



Regional District of  
Central Okanagan

# Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan 2024 - 2028

Our Home Our Future



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# Executive Summary

## About the Regional District of Central Okanagan's RGS Priority Projects Plan

The Regional District of Central Okanagan's (RDCO) RGS Priority Projects Plan is a five-year Action Plan that outlines priority initiatives for the RDCO to implement based on commitments defined in the RDCO's Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 (RGS). On July 24, 2017, the Regional Board endorsed the first RGS Priority Projects Plan which resulted in a number of successful initiatives and projects completed that had significant strategic investment value throughout the region.

The 2024-2028 Priority Projects Plan contains 14 discrete implementation projects and seven ongoing base business items supporting a broad range of RGS policies. All projects and initiatives have been selected and scoped to support regional coordination and collaboration in support of regionally shared needs.

This Plan is driven by the RGS, which specifies the collaborative development of the Action Plan as part of the individual and joint responsibility of the Regional District partners for the "effective management of the future growth of the region." Beyond the RGS, a coordinated regional response continues to be the most sensible, economic and effective approach to collective challenges. This is further recognized by provincial, federal and non-governmental funding initiatives that prioritize projects that demonstrate regional benefits or connections to regional strategic initiatives.

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 suit the needs of the region. Every year the RDCO Board will be asked to consider the projects recommended in this Plan and approve the requisite resource allocations on a case-by-case basis through the annual budget process.

## Process

The Action Plan was developed by RDCO staff and the RGS Steering Committee along with staff input from partnering communities, area non-governmental organizations and other governmental agencies. This work builds on the insights from the previous plan and work that has occurred throughout the region since 2017. A collaborative and iterative approach was used to inform the final list of projects.

## Five-Year Action Plan Summary

Since adoption of the RGS, the RDCO and its regional partners have completed a significant amount of work towards achievement of its goals and policies. As part of the Plan development, projects were considered covering all Issue Areas of the RGS. Many of these Issue Areas were found to be well supported by a significant amount of recent and ongoing work. The projects listed below were selected to supplement and support this work. As such, some RGS Issue Areas are not directly represented by the selected projects in this Plan. However, given the interconnected nature of regional issues, it is often the case that one project supports multiple issues areas both directly and indirectly.

The following table outlines the priority projects and their sequence in the Plan.

	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				✓	✓

## 1. Overview

### 1.1 Purpose

The RDCO adopted its first RGS in 2000 and an update was initiated in 2010. In 2014, the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) adopted Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 (RGS). Section 4.1.2 of the RGS emphasizes that the RDCO and its member municipalities are, “individually and jointly, responsible for effective management of the future growth of the region.” Since adoption of the RGS, the RDCO and regional partners have fulfilled this commitment in several ways. Significant progress has been made toward RGS goals and policies by staff and elected officials working at both regional and local levels. RGS Section 4.1.2 specifies the development of a “five-year action plan to outline the priority initiatives to implement the RGS.”

By developing this RGS Priority Projects Plan and implementing its initiatives, the RDCO and its partners are not only fulfilling the commitments of the RGS but echoing its most central insight: many of the challenges we collectively face are best addressed at the regional level.

Regional priorities planning is an opportunity to consider these questions with regional partners:

- What should be the regional priority projects for the next five years?
- Where should coordinated regional responses be focussed?

- What would be the most sensible economic and effective approaches to collective regional issues?
- Where should collaboration on funding initiatives be focussed that demonstrate regional benefits?
- Are there funding opportunities that make sense to pursue as regional partners?

The purpose of this document is to identify priority projects to support implementation of the RGS for the next number of years and describe the process undertaken to select those projects until a review and update of the current RGS has been completed.

## 1.2 Description

The Action Plan was developed by RDCO staff and the RGS Steering Committee along with staff input from partnering communities, area non-governmental organizations and other governmental agencies. This work builds on the insights from the previous plan and work that has occurred throughout the region since 2017. A collaborative and iterative approach was used to inform the final list of projects. Project work consisted of developing and prioritizing a list of projects into a multi-year Action Plan and involved a series of research, analysis and consultations steps beginning in January 2024, concluding with endorsement of the final report by the RDCO Board.

The 2024-2028 Priority Projects Plan contains 14 discrete implementation projects and seven ongoing base business items supporting a broad range of RGS policies. These projects are a framework for maintaining momentum toward RGS goals and policies. The projects have been selected and scoped to support regional coordination and collaboration in support of regionally shared needs and goals, with the expectation that there will be efficiencies from conducting work at the regional level.

The plan is not a rigid five-year workplan. Each year, the RDCO Board will be asked to consider the recommended projects and approve the associated resource allocations on a case-by-case basis through the annual budget process. As new opportunities or unexpected demands arise, the projects in this plan can be revised, re-sequenced or replaced, as needed.

It should also be noted that this document does not identify all high priority projects to be undertaken to implement the direction in the RGS. Many projects are underway that support RGS priorities that may not be listed in this Plan. The projects highlighted in this Plan are based on gaps identified in RGS implementation.

A summary timeline of the five-year Action Plan is provided (Section 4.2) followed by detailed project descriptions and rationale, and applicable RGS policies (Section 4.3).

## 2. Process

This section describes the process used for developing, evaluating and screening potential projects.

The development of the list of priority projects advanced through an iterative process involving research and technical analysis. The general process consisted of the following steps:

- 1. Plan and Document Review:** Recent plans were reviewed that were likely to have information about past and ongoing work or be a potential source for new projects. Priority focus was given to documents from within the last 5 years. These documents included regional and local plans and strategies, strategic plans and other relevant background documents representing the RDCO and its member communities. For a full list of the documents reviewed see Appendix B.

An overview was also prepared highlighting current and past work supporting RGS implementation as a tool to support discussions with RDCO staff and regional partners. Possible regional initiatives were organized into three categories: 1) Committed initiatives; 2) Initiatives with current momentum and 3) Emerging issues.

- 2. Developing a long list:** A long list of potential projects were identified primarily through consultation with the RGS Steering Committee, RDCO staff and review of other existing initiatives.

Given the importance of momentum and buy-in for successful implementation, it was acknowledged early that the first source for potential projects should be those already identified as under consideration by one of the many departments, organizations and partnerships already at work in the region. Another source for potential projects was when an urgent matter or critical need was identified.

- 3. Project screening – creating the short list:** Moving from a long list of projects to the final list of projects and ongoing base business items recommended for inclusion in the RGS Priority Projects Plan occurred through multiple phases, involving close review by the RGS Steering Committee. More detail on the phases of evaluating and screening projects are provided in Section 3.2.
- 4. Prioritization and sequencing:** The recommended projects were prioritized and sequenced over a five-year action plan based on evaluation criteria. More detail on prioritization and sequencing rationale is provided as part of project descriptions (Section 4.1).

### 2.1 Consultation

Consultation was used to clarify project purpose, direction, identify priority areas, supplement research with the expertise and specialized knowledge of local area staff and provide feedback.



Figure 1: Workshop with Regional Partners

Most consultation took place through meetings held with RDCO staff and the RGS Steering Committee. A regional partners workshop was held on February 28, 2024 with twenty attendees and representatives from the following communities and organizations:

- Regional District of Central Okanagan
- City of West Kelowna
- Westbank First Nation
- District of Peachland
- District of Lake Country
- City of Kelowna
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
- Interior Health Authority



Figure 2: Workshop Participants

A survey was also sent to select staff from member communities and Interior Health Authority that were unable to attend the workshop along with Okanagan Basin Water Board, Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program and the Ministry of Agriculture on March 1, 2024, to garner additional input and consider how regional momentum can be maintained through the years ahead. Five responses were received representing:

- City of Kelowna
- Interior Health
- Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program

The following schedule outlines the meetings held and their contribution to project work:

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
RDCO staff, Regional Partners	February 28, 2024	Workshop to gather input on evaluation criteria and preliminary priority projects list
RDCO staff	March 21, 2024	Feedback on criteria for screening projects, review list of potential initiatives, regional partners added insights on criteria and potential projects
RDCO staff and RGS Steering Committee	June 6, 2024	Review of project short list
Presentation to RDCO Board	July 25, 2024	Review of draft priority projects
RDCO staff and RGS Steering Committee	November 6, 2024	Review of draft RGS Priority Projects Plan
Presentation to RDCO Board	December 12, 2024	Consideration for endorsement of 2024-2028 RGS Priority Projects Plan



## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Focus Areas

The RDCO and its partners have a history of successful coordination of regional services and action, working together with a common purpose to address regional issues. Beyond core service areas, a number of initiatives related to the implementation of the RGS have been undertaken. On July 24, 2017, the Regional Board endorsed the first RGS Priority Projects Plan which resulted in a number of successful initiatives and projects completed that had significant strategic investment value throughout the region including:

- Regional Floodplain Management Plan – Phases 2 and 3
- Regional Planning Labs
- Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2019
- Regional Citizen Survey, 2022
- Regional Housing Strategy, 2022
- Central Okanagan Agricultural Background Report, 2022

At the time of developing the updated action plan, there were many projects underway involving regional partners which cover several of the RGS Issues Areas including:

- Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative
- Exploring curbside food waste collection
- Central Okanagan Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory
- Regional Agricultural Strategy
- Agricultural Land Use Inventory for the Central Okanagan
- Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy
- Regional Employment Lands Inventory
- Exploring and defining a regional transportation service

As part of this project's work, RGS Issue Areas and associated policies were explored to identify areas that are well supported and areas that should be the focus of the 2024-2028 Priority Projects Plan.

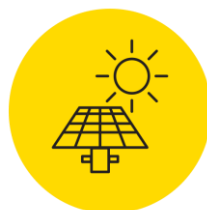
Through feedback received from surveying our partners, the regional priorities that were identified for areas of focus through projects and initiatives in the 2024-2028 action plan included:



OUR ECOSYSTEM



OUR HOUSING



OUR CLIMATE

The following section summarizes the focus of consultation discussion, including general context, work completed or ongoing and potential gaps to be filled. The section is organized by RGS Issue Area:



OUR LAND

**Our Land:** This RGS issue area was identified as sufficiently supported through Official Community Plans and Regional Context Statements during the development of the 2017 RGS Priority Projects Plan. However, since this time, there have been significant changes within the region influencing both how much and where our region will grow.

The RDCO adopted its first RGS in 2000. An update to the 2000 RGS was initiated in 2010 and the current RGS was adopted in 2014. In April 2021, after providing input on whether the RGS should be reviewed, the Board determined a review was not required and supported staff to continue actively engaging with partners on implementation initiatives. Since 2021, population growth and new provincial housing legislation have been major changes that are influencing both how much and where our region will grow. Additionally, the increasing prevalence of natural hazards such as wildfires, landslides and floods mean a review and update of the Regional Growth Strategy is necessary to ensure growth is guided in a fashion that protects human health, safety and the natural environment.



**Our Economy:** The regional economy is well supported by the work of the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC). The COEDC supplies a wide variety of economic development services for the region, including business retention and expansion initiatives, investment attraction, marketing and promotions and sector specific support (e.g., agriculture – see notes under “Our Food” below).

A Regional Employment Lands Inventory is currently underway and will provide a foundation for a Regional Employment Lands Strategy. These initiatives will coordinate action at the local level and develop tools to support prospective new businesses and investors to explore the region’s assets and identify sites that may meet their needs. Ensuring the timely availability of suitable and affordable employment lands is critical to maintaining competitiveness, particularly in high value sectors such as manufacturing, value-added agricultural and the tech sector. This was an area identified as an opportunity for improvement within the region that will be addressed by these two projects in this Plan.



OUR WATER RESOURCES

**Our Water and Our Ecosystem:** Environmental land protection and water stewardship are long-held priorities within the region.

The RDCO is an active member in a variety of conservation and stewardship organizations operating in the valley, including the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP), the Okanagan-Similkameen Stewardship Society, the Local Government Working Group on Species and Ecosystems at Risk (LGWGSER) and the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council.



OUR ECOSYSTEM

Planning for Ecosystem Connectivity in the RDCO is an ongoing collaborative project which supports RGS implementation.

RDCO has supported multiple data gathering and mapping initiatives that have critically benefited regional and local level initiatives. Notable past projects include the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (2001-2012 and 2022-2024 updates), Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory Mapping (2004, 2010, 2016) and Climate Projections for the Okanagan Region (2020). Other ongoing environmental initiatives not specifically noted in this document, including those identified through the RDCO Environmental Planning Program, RDCO Parks Services, local municipalities and the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program, will continue and address the RGS goals of managing and protecting water resources and protecting, enhancing and restoring biodiversity in the region.



OUR HEALTH

**Our Health:** As a topic that cuts across multiple policy areas, there are a number of ways that health is being addressed such as through active transportation planning; environmental protection and water stewardship; air quality protection and the promotion of active lifestyles.

There are still significant challenges identifying ways to incorporate principles of a healthy built environment into comprehensive plans (i.e. operationalizing the research) as supported by the RGS (Our Health, Policy 8). At the same time, there are opportunities to leverage the good position of the RDCO with regards to health by building stronger working relationships with the Interior Health Authority.



OUR FOOD

**Our Food:** Agriculture is an important part of the heritage and cultural identity of the Central Okanagan. It contributes to the economy, landscape and high quality of life enjoyed by residents. Agriculture also continues to compete with other land uses due to a limited land base and additional pressures from the impacts of climate change and a fast-growing population. There are currently many resources from various levels of government and non-

government agencies that are working to support the agricultural industry given the magnitude of challenges they are facing.

As agriculture in the Central Okanagan continues to face development pressures, production intensifies on existing farms and expands up into higher elevations, member communities in the Central Okanagan have an opportunity to explore innovative options and solutions to support agriculture. Further, there is a need to address soil movement at a regional scale and to better control soil deposition and prevent illegal dumping within the Central Okanagan.

There are two projects in this Plan, The Regional Agricultural Strategy and the Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy, that will directly address these issues. The Regional Agricultural Strategy will develop a comprehensive, regional approach to preserving and protecting the agricultural land base to support the long-term viability of agriculture in the Central Okanagan. The Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy will address soil movement at a regional scale. As there is a significant agricultural component to soil deposition throughout the region, the Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy will drive some of the policy and implementation in the Regional Agricultural Strategy.

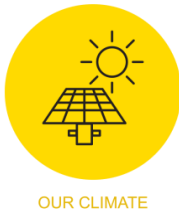
Another area of related, ongoing work is the provincial 2023-2024 Central Okanagan Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI) update. The RDCO is currently supporting this effort, which will provide a comprehensive evaluation of changes that have occurred over the past 8 years in agricultural land use, the status of actively farmed land and assess the impact on the agricultural demand for water resources in the Central Okanagan. ALUIs describe all crop type, irrigation, livestock and non-farm use on agricultural land. With an updated ALUI, more accurate agricultural water demand predictions for different climate scenarios can be created and used by Local Governments for informed decision making. The resulting comparative analysis from previous ALUI projects provides a clear indication of the changing nature of agricultural land use in the Central Okanagan



**Our Housing:** The Central Okanagan is one of the fastest growing regions 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. Housing affordability is a critical issue. The population is growing at a faster rate than projected in the RGS and this is having significant impacts on housing supply and affordability. The provincial government has taken action to address record growth in home prices, rental costs and low rental vacancy rates. In 2023, the province introduced new landmark housing legislation that will significantly influence growth and development in the Central

Okanagan. Amendments to the *Local Government Act* are transformative and will take time for members around the region to update land use, finance, infrastructure and related bylaws to align with Provincial direction.

It is imperative that we are proactive in planning for further anticipated growth at the regional level. With all the recent changes, partnering communities recognize the need for more regional consistency across the Central Okanagan. There is an opportunity within the region to align methodology as it pertains to many of the new requirements with respect to population growth and Housing Needs Reports. Two projects within this Plan, the Regional Housing Needs Summary and the Growth Projections Regional Methodology, address these needs directly.



**Our Climate:** The impacts of climate change are being directly experienced in the Central Okanagan, with the increased prevalence and intensity of extreme heat, wildfires and floods in recent years.

Given the cross-cutting nature of climate change, the numerous ways that the RDCO and communities of the Central Okanagan have worked to mitigate and adapt to climate change effects is not necessarily apparent. For example, work has been done in activities as broad as land use planning, (e.g. through OCP policy revisions), housing policy, adaption strategies, urban forestry initiatives, parkland acquisition and other park management initiatives, fire protection and sustainable and active transportation, all of which contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions or supporting climate adaptation efforts.

Phase 2 of the Regional Floodplain Management Plan focused on delineation and confirmation of the flood-prone streams and floodplains identified in Phase 1. Phase 3 completed in 2021 used the information collected through Phases 1 and 2 to create mitigation strategies and included an extensive outreach component to gain input from member local governments, Syilx communities in the region, stakeholders and the public to ensure that the proposed mitigation options are acceptable and supported.

Many players in the region are already working towards solutions, including developing climate action plans and land use policy to protect natural ecosystems and assets. The 2020 Climate Projections Report for the Okanagan Region provides local climate projections to inform the work going forward and help to prepare communities and citizens for the changes ahead. The Regional Climate Action Plan is an initiative proposed in this Plan that will help further coordinate climate changes strategies within the region.



OUR TRANSPORTATION

**Our Transportation:** As the population in the Central Okanagan continues to grow, having an efficient and effective transportation network will be critical to maintaining economic growth, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution and supporting community health and wellbeing. The Regional Transportation Plan was completed in 2020, along with the Regional Bicycling and Trails Master Plan. Partnerships across the region and with the province are required to deliver recommendations and implement priorities outlined in the Regional Transportation Plan. Additionally, it will be important to continue to work together across the region to ensure regional housing and transportation plans are coordinated as our population continues to grow. To support ongoing coordination and collaboration across the region on transportation, the Regional Board included exploring and defining a Regional Transportation Service in their 2023-2026 Regional Board Strategic Priorities.



OUR GOVERNANCE

**Our Governance:** RDCO and regional partners are collaborators in sharing resources, ideas and addressing common challenges. In recent years, the RDCO has hosted innovative Regional Planning Labs that have improved information sharing and collaboration to make the best use of limited resources. Feedback received from participants continues to demonstrate that there is great interest and value in working collaboratively together to tackle regional issues.

### 3.2 Project Screening and Evaluation

With so many important initiatives underway or planned in support of RGS Issue Areas (as described in Section 3.1), an effort was made to identify projects that were both an important aspect of RGS implementation and help advance solutions that matter most at the regional level. Evaluating potential projects involved rating how well they performed against several evaluation criteria.

**Evaluation Criteria** – regional priority projects were evaluated using the following considerations:

- 1) Regional Benefit – Is collaboration among regional partners essential for the initiative and is the project a high priority to advance the RGS? Does the project align with the Regional Board's strategic priorities?
- 2) Multi-solving / Co-benefits – Does the project have many benefits and address several problems at the same time?
- 3) Practical - Is there political support among regional partners for this initiative? Are staff resources available among regional partners for this initiative?
- 4) Momentum building – Does the project build on existing momentum and require little additional work to build 'buy-in'?
- 5) Legislative Requirements - Would the project support and lend resources to advancing legislative requirements at the local level?

**Other Considerations** – also applied to evaluating the list of priority projects:

- 6) Funding – Is there budget to advance the initiative and/or funding program opportunities that can be best leveraged with regional collaboration?
- 7) Keystone – Is the project requisite or highly important to advancing other projects? Some projects are considered as 'primary' or 'secondary' in relation to each other and sequenced accordingly.

The projects that were retained following the screening are described in Section 4.

## 4. Priority Projects

### 4.1 Evaluation and Prioritization

The final priority projects were prioritized and sequenced over a five-year action plan based on the project evaluation and screening criteria outlined in Section 3.2.

Table 2: *Five-Year Action Plan Summary and Timeline*, outlines all the priority projects according to their sequence in the five-year plan. Section 4.3 provides the following for each priority project:

- A detailed description and rationale
- An identification of RGS policies supported by the project
- Prioritization
- Implementation & Current Status

#### **Cross-cutting themes:**

Each of the projects listed in the action plan shall strive to address each of the three cross cutting themes described below:

Truth & Reconciliation - The RDCO is committed to reconciliation and developing government-to-government relationships with Westbank First Nations, the Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Okanagan Indian Band. All projects undertaken will strive for meaningful collaboration and government-to-government working relationships with the sylix/ Okanagan peoples.

Social Equity - Social equity is a collective desire to ensure all citizens across a community have fair and equal access to services, programs and opportunities to participate, prosper and reach their full potential. By applying a social equity lens to address social needs in the region, inequitable conditions based on factors such as income, race, age, gender, sexual orientation and mobility, among other factors, can be identified and addressed.

Climate Resilience - The RDCO is committed to climate action and protecting the environment by reducing our impact, adapting to climate change and delivering innovative services that better manage greenhouse gas emissions. Projects undertaken will respond to the impacts of climate change, as applicable.

## 4.2 Five-Year Action Plan

The Gantt chart below indicates high-level estimated start dates and duration of prioritized projects. For items under ongoing base businesses, most projects are intended to be ongoing or recurring. Under the discrete regional projects, most of the projects are anticipated over multiple years.

This timeline is understood to be a flexible guide, not a fixed schedule. While the projects are allocated to specific years, an adaptive management approach will be taken so that if an opportunity or time sensitive need presents itself (e.g. new funding opportunities), RDCO staff and the Board will be able to make informed decisions about re-prioritization.











**Table 1: Five-Year Action Plan Summary**

	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				✓	✓

The comprehensive action plan below (also see Appendix A) summarizes the ongoing base business items and discrete regional projects along with the relevant components of the RGS that they support, insights on required resources and whether regional data will be an intended outcome.



Table 2: Five-Year Action Plan

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

\* ESTIMATED BUDGET: N/A = PART OF BASE BUDGETS; \$ = <\$50K; \$\$ = \$50K - \$100K; \$\$\$ = >\$100K  
 \*\* RESOURCE INTENSITY RELATING TO STAFF TIME, PROJECT COORDINATION AND OVERALL REGIONAL COMPLEXITY (1-LOW, 2-MEDIUM, 3-HIGH)

As each project is advanced, more detailed scoping will refine cost estimates and identify interested parties or interest holders (stakeholders) prior to commencement. Partnerships and interested parties are anticipated to include Central Okanagan government organizations (including member municipalities and First Nations), provincial government organizations and interested public, private and non-profit community organizations, as appropriate.

## 4.3 Project Descriptions

### Ongoing Base Business

#### 1) Regional Growth Strategy Implementation Monitoring



**Description and Rationale:** Section 452 of the Local Government Act requires that once a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is adopted, a program to monitor its implementation and the progress being made towards its stated objectives and actions must be established, including an annual report on implementation progress. The RGS Implementation Monitoring Program consists of a narrative of work accomplished relating to goals of the RGS, RGS Priority Projects Plan and input from the RGS Steering Committee. While results are important for identifying areas of adjustment, the true value of monitoring and reporting is to promote accountability and transparency on implementation progress. The RDCO is committed to implementation monitoring to ensure transparency related to RGS implementation and brings an RGS annual report to the Board each year.

**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 1, 2, & 4

**Implementation & Current Status:**

Implementation Monitoring results are compiled into a report provided to the Regional Board in the first quarter of each year. The last report was provided to the Committee of the Whole in April 2024.

#### 2) Regional Context Statements



**Description and Rationale:** Regional Context Statements link municipal Official Community Plans (OCPs) to the RGS by demonstrating how the OCP supports and aligns with the goals and strategies set out in the RGS and the relationship between OCPs and the RGS. The Local Government Act outlines requirements for regional context statements, content and Board acceptance of regional context statements.

When a municipal council submits a proposed Regional Context Statement for acceptance, the Board must respond by resolution.

**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 4, 5, & 6

### **Implementation & Current Status:**

As required, RDCO Planning staff and the RGS Steering Committee review Official Community Plan updates and comment on regional context statements to provide a recommendation to the Board for consideration to ensure alignment of the overarching Regional Growth Strategy objectives. As OCPs are updated, context statements will be brought to the Board for review in alignment with legislative requirements.

### **3) RGS Steering Committee**



**Description and Rationale:** The RGS Steering Committee was established in 2016 and meets regularly to coordinate on matters related to regional growth and the implementation and monitoring of the Regional Growth Strategy, including the RGS Priority Projects Plan. The Committee is facilitated by RDCO staff and comprised of senior representatives of regional and municipal planning departments, First Nations and agencies with an interest in regional planning. Overall, the RGS Steering Committee provides an important regional forum for collaboration on regional growth and RGS implementation at the staff level. Continuing to facilitate regular RGS Steering Committee discussions to proactively guide regional growth issues is a priority for the RDCO.

#### **RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 1,3,4 & 5

#### **Implementation & Current Status:**

The RGS Steering Committee shall meet as needed; however, not greater than on a monthly basis.

### **4) Regional Planning Labs**



**Description and Rationale:** Planners from across the region are routinely tasked to address common challenges and develop effective solutions. However, the collective experience and lessons-learned from this work is not always shared. Further, emerging challenges often require creative approaches and problem solving that is enriched from multiple perspectives, discussions among experienced professionals and the lesson learned from piloting potential solutions. Regional Planning Labs were initiated in 2018 to add value to shared planning topics and emerging solutions across the Central Okanagan. They serve as a forum for planners and other professionals around the region to meet and

work through difficult technical challenges related to specific planning topics. Favorably, the Regional Planning Labs strengthen the foundation of regional knowledge-sharing and consistency. They commence with an exploration of the challenges faced and end with actions that can be implemented, learned from and improved upon.

The RDCO Board and staff are committed to continue hosting regional planning labs. The topics of focus for Regional Planning Labs are established by the RGS Steering Committee. Regional Planning Labs covered a range of topics including housing, local economy, environment, food systems, utilities and municipal services.

As an example, in November 2023, RDCO hosted a Planning Lab that gathered various professionals to share knowledge, discuss challenges and improve planning and implementation for environmental protection during development

**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 3,4,5 & 6

**Implementation & Current Status:**

Since 2018, the RDCO has hosted eleven Regional Planning Labs. Each year through RDCO's annual budget deliberation process, the Board considers budget to support planning labs.

**5) Regional Citizen Survey**



**Description and Rationale:** The Regional Citizen Survey collects statistically significant data on resident priorities, perceptions on regional issues and satisfaction with the RDCO's services. The Regional Citizen Survey serves as a valuable data source for staff and elected officials to inform decision-making and budget allocation, regional communications and RGS implementation.

**RGS Policies Supported:**

- Our Governance- Policies 2,4, 5 & 6

**Implementation & Current Status:**

The Regional Citizen Survey occurs every two years. RDCO's first citizen survey was completed in 2022 and the second one is scheduled for fall 2024. The survey is coordinated by RDCO Communications and is a joint initiative with RDCO's Development Services and Engineering Department.

## 6) Environmental Data and Mapping



**Description and Rationale:** The RDCO supports multiple environmental data gathering and mapping initiatives that support planning and land use management on an ongoing basis. Notable recent past projects include the Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (2021), report on Climate Projections for the Okanagan Region (2020) and Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory Mapping (2016).

The updated data and information from these efforts are used by all levels of government, as well as the general public, landowners, developers, professional biologists and non-government organizations that need scientific information to support conservation efforts. Overall, readily accessible environmental data and mapping are required for development application reviews and regional policy initiatives. RDCO staff provide ongoing updates to data, to ensure accuracy and support regional projects.

### **RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 11 & 12
- 3.2.3 Our Water Resources- Policies 1,3 & 4
- 3.2.8 Our Ecosystems- Policies 1,2,3,4,6,11,12 & 14

### **Implementation & Current Status:**

The next environmental data and mapping project will be an update of the Okanagan Lake Foreshore Inventory Mapping, which was last done in 2016.

## 7) Central Okanagan Regional Open Data Library



**Description and Rationale:** Providing a regional open data library within the Central Okanagan is important for facilitating data sharing among staff, which can help bridge gaps and ensure meaningful and consistent coordination across the region. A regional data library that is shared via an open portal and promoted and advertised to member governments will provide value to RDCO's partners, accelerate digital transformation and drive technological leadership within the region. Additional regional benefits include streamlined information retrieval, reduced redundancy, centralized data management, improved categorization, reduced physical storage needs and lower administrative costs.

### **RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 2,3,4 & 5

**Implementation & Current Status:**

The RDCO currently has an open data portal. As regional data layers related to population, demographics, housing, transportation, climate and the environment (among others) are updated, the portal will be enhanced and promoted to our partner organizations.

## 2024-2028 Priority Projects: Planning

### 1) Regional Employment Lands Inventory (RELI)



**Description and Rationale:** A key aspect of supporting sustainable and resilient economic development in the region is ensuring the adequate availability of employment lands. As economic activity crosses municipal boundaries, this is most appropriately done at the regional scale.

The Regional Employment Lands Inventory (RELI) will assess current and future usage of employment-supporting lands in the Central Okanagan, including commercial, industrial, office, agricultural and institutional lands. From this, projected demand, future supply and impending shortages by sector will be estimated. This information can then be used to direct future commercial and land use development in the region.

The objective of the RELI is to gain an understanding of the current inventory of employment lands, which 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 than can be used by various user groups throughout the region.

The RELI will support the work of the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) in attracting investment and supporting business in our region. The RELI will be followed by the Regional Employment Lands Strategy, which will be a separate project that involves working collaboratively across the region to identify solutions for ensuring an adequate supply of employment lands throughout the region.

#### **RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 1,4,6 & 13
- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policies 1 & 3

**Prioritization:** The Regional Employment Lands Inventory was identified as a priority in the 2017 RGS Priority Projects Plan and is an identified committed initiative already underway.

**Implementation & Current Status:** The RELI is currently underway and anticipated for completion in 2025.

### 2) Regional Agricultural Strategy



**Description and Rationale:** Agriculture is an important part of the heritage and cultural identity of the Central Okanagan. However, the agricultural sector is challenged by the impacts of growth, a limited land base and a rapidly changing climate. The Regional Agricultural Strategy will develop a comprehensive, regional approach to preserving and protecting the agricultural land base to support the long-term viability of agriculture in the Central Okanagan. The Regional Agricultural Strategy will be developed in conjunction with the Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy that will also culminate in an Electoral Area Soil Deposit Bylaw (separate project).

The objectives of Phase 2 of the Regional Agricultural Strategy are to:

- Develop a strategy to protect agricultural land in the region;
- Promote resilience and the economic viability of farming in the Central Okanagan;
- Encourage economically, environmentally and socially beneficial agricultural practices; and,
- Promote food security, equity, health and well-being of the people living in the Central Okanagan.
- Incorporate the findings of the Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy.

**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 3 & 8
- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policies 2,3,5,9 &11
- 3.2.5 Our Food- Policies 1,2,3,4,6 & 7
- 3.2.8 Our Ecosystems- Policies 2,3,6 & 13
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 3,4 & 5

**Prioritization:** Developing a Regional Agricultural Strategy was identified as a priority in the 2017 RGS Priority Projects Plan and is an identified committed initiative already underway.

**Implementation & Current Status:** The first phase of the Regional Agricultural Strategy was completed in 2022 and resulted in the Central Okanagan Agricultural Background Report. The second phase was launched in 2024 and is anticipated for completion in 2025.

**3) Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy**



**Description and Rationale:** The Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy is intended to address soil movement at a regional scale and to better control soil deposition and prevent illegal dumping within the Central Okanagan. The Strategy will inform the Regional Agriculture Strategy (RAS) to enable member communities to align their local level policies



accordingly and to provide direction to RDCO staff to draft a soil bylaw for the Electoral Areas.

Managing the movement of soil is critical to the protection of topsoil, riparian areas, waterbodies and agricultural lands. Currently, there is no bylaw to regulate the movement of soil within the Electoral Areas. Further, as this issue is not currently being addressed at a regional scale, there is a need for collaboration and consistency between all partnering communities to address soil management. This is important because discrete areas within the region have become major sites for illegal soil dumping due to rapid growth and development. The Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy will identify solutions for where soil and fill can be deposited.

**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 1, 3, 6 & 8
- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policies 2,3,5,9, & 10
- 3.2.5 Our Food- Policy 1
- 3.2.6 Our Housing- Policy 1
- 3.2.8 Our Ecosystems- Policy 13
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 3,4 & 5

**Prioritization:** Creating and enforcing a Soil Deposition Strategy and Bylaw is a 2023 - 2026 Regional Board Strategic Priority.

**Implementation & Current Status:** The Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy and accompanying Soil Deposit Bylaw will be developed concurrently with the Regional Agricultural Strategy. These projects were launched in fall 2024 and are anticipated for completion in 2025.

**4) Regional Housing Needs Summary**



**Description and Rationale:** The Province has updated legislative requirements for Housing Needs Reports. The Regional Housing Needs Summary will build upon the provincially required Interim Housing Needs Reports currently in development across the region. The Summary will append together the Housing Needs Reports of each RDCO member municipality to provide overarching regional trends as it relates to population, households, rents, income and housing needs. The Regional Housing Needs Summary will also include further analysis and engagement to include additional detail on the housing needs of the two Electoral Areas and two First Nations' communities within the Central Okanagan.

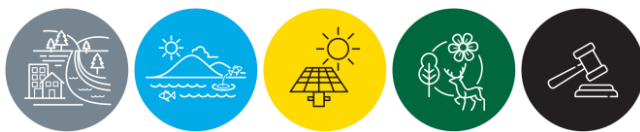
**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policy 8
- 3.2.6 Our Housing- Policy 4
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 4 & 5

**Prioritization:** The Interim Housing Needs Reports are a provincial requirement. The Regional Housing Needs Summary will build off provincial requirements and go further to provide a regional compilation and trends summary, maximizing value to Central Okanagan governments.

**Implementation & Current Status:** The Regional Housing Needs Summary was launched in October 2024 and is anticipated to be complete in spring/summer 2025. There is an opportunity to continue to compile regional summaries following the first regular Housing Needs Report which must be completed by December 31, 2028, and every five years thereafter.

**5) Development Permit Area Standards**



**Description and Rationale:** This project would establish recommended methodologies for updating Environmental Development Permit Areas (eDPAs) and associated policies in Official Community Plans for the Central Okanagan. The updated standards would account for climate change considerations for habitat protection, in the context of regional development pressures. Through this work, available ecosystem data will be assessed to update the delineation of DPAs while providing an opportunity to identify data gaps, informed by the RDCO’s ongoing base project to collect and update Environmental Data and Mapping. Updating eDPA standards will ensure that current data and best practices are reflected through Official Community Plans. This will result in more efficient and streamlined processes for development applicants, alongside effective implementation of environmental protection and enhancement measures. The proposed methodologies would be piloted by the RDCO and provide member municipalities with an example that could be easily referenced and adopted to foster regional consistency.

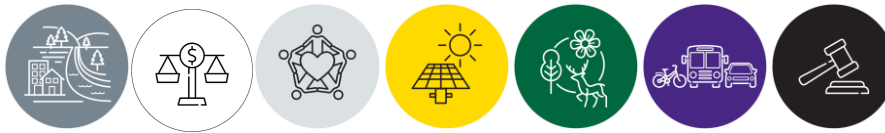
**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 11 & 12
- 3.2.3 Our Water Resources- Policies 1,3,4 & 5
- 3.2.7 Our Climate- Policies 3,6 & 8
- 3.2.8 Our Ecosystems- Policies 1,2,3,4,6,7,12,13 &14
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policy 5

**Prioritization:** The provincial government requires that local governments must specify guidelines for the protection of the natural environment as well as for the promotion of energy and water conservation. Changes to land use, ecosystem status and climate necessitate periodic review and update of DPA Standards and supporting policies.

**Implementation & Current Status:** This project is in the scoping phase and is anticipated to begin in 2025.

## 6) Regional Climate Action Plan



**Description and Rationale:** Climate change is one of the most critical issues being addressed by governments around the world, including here in the Okanagan Valley. Climate change requires both mitigation and adaptation to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to changes that are already taking place. BC's local governments are working to prepare for and adapt to our changing climate by pursuing measures to improve the climate resilience of homes and infrastructure, integrate hazard risk assessments into land use planning, protect and restore natural areas, improve emergency preparedness and response and build awareness and connections among community members.

A Regional Climate Action Plan would include a climate hazard risk and vulnerability assessment, alongside a regional approach to climate mitigation and adaptation at the community level. Developing a regional climate action plan serves several important purposes such as tailoring localized solutions, fostering collaboration across local governments, businesses and communities, enhancing regional resiliency and integrating a climate lens into policy documents to ensure more evidence-based decision-making processes. A coordinated regional approach, including regional metrics and performance monitoring, will help track progress at the regional level and ensure efforts are supporting provincial CleanBC goals and targets. This project is anticipated to inform the climate section of the next Regional Growth Strategy update.

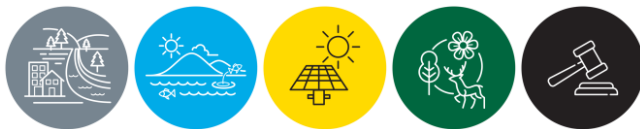
### RGS Policies Supported:

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 7,11 & 12
- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policies 3 & 9
- 3.3.4 Our Health- Policies 3,4 & 5
- 3.2.7 Our Climate- Policies 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8
- 3.2.8 Our Ecosystems- Policies 1,2,3,6 & 7
- 3.2.9 Our Transportation – Policies 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 4 & 5

**Prioritization:** CleanBC is the provincial roadmap to expanding and accelerating our collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, BC's Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy provides direction for climate change impacts. The RDCO is a signatory to the B.C. climate action charter and is committed to creating more energy-efficient, complete and compact communities. A regional approach to climate is especially crucial given the region's growing population, housing demand and affordability pressures, all which intensify land use and environmental stresses. A coordinated approach helps minimize these impacts by promoting sustainable growth patterns, optimizing resource use and fostering resilience in ways that individual municipalities or electoral areas could not achieve alone. A regional, integrated approach aligns with BC's progressive climate policies and provides economic and social co-benefits by fostering safer, healthier and more cohesive communities.

**Implementation & Current Status:** This project is in the scoping phase and is anticipated to begin in 2025/2026, pending funding.

## 7) Terms of Reference for Professional Reports



**Description and Rationale:** This project aims to establish consistency in professional services and assessments and improve the efficiency of development application review. Driven from the outcomes of 2023's Planning Lab and cross jurisdictional input, a sentiment echoed by both local governments and Qualified Professionals was that there is a need for a standardized Terms of Reference for professional reports that inform the development review process. Recommendations for updated and standardized Terms of Reference would propose definitions, components of reporting and methodologies that could serve as a model for Central Okanagan governments, improving consistency across the region and improving transparency for development permit applicants.

### **RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 5,7,11 & 12
- 3.2.3 Our Water Resources- Policies 1,3,4 & 5
- 3.2.7 Our Climate- Policies 3,6 & 8
- 3.2.8 Our Ecosystems- Policies 1,2,3,4,6,7,12,13 & 14
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policy 5

**Prioritization:** Clear Terms of Reference for professional assessments are crucial for local governments in BC, especially considering updates to the professional reliance model and legislation (2021). Clear guidelines can help enhance accountability, transparency, improve public trust, provide consistency and fairness, reduce risk for all

parties and improve project management efficiency for developers. This project was also identified as a need by Planning Lab participants to aid in consistent and predictable development review across the region. Qualified Professionals who participated in the Planning Lab also identified the value of having consistent reporting requirements, to avoid errors when switching between local governments who use different assessment criteria or terminology.

**Implementation & Current Status:** This project will commence following the completion of Development Permit Area Standards (see project #8), with work anticipated to begin in 2026.

## 8) Regional Employment Lands Strategy (RELS)



**Description and Rationale:** This project will build on the Regional Employment Lands Inventory (see project #1) and convene the regional partners to work together on identifying solutions to any projected shortages in various employment lands throughout the region. This will benefit the regional economy by ensuring the Central Okanagan has an adequate supply of employment lands in the appropriate locations to attract and support the business and industries needed to ensure our economy thrives. Working together regionally on this initiative will ensure Central Okanagan residents will have the balance of jobs needed to support our growing population.

### **RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 1,4,6 & 13
- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policies 1,2,3,5,8,10 & 11
- 3.2.5 Our Food- Policy 2
- 3.2.9 Our Transportation- Policy 2

**Prioritization:** The Regional Employment Lands Strategy builds off the RELI (see project #1) which was identified as a priority in the 2017 RGS Priority Projects Plan.

**Implementation & Current Status:** The requisite for this project is the Regional Employment Lands Inventory. The RDCO will aim to complete the Regional Employment Lands Strategy in time to inform member municipalities 2030 OCP updates.

## 9) Growth Projections Regional Methodology



**Description and Rationale:** Providing a high-level analysis of long-range population, dwelling units and employment projections are a key service for the RDCO’s planning division, as these projections enhance the quality of planning services across the region. Since growth projections are most accurate at the regional level, the RDCO will lead this project to support higher levels of collaboration and engagement between regional stakeholders and member jurisdictions to support transportation, housing and community planning needs. In practice, projection modelling can promote collaboration and consistency among regional agencies and partnerships, which in turn can create a streamlined basis of information, assumptions and policy implementation methods. It is important that we are proactive in planning for further anticipated growth at the regional level. With all the recent changes, partnering communities recognize the need for more regional consistency across the Central Okanagan. This project will also address the new provincial methodology for developing Housing Needs Reports and work together regionally on areas that lack clarity and are open to interpretation to ensure a consistent approach throughout the region.

### **RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policy 1
- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policy 8
- 3.2.6 Our Housing- Policy 4
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 4 & 5

**Prioritization:** Providing regularly updated population and employment projections is a foundational input for Housing Need Reports, Official Community Plans and capital infrastructure plans, among others, providing high value for regional partners.

**Implementation & Current Status:** This project would aim to use 2026 Census data and complete the projection updates in time to inform the provincially required Housing Needs Update Reports in 2028.

## 10) Regional Growth Strategy Update



**Description and Rationale:** The RDCO adopted its current Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) in 2014. The *Local Government Act* requires that regional districts consider whether

their Regional Growth Strategy be updated at least once every 5 years. In April 2021, the Board considered whether the RGS should be updated and determined a review was not required at that time.

Since 2021, population growth and new provincial housing legislation have been major changes that are influencing both how much and where our region will grow. Additionally, the increasing prevalence of natural hazard events such as wildfires, landslides and floods mean a review and update of the Regional Growth Strategy is necessary to ensure growth is guided in a fashion that protects human health, safety and the natural environment.

Updating the RGS would entail a multi-year process and include an assessment of the current growth strategy, a review of population and employment projections, comprehensive public and community partner engagement and the identification of high-priority implementation actions to advance responses to region-wide issues. The new RGS would also respond to and incorporate the Housing Needs Reports currently being updated across the region.

**RGS Policies Supported:**

3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 3,4,5,6 & 7

**Prioritization:** Updating the RGS in time to inform member municipality’s 2030 OCP updates was supported by the Regional Board in October 2024.

**Implementation & Current Status:** Staff will begin scoping an RGS update in 2025. Advancing the RGS in 2025 would provide a consistent regional approach to growth in time to inform member municipality’s 2030 OCP updates. Following the provincial release of a legislated OCP update schedule, it is prudent to ensure that an updated RGS is completed in time to inform the next round of municipal OCP updates required for 2030. This timing would ensure a streamlined and coordinated approach between the RGS and OCP updates, where the regional content is established at the onset of individual OCP updates, eliminating the potential need for re-work. This would provide significant value to both member municipalities and electoral areas.

2024-2028 Priority Projects: Engineering

11) Explore and Define Regional Transportation Services



**Description and Rationale:** Transportation is vital to connecting people and places across the region and supporting the Central Okanagan’s growing population, economy and quality of life. Regional transportation planning was previously coordinated by the Sustainable Transportation Partnership of the Central Okanagan (STPCO). However, the

STPCO dissolved in 2020 and there is currently no formal regional governance structure looking after regional transportation issues and coordination in the Central Okanagan. This is why the RDCO Board included exploring and defining a regional transportation function in its Strategic Priorities for 2023 - 2026. A RDCO regional transportation function would facilitate regional transportation collaboration, planning and programs aligned with recommendations contained in the Central Okanagan's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP was endorsed by the City of West Kelowna, District of Lake Country, District of Peachland, City of Kelowna, Westbank First Nation and the Regional District of Central Okanagan in 2020.

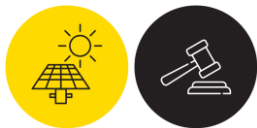
**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.7 Our Climate- Policies 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 & 8
- 3.2.9 Our Transportation- Policies 1 & 2
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 1,4,5 & 6

**Prioritization:** Exploring and defining a regional transportation service is a 2023 – 2026 RDCO Board Strategic Priority.

**Implementation & Current Status:** The RDCO Board approved the regional transportation service concept in October 2024 and directed staff to report back with financial plan impacts and draft bylaws for consideration.

**12) Explore Curbside Food Waste Collection**



**Description and Rationale:** The purpose of this is to explore and analyze the important factors for designing, implementing and operating a successful curbside food waste collection program. Implementing a curbside food waste food collection program would divert waste from the landfill and lower carbon emissions, while improving levels of service to residents. Food that is sent to a landfill not only wastes nutrition and the resources used to grow, store, process and distribute food, but it also produces methane, which accelerates global warming. Within the RDCO, compostable materials in residential curbside garbage make up nearly 50 per cent of the district's landfill-bound waste stream including 41% food waste and soiled paper and 6.8% other compostables (like yard waste). By implementing a food waste collection program, the region could annually divert an estimated 7,500 tonnes of waste from the landfill, extending the lifespan of the landfill and reducing carbon emissions. Properly disposing of food waste would also ensure the nutrients from discarded food are returned to the environment, providing greater benefits to our ecosystem.

**RGS Policies Supported:**

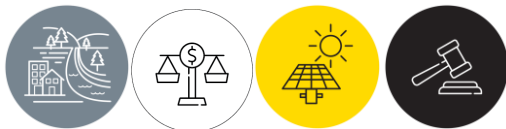


- 3.2.7 Our Climate- 1, 3, 6
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 1,2,4 & 5

**Prioritization:** Implementing a curbside organics collection program is a 2023 – 2026 RDCO Board Strategic Priority.

**Implementation & Current Status:** Exploring Curbside Food Waste Collection is anticipated to be complete in fall/winter 2024/2025. Exploration is the first step and will be followed by a separate project (see project #10) to implement curbside food waste collection, if staff are directed to do so by the Board.

### 13) Implement Curbside Food Waste Collection



**Description and Rationale:** This project would implement the recommendations of the exploration phase of curbside food waste collection (see separate project #3). The exploration phase found that 73% of residents support a food waste collection program, which could help divert waste from the landfill, lower carbon emissions and return vital nutrients from food waste to the environment. Next steps and recommendations for implementation will be presented to the Board for approval, prior to implementation.

#### RGS Policies Supported:

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policy 13
- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policy 3
- 3.2.7 Our Climate- Policies 2 & 6
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policy 6

**Prioritization:** Implementing a curbside organics collection program is a 2023 – 2026 RDCO Board Strategic Priority.

**Implementation & Current Status:** The RDCO is scoping the next phase of this initiative, which involves the preparation of a draft service plan which will be reported on in 2025. It is anticipated that this project will commence in 2026.

### 14) Regional Air Quality Plan Update



**Description and Rationale:** Air quality is an important indicator for quality of life and has a direct impact on human health. For example, Health Canada estimates air pollution is linked to thousands of hospital visits and premature deaths each year and contributes to asthma and acute respiratory symptoms. Air pollutants are emitted from a variety of activities such as vehicle exhaust, wood burning and industrial activities, among others. Improving local air quality can reduce pollutants emitted around the region that are harmful to human health, while also supporting climate change mitigation efforts.

The RDCO provides the Regional Air Quality Program, which is a joint initiative between member municipalities. The program is guided by the 2015 Central Okanagan Clean Air Strategy, which includes a vision, goals and targets to improve air quality across the region. This project will update the Central Okanagan Clean Air Strategy to align with relevant changes to provincial air policy, regulations and science and health research updates. New and updated initiatives will be examined and considered in the context of reducing emissions and balanced with First Nations considerations.

**RGS Policies Supported:**

- 3.2.1 Our Land- Policies 1,6 & 7
- 3.2.2 Our Economy- Policies 3,7 & 9
- 3.2.4 Our Health- Policies 4,5 & 8
- 3.2.5 Our Food- Policy 2
- 3.2.7 Our Climate- Policies 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8
- 3.2.9 Our Transportation- Policy 3
- 3.2.10 Our Governance- Policies 4 & 5

**Prioritization:** The Clean Air Strategy was developed in 2015 and requires an update to provide direction on regional initiatives for healthy air quality moving forward.

**Implementation & Current Status:** It is anticipated that the project will be advanced in 2027, following a service review of the regional air quality function at the RDCO scheduled for 2026.

#### 4.4 Funding

Funding for the projects in the 2024 - 2028 RGS Priority Projects Plan can come from a variety of sources. Whenever possible, grant funds will be sought to fund the project, which are often competitive as they provide broad regional value to multiple organizations. Examples of grant programs that can help fund regional initiatives, such as the projects in this plan, are listed below:

**Federal:**

- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Canada Public Transit Fund

**Provincial:**

- Capacity Funding for Local Government Housing Initiatives

*Regional District of Central Okanagan*

- Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)
- Local Government Climate Action Program
- Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding

## Appendix A: 5-Year Action Plan

	Our Land	Our Economy	Our Water Resources	Our Health	Our Food	Our Housing	Our Climate	Our Ecosystems	Our Transportation	Our Governance	Estimated budget*	Resource Intensity**	Regional Data
<b>Ongoing Base Business</b>													
1) RGS Implementation Monitoring										✓	N/A	1	
2) Regional Context Statements										✓	N/A	1	
3) RGS Steering Committee										✓	N/A	1	
4) Regional Planning Labs										✓	\$	1	
5) Regional Citizen Survey										✓	\$	1	
6) Environmental Data and Mapping	✓		✓					✓		✓	\$	3	✓
7) Central Okanagan Regional Open Data Library										✓	N/A	2	
<b>Regional Projects: 2024 - 2028</b>													
1) Regional Employment Lands Inventory	✓	✓									\$\$\$	2	✓
2) Explore and Define Regional Transportation Service							✓		✓	✓	N/A	3	
3) Explore Curbside Food Waste Collection							✓			✓	\$\$	3	
4) Regional Agriculture Strategy	✓	✓			✓			✓		✓	\$\$	2	
5) Regional Soil Deposit and Removal Strategy	✓	✓			✓			✓		✓	\$	2	
6) RGS Update										✓	\$\$\$	3	
7) Regional Housing Needs Summary		✓				✓				✓	\$\$	2	✓
8) Development Permit Area Standards	✓		✓				✓			✓	\$\$\$	2	
9) Terms of Reference for Professional Reports			✓				✓			✓	\$	2	
10) Implement Curbside Food Waste Collection	✓	✓					✓			✓	\$\$\$	3	
11) Regional Climate Action Plan		✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	\$\$\$	2	✓
12) Regional Air Quality Plan Update	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	\$\$\$	2	✓
13) Growth Projections Regional Methodology	✓	✓								✓	\$	2	✓
14) Regional Employment Lands Strategy	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓	\$\$	2	✓

\* ESTIMATED BUDGET: N/A = PART OF BASE BUDGETS; \$ = <\$50K; \$\$ = \$50K - \$100K; \$\$\$ = >\$100K  
 \*\* RESOURCE INTENSITY RELATING TO STAFF TIME, PROJECT COORDINATION AND OVERALL REGIONAL COMPLEXITY (1-LOW, 2-MEDIUM, 3-HIGH)

## **Appendix B: Documents Reviewed**

### **Regional Level Plans/Initiatives**

- Regional District of Central Okanagan Strategic Priorities Plan 2023-2026
- Central Okanagan Integrated Transportation Strategy, 2023
- Regional Citizen Survey, 2022
- Regional Housing Study, 2022
- Central Okanagan Agricultural Background Report, 2022
- Regional Floodplain Management Plan Phase 3, 2021
- Climate Projections for the Okanagan Region, 2020
- Solid Waste Management Plan, 2020
- Regional Transportation Plan, 2020
- Regional Bicycling & Trails Master Plan, 2020
- Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2019
- Sustainable Water Strategy Action Plan 2.0, 2019
- RGS Priority Projects Plan, 2017
- Regional Parks and Greenways Plan (2008 – 2020)
- Central Okanagan Clean Air Strategy, 2015
- RDCO Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336
- A Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Okanagan Region, 2014

### **Member municipalities**

- District of Lake Country OCP, 2018-2028
- District of Lake Country Strategic Priorities 2022
- Lake Country 2023 Housing Needs Report
- Lake Country 2020 Agriculture Plan
- District of Peachland Corporate Strategic Plan 2022-2026
- District of Peachland OCP, 2018
- District of Peachland Active Transportation Network Plan, 2023
- District of Peachland Housing Needs Assessment, 2023
- City of West Kelowna 2022-2026 Strategic Priorities
- City of West Kelowna Official Community Plan, 2020-2040
- City of West Kelowna Corporate Climate Action Plan, 2023
- City of West Kelowna Housing Strategy, 2023
- City of Kelowna 2040 OCP
- City of Kelowna 2022 Annual Report: Pathways to Progress
- City of Kelowna 2040 Transportation Master Plan
- City of Kelowna Council Priorities 2023-2026
- City of Kelowna Housing Needs Assessment 2021-2031
- City of Kelowna Healthy Housing Strategy
- City of Kelowna Annual Housing Report, 2022

### **First Nations**

- Westbank First Nation Government Strategic Plan 2020-2023
- Westbank First Nation Comprehensive Community Plan, 2022
- Okanagan Indian Band Strategic Plan, 2020-2025