

Regional Planning 2019 Fall Bulletin

Regional Planning Lab

The Regional Planning Lab is a forum for those located around the region to work together on common issues. This initiative is implementing Priority Project No. 2 of the Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan.

A Regional Planning Lab took place during spring 2019 to discuss land use compliance within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). This topic links to the Regional Growth Strategy issue area, Our Food, which contains policies to support the goal of a regional food system that is healthy, resilient, and sustainable.



During the Lab, it was discovered that jurisdictions throughout the Central Okanagan are struggling with a multitude of similar agricultural compliance issues.

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is a long-range planning tool to help regional districts and local governments plan a coordinated future for their communities while dealing with regional issues and decisions that cross local political boundaries.

Examples of uses negatively impacting farmland include:

- depositing fill;
- vehicle and equipment storage; and,
- large structural footprints and production facilities.

As such, members of the Regional Planning Lab agreed to move forward with the creation of a collaborative compliance project.

Regional Agricultural Compliance and Enforcement Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to protect farmland through the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices and to increase food security in the Central Okanagan.

The role of the RDCO is to administer and support the project by offering assistance to further engage with the agricultural community. This includes staff from the District of Peachland, City of West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country, and the District of Summerland, in collaboration with the Agricultural Land Commission, B.C. Assessment, Interior Health Authority, and Ministry of Agriculture.

Potential actions include:

- Increasing communication between stakeholders;
- Developing a collaborative system for addressing agricultural issues within individual jurisdictions;
- Developing a regional Memorandum of Understanding; and,
- Building public awareness on the importance of protecting the ALR.

Partial funding to initiate the project has been provided as part of the Community Food Action Initiative in cooperation with Interior Health Authority.

Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program

Provincial legislation requires that once a RGS is adopted, on-going monitoring must be established to assess implementation and measure progress being made towards the stated objectives.

In order to meet legislative requirements for monitoring, the State of the Basin Report 2016 was used as an interim program. This Report 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.

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.

The RDCO RGS Monitoring Program was endorsed by the Regional Board on October 10, 2019, and consists of two components:

1. A framework for monitoring impact on RGS goals consisting of 22 measures across the 10 RGS Issue Areas; and

2. 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 project used a collaborative process that involved RDCO staff, the Regional Growth Strategy Steering Committee, and various other regional partners and organizations, such as the Okanagan Basin Water Board, Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Sustainable Transportation Partnership of the Central Okanagan, and Interior Health Authority.

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