inventory of employment lands. This will then be analysed in conjunction with population and employment projections to inform future land needs. This will ultimately yield the creation of a GIS tool that can be used by various user groups throughout the region. One of the discrete deliverables of the RELI workplan is the development of a series of long-range demographic and housing projections. These projections will inform the regional

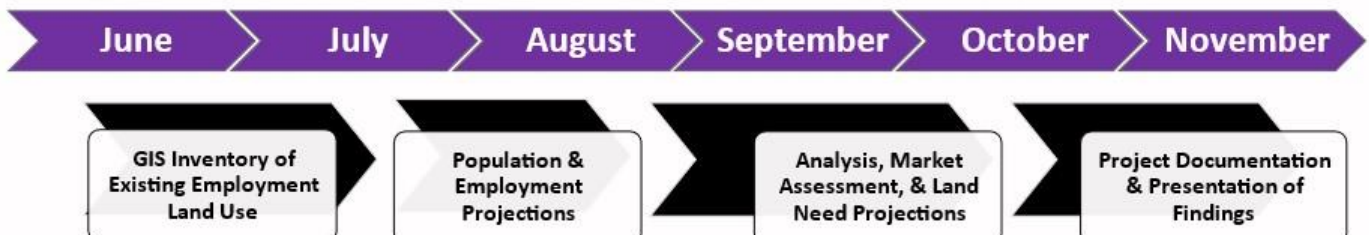


Figure 1: RELI Project Timeline

employment projections being prepared by another consultant (Deloitte). The overall level of employment growth will be calibrated to fit with regional population projections, and more specifically with the projection of the future labour force as determined by age-specific population projections, combined with age-specific labour force participation rates.

### Legislative Changes

The Province is shifting to a more pro-active approach to planning, where local governments identify their housing needs, and then zone for what is needed. New requirements include that all local governments update their Housing Needs Reports (HNRs) using a standard method. Local governments must then align zoning bylaws and Official Community Plans (OCPs) accordingly using BC Stats data. All local governments must complete their Interim Housing Needs Report by January 1, 2025.

### Demographic and Housing Projections

The Central Okanagan is the fastest growing region in Canada. From shifts in patterns of domestic migration to national policy changes for immigration, many regions will continue to see growth in the coming years well above historical averages. It imperative that we are proactive in planning for this growth.

While the demographic and housing projections prepared by Rennie are currently supporting the RELI project, these scenarios will help inform a range of planning projects and initiatives including upcoming HNRs, OCPs, and a review and update of the Regional Growth Strategy. The intent behind this work was to provide more regional consistency as it pertains to these projections. Staff from partnering communities recognized the value in participating in this project to inform work occurring in individual communities as a result of the recent legislative changes.

Although all local governments must now use a prescribed methodology to support their HNRs, developing a range to assist on a technical level to help with other more nuanced analysis is an approach that many communities are pursuing to support planning efforts across various disciplines. The projections from Rennie's work will be further refined by each member municipality through their own individual HNRs that are required to be completed by January 1, 2025.

Given the size of some of the communities in the RDCO, an allocation approach was used by Rennie to distribute population by age to each of the region's member communities. This allocation was based on a shift-share approach whereby the changing distribution of population by age, as represented through historical Census, was used to distribute the future regional population to member communities. A parallel shift-share approach was used to allocate future housing by structure and tenure types. In addition to the relative distribution of housing by type as seen through the Census, available data on housing starts and completions was used to inform the allocation of future housing to each community.

Deliverables include:

- An updated set of demographic projections to provide the context for international migration.
- RDCO annual population projections by age and gender for several future scenarios to 2046
- Regional occupied dwelling unit forecasts for each of the population scenarios summarized into two dwelling unit classifications (apartments and ground-oriented) and two tenure types (owned and rented).
- From each of the regional population scenarios, an allocation to the region's major member communities.

While the primary deliverables for this project will be the output from the projection scenarios delivered, technical documentation will also be included that outlines the base data used in the projections, the

methodological approach to developing the projections and major findings from the model series for the RDCO and its member communities.

---

**Considerations:**

**Organizational:** Development and Engineering Services staff is responsible for the overall project management, contract management, and other administrative functions.

This scope of work will inform future planning projects and initiatives such as OCP updates, the RGS update, and other key land use policy frameworks.

**External:** A technical committee made up of planning staff, engineers, technical experts and economic development specialists from partnering communities are providing input and oversight throughout the RELI.

For the demographic and housing projections component, the Regional Growth Strategy Steering Committee has been involved in reviewing and providing comments on the data and scenarios. All partnering communities attended a workshop with Rennie on August 14, 2024 to review the initial data sets. The projections are intended to implement a standardized approach for the region to support coordination and consistency. The projections from Rennie's work will be further refined by each member municipality through their own individual HNRs that are required to be completed by January 1, 2025.

Deliverables of the projections work will be made available to all member communities including:

- City of Kelowna
- District of Lake Country
- Okanagan Indian Band
- District of Peachland
- Westbank First Nation
- City of West Kelowna

**Financial:** The RDCO received funding for the Regional Employment Lands Inventory project through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) 2023 Complete Communities grant in the amount of \$150,000.00. The demographic and housing projections component is being supported through \$30,000.00 of the Local Government Housing Initiatives funding program which was to be spent by RDCO on eligible costs and activities related to legislative requirements arising from Bills 44, 46, and 47.

---

**Attachment(s):** 1. PowerPoint Presentation  
2. Rennie Presentation