



Governance & Services Committee

TO: Governance and Services Committee

FROM: Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

DATE: October 10, 2019

SUBJECT: Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program (6430-40)

Purpose: To present the Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program.

Executive Summary:

The Regional Board adopted Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 (RGS) on June 23, 2014. The RGS Priority Projects Plan, a five-year action plan outlining priority initiatives intended to continue implementing the RGS, was endorsed by the Regional Board on July 24, 2017.

An RGS Monitoring Program was identified as a key element in the Priority Projects Plan; to establish a program to monitor the implementation and progress being made towards achieving the RGS objectives.

A consulting contract to develop the Monitoring Program was awarded to EcoPlan International Inc. (EcoPlan) with the objectives of developing a framework for monitoring impacts on the RGS goals and a process for tracking implementation. EcoPlan used a collaborative process to develop the program that involved input from RDCO staff, member municipalities, First Nations, the RGS Steering Committee, and various regional partners and organizations.

Paul Siggers, Project Coordinator, will provide a presentation outlining the RGS Monitoring Program's overview, process, outcomes and implementation monitoring components, as well as its reporting procedures.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the presentation on the Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program be received for information;

AND THAT the Governance and Services Committee recommends that the Regional Board endorse the Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program.

Respectfully Submitted:



Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

Approved for Committee's Approval



Brian Reardon, CAO

Prepared by: Danika Dudzik, Environmental Planner

Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan:	Receiving the presentation on the draft RGS Monitoring Program meets the 2019-2022 Strategic Priorities Plan vision and values.
Policy:	Receiving the presentation on the draft RGS Monitoring Program complies with Section 4.1.4 of the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336.
Legal/Statutory Authority:	Authority to establish a program to monitor the implementation and the progress made towards objectives and actions of a regional growth strategy is identified in Part 13 - Section 452 of the <i>Local Government Act</i> .

Background:

Regional Growth Strategy

The RDCO adopted Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 on June 23, 2014. The RGS 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 a collective vision from the regional partners for how they see the future in order to create a region that promotes growth that is economically, environmentally and socially healthy over a twenty (20) year time horizon.

RGS Steering Committee

The RGS Steering Committee, created in 2016, is a forum for senior representatives of regional and municipal planning departments, First Nations and agencies with an interest in regional planning to coordinate the strategic priorities around the region and align the priorities with the goals and policies of the RGS.

RGS Priority Projects Plan

In accordance with Section 4.1.2 of the RGS, through a collaborative process, RDCO staff, RGS Steering Committee and elected officials developed a 5 year action plan to outline the priority initiatives to implement the RGS. The 5 year action plan, endorsed by the Regional Board on July 24, 2017 is the framework for RGS implementation and based on the regional initiatives identified within the RGS and by the Regional Board. The RGS Priority Projects Plan highlights projects regional in nature that propose regional projects/actions that fulfill policies that remain outstanding or have the opportunity to be strengthened.

Table 1: Five-Year Action Plan Summary and Timeline. Dark green indicates one-time projects of limited duration; light green indicates projects that, once initiated, will be ongoing.

#	Project	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	Regional Flood Management Plan: Phases 2 and 3					
2	Regional Planning Lab					
3	Regional Housing Needs Assessment					
4	Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program					
5	Regional Citizen Survey					
6	Regional Housing Strategy					
7	Regional Growth Strategy Five-year Review					
8	Regional Agricultural Strategy					
9	Regional Employment Lands Inventory					

State of the Basin Report 2016

As identified in the RGS Priority Projects Plan, the development of a monitoring program was originally scheduled for 2018. In order to meet legislative requirements for monitoring, the State of the Basin Report 2016 was used as an interim program.

The State of the Basin Report 2016 was an inter-regional initiative between the three Regional Districts in the valley to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework intended to track progress on matters important to the Okanagan valley as a whole. There are 36 indicators and measures represented in the report which address various theme areas throughout the valley; corresponding to common RGS policy areas.

Although a strong base for the project was developed through the inter-regional initiative, a specific RDCO monitoring program will help identify areas where RGS goals and policies are successful, where more work needs to be done, or where adjustments and adaptations to current initiatives need to be made.

RGS Monitoring Program:

Overview

The purpose of the program is to provide the foundation for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the RGS through the development of a set of measures that can be used to monitor progress. The effectiveness of the RGS can be assessed through a monitoring program which can be added to or modified over time to better meet the needs of the Board, member municipalities, and First Nations. The measures developed are reflective of RGS policy and have applicability across jurisdictional boundaries and scales.

The consulting contract to develop the Program was awarded to EcoPlan. The project began in December 2018 with a final draft of the Program completed in September 2019. EcoPlan used a collaborative process throughout the project that involved RDCO staff, the RGS Steering Committee, and various other regional partners and organizations.

The following steps were taken in order to develop the program:

Preparation: research into comparable regional monitoring programs and discussion with RGS Steering Committee members to clarify expectations and objectives.
Establish the Monitoring Program framework: using the RGS Issue Areas and associated goals to organize measure research and selection.
Populate the framework with a long list of indicators: researching potential indicators and measures as candidates for tracking progress toward RGS goals.
Evaluate, screen, and revise in order to make a shorter list of indicators: development and application of a set of eight criteria for determining the most suitable measures.
Report, review and refine: an iterative cycle of draft frameworks and review involving RDCO staff, RGS Steering Committee members, and representatives from other organizations.

Monitoring Program Components

The Monitoring Program has two components:

- A framework for monitoring impact on RGS goals consisting of 22 measures across the 10 RGS Issue Areas; and
- A process for tracking Implementation, both of actionable policies identified in the RGS, as well as other regional and local initiatives that may contribute to the achievement of RGS goals.

The Monitoring Program that has been developed will support tracking of two aspects of the RGS: Implementation Monitoring; a description of a recommended process for implementation monitoring and Outcome Monitoring, a set of 22 measures to be collected at various intervals (every two to three years or every five years) tracking progress on key aspects of the RGS goals.

The Monitoring Program consists of five components, combining a mix of annual, biennial and five-year reporting cycles, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data.

Table 2: Summary of Monitoring Procedures and Schedule.

Monitoring Program	Frequency	Timing
<i>Implementation Monitoring Report</i>	Annual	1 st Quarter
a) Narrative of work accomplished relating to goals of the RGS	Annual	4 th Quarter
b) RGS Priority Projects Plan	Annual	4 th Quarter
c) RGS Steering Committee Review and Assessment	Annual	4 th Quarter
<i>Outcome Monitoring</i>		
d) Intermediate Report (15 measures)	2-3 years	1 st Quarter
e) Comprehensive Report (22 measures)	5-years	1 st Quarter
f) Updates for critical trends (select measures as needed)	As needed	1 st Quarter

Financial Considerations:

The Regional Board approved the project budget of \$20,000 for the development of a RGS Monitoring Program through the 2019 budget process.

Through on-going Implementation Monitoring, RDCO staff will prepare an annual report on implementation and progress of the RGS in consultation with the RGS Steering Committee. Data collection for Outcome Monitoring will be compiled by RDCO staff with reporting from member municipalities and First Nations on specific measures as required.

Legal/ Statutory Authority:

In accordance with the *Local Government Act (LGA) Section 452*, a regional district that has adopted a regional growth strategy must “establish a program to monitor its implementation and the progress made towards its objectives and actions” and “prepare an annual report on that implementation and progress.”

External Implications:

The development of the Program 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. In addition, detailed input was received from specialized staff of organizations that track specific data applicable to RGS goals to understand the specifics and limitations around data. Further, staff from Regional Districts throughout the Province with established Monitoring Programs, were interviewed to understand lessons-learned from their experiences.

The development of the Monitoring Program and approach taken by EcoPlan allowed a number of opportunities for project participants to provide direction and feedback to influence the development of the Program.

RGS Steering Committee

Supports the RGS Monitoring Program, Draft #4. Many of the regional issues of the RGS require cross jurisdictional collaboration in order to plan for the long term growth in the Central Okanagan. The Program provides the foundation for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the RGS and its effectiveness can be assessed through this process. The Monitoring Program has considered established evaluation and implementation initiatives of member municipalities and First Nations. Measures developed can complement monitoring occurring at a local level throughout the region, are reflective of RGS policy and have applicability across jurisdictional boundaries and scales.

Affected Agencies/Organizations

Representatives from the Okanagan Basin Water Board, Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Sustainable Transportation Partnership of the Central Okanagan, Statistics Canada, BC Stats, and Interior Health Authority were consulted on the development of appropriate measures and relevant data available for specific RGS goals. These agencies and organizations will also be involved in various data collation in the future.

Lessons-Learned from other Regional Districts

Input received from various Regional Districts across the Province proved valuable in developing the framework for the RDCO's RGS Monitoring Program. The following findings were common themes or important lessons-learned from conversations with planners from other Regional Districts:

- Data collection is a major challenge. This was the top issue identified and nearly all planners consulted noted the resource requirements of collecting, collating and reporting for RGS monitoring. Even for regional districts with well-developed programs that have high buy-in from member jurisdictions found it very difficult to get a complete set of comparable data for all jurisdictions within the regional district. In addition to the volume of data, there are regularly challenges of data quality and comparability that have to be addressed before the data can be used.
- The monitoring program is valuable for identifying new priorities for regional action. While not all regional planners found their monitoring program useful, most found it very helpful for identifying topics for further exploration and helping the respective Regional Boards to establish priorities.
- Implementation is very difficult to quantify. Many regions used quantitative data for impact monitoring but used a more narrative style for implementation monitoring. While the narratives can include quantitative metrics (i.e. numbers of initiatives of different types), the variability and diversity of initiatives don't lend to annual counts that can be meaningfully compared.
- Jurisdiction and focus on Regional Growth Strategy. Some of those interviewed discussed the challenges of using measures that are influenced by forces (e.g. global economy, climate change) beyond regional district control.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

- *General*
- *Organizational Issues*
- *Alternative Recommendation*

Attachment:

- Draft Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program, Version 4, dated September 26, 2019