



# Regional Board Report

## Request for Decision

**To:** Regional Board  
**From:** Director of Development and Engineering Services  
**Date:** December 12, 2024  
**Subject:** Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan 2024-2028

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

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**Purpose:** To consider the Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan 2024-2028 for endorsement.

### Executive Summary:

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Priority Projects Plan identifies key initiatives that cross jurisdictional boundaries and benefit from a regional approach to planning and coordination. The first RGS Priority Projects Plan was endorsed in 2017 and after several years of work to advance the initiatives in the plan, it is now nearing completion. To continue the momentum toward RGS implementation, staff have worked with our regional and community partners to develop a new RGS Priority Projects Plan for 2024 - 2028. The intent is that the regional project list is supported in principle and projects will be approved each year through the annual budget deliberation process.

The new plan will guide regional planning initiatives over the next several years and address cross-cutting topics such as regional housing, employment, transportation, climate, agriculture, and environmental stewardship. The new plan includes individual projects as well as ongoing base business that supports annual regional planning and coordination. The new plan also identifies projects underway and how subsequent projects will build upon and complement current work. Of note, an update to the Regional Growth Strategy is included as part of the new RGS Priority Projects Plan. This is intentional and designed to keep momentum on key regional initiatives while the RGS update is underway. This approach will allow for strategic efficiencies as projects will be completed in time to inform key chapters of the updated RGS.

A key focus has been to work with staff around the region to ensure projects will provide value to our regional partners, for example, by providing needed data and outputs in time to inform their 2030 Official Community Plans updates. This will help lighten the load on our regional partners and ensure an efficient and coordinated approach to topics that are more effectively addressed on a regional scale. The RGS Steering Committee has reviewed and supports the RGS Priority Projects Plan for 2024-2028.

### Recommendation(s):

**THAT** the Regional Board endorses the Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan 2024-2028 from the Director of Development and Engineering Services, dated December 12, 2024.

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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

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### **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

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|---------------------------|---|
| √ Emergency preparedness  | √ Truth and reconciliation                              |
| √ Health and wellness     | √ Environment and climate – Regional priority only      |
| √ Regional transportation | √ Growth and development – Electoral Area priority only |
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### **Background:**

#### Regional Growth Strategy

The RDCO adopted its first RGS in 2000. An update to the 2000 RGS was initiated in 2010 and the current RGS Bylaw No. 1336 was adopted 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. The RGS is also a collective vision from the regional partners for the future to create a region that promotes growth that is economically, environmentally and socially healthy over a twenty (20) year time horizon.

The RGS represents a joint-planning approach to addressing the growth issues that go beyond local government boundaries. It was developed in collaboration from member municipalities, First Nations and Provincial agencies and accepted by all partners. The strategy is an agreement among governments and agencies to work together on common issues to find common solutions. The strategy reflects a shared regional vision for the future, as well as goals and policies necessary to achieve effective growth management.

#### 2017 RGS Priority Projects Plan

On July 24, 2017, the Regional Board endorsed the first RGS Priority Projects Plan which outlined priority initiatives for the RDCO to implement based on commitments defined in the RGS. The Plan contained nine projects supporting over 25 policies, across eight Issue Areas of the RGS. A number of successful initiatives and projects were completed in accordance with the plan and it is now near completion.

#### 2024 RGS Priority Projects Plan

Being accountable for progress towards achieving the goals of the RGS requires a commitment to implementation. To ensure continued momentum, a list of projects for 2024-2028 has been prepared to guide regional coordination and foster collaborative work within the Central Okanagan. Development Services staff initiated the update to the RGS Priority Projects Plan in January 2024. The overall objective is to create a list of regional projects that will, over the next several years, assist in implementing the RGS. Due to recent legislative changes, various projects have been selected to respond to emerging issues and support the current planning framework. Projects identified in the action plan are best executed at a regional scale for consistency and efficiency.

The new plan was developed with input and review from the RGS Steering Committee, which is a forum for senior representatives of regional and municipal planning departments, First Nations and agencies around the region with an interest in regional planning. A workshop was held on February 28, 2024 to

gather insights, discuss collective regional issues, and challenges and opportunities for focus in the coming years that will benefit from regional partnerships. Along with Development Services Staff, representatives from City of West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, District of Peachland, District of Lake Country, City of Kelowna, Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission and Interior Health Authority attended. As an outcome of the workshop, feedback was garnered to help with an approach for evaluating, selecting and prioritizing initiatives for the updated plan.

The development of the list of priority projects advanced through an iterative process involving research and technical analysis, consultation with the RGS Steering Committee and stakeholders, and follow up research. The plan builds on the insights from the previous plan and work that has occurred throughout the region since 2017. The process allowed opportunities to provide direction and feedback to influence the development of the plan.

On July 25, 2024, RDCO staff brought forward an overview of the project and draft priority projects action plan to the Board which was well received. The final list of projects support several key priorities of the RGS including Our Ecosystems, Our Housing, and Our Climate. Further to the completion of the plan, RDCO staff received comments from the RGS Steering Committee which has been incorporated into the final RGS Priority Projects Plan for 2024-2028.

The 2024-2028 Priority Projects Plan contains 14 discrete implementation projects and 7 ongoing base business items supporting a broad range of RGS policies. As part of developing the plan, projects were considered covering all the RGS Issue Areas. Many of the RGS Issue Areas were found to be well supported by a significant amount of recent and ongoing work. The projects listed were selected to supplement and support this work. As such, some RGS Issue Areas are not directly represented by the selected projects in the updated Priority Projects Plan. However, given the interconnected nature of regional issues, it is often the case that one project supports multiple issue areas both directly and indirectly.

Of note, an update to the Regional Growth Strategy is included as part of the new RGS Priority Projects Plan. This is intentional and designed to keep momentum on key regional initiatives while the RGS update is underway. This approach will also allow for strategic efficiencies, as projects will be completed in time to inform key chapters of the updated RGS.

Many of the regional issues of the RGS require cross-jurisdictional collaboration to plan for the long-term growth in the Central Okanagan. Favourably, the RGS Steering Committee supports the draft RGS Priority Projects Plan for 2024-2028 and further underscores that many of the projects align with and complement the individual workplans of each respective community, such as updating Official Community Plans. Though the priority projects have been identified, this is not meant to be a rigid five-year workplan. It may need to be revised in coming years to be adaptive to suit the needs of the region. Overall, the projects work towards implementation of the RGS by emphasizing collective and coordinated actions on regional activities that are best accomplished at a regional scale.

The following table outlines the priority projects and their proposed sequencing in the updated RGS Priority Projects Plan for 2024 – 2028:

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
<b>Ongoing Base Business</b>					
1) RGS Implementation Monitoring	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2) Regional Context Statements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3) RGS Steering Committee	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4) Regional Planning Labs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5) Regional Citizen Survey	✓		✓		✓
6) Environmental Data and Mapping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7) Central Okanagan Regional Open Data Library		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>2024 – 2028 Regional Projects: Planning</b>					
1) Regional Employment Lands Inventory	✓	✓			
2) Regional Agricultural Strategy	✓	✓			
3) Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy	✓	✓			
4) Regional Housing Needs Summary	✓	✓			
5) Development Permit Area Standards		✓	✓		
6) Regional Climate Action Plan		✓	✓		
7) Terms of Reference for Professional Reports			✓	✓	
8) Regional Employment Lands Strategy			✓	✓	
9) Growth Projections Regional Methodology				✓	✓
10) RGS Update		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>2024 – 2028 Regional Projects: Engineering</b>					
11) Explore and Define Regional Transportation Service	✓	✓			
12) Explore Curbside Food Waste Collection	✓	✓			
13) Implement Curbside Food Waste Collection			✓	✓	
14) Regional Air Quality Plan Update				✓	✓

### Next Steps

After multiple touchpoints, workshops, and meetings with regional and community partners throughout the year, staff are pleased to present the RGS Priority Projects Plan for 2024 – 2028 to the Regional Board for endorsement. If endorsed, the projects in the plan will be used to inform multi-year budgeting and work planning. The intent is that the regional project list is supported in principle and projects will be approved each year through the annual budget deliberation process.

### **Considerations:**

#### Organizational:

Developing the RGS Priority Projects Plan complies with Section 4.1.2 of the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336. The plan is intended to guide collaborative work throughout the region as the RGS review and update is taking place. Upon completion of the RGS update, any projects that have not been completed may be re-evaluated through the development of the next action plan.

External: The RGS Priority Projects Plan received direction from staff representing the RDCO, District of Peachland, City of West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, City of Kelowna and District of Lake Country. A collaborative and iterative approach was used to inform the final list of projects.

Various interested community partner organizations also provided input to set foundations and identify need throughout the region.

Financial: Projects outlined in the Plan do not automatically have approval to proceed. The intent is that the regional project list as presented is supported in principle and projects requiring RDCO funding will be reviewed annually through the budget deliberation process.

Considerations not applicable:

- Legal/Statutory Authority
- Alternate Recommendation

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Attachment(s): 1. Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan 2024-2028  
2. PowerPoint Presentation

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