



# Governance & Services Committee

**TO:** Governance and Services Committee

**FROM:** Todd Cashin  
Director of Community Services

**DATE:** February 11, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan: 2021 Projects

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**Purpose:** To provide the Governance & Services Committee with an annual update on the implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy and an overview of the projects outlined in the Priority Projects Plan.

## Executive Summary:

On June 23, 2014, Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 (RGS) was adopted, and on July 24, 2017, the Regional Board endorsed the Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan. This five-year Action Plan outlines priority initiatives for the RDCO to implement based on commitments defined in the RGS. Regional planning projects in the five-year Action Plan were approved in principle by the Regional Board with projects requiring RDCO funding being reviewed annually through the budget deliberation process.

A number of successful initiatives and projects related to the implementation of the RGS have been completed. Others are in process or have been identified for future consideration. Planning staff is suggesting several regional planning projects in this report that are identified as having significant strategic investment values supporting the RGS. These projects have been selected and scoped to provide regional coordination and collaboration with our member municipalities in support of regionally shared needs.

## RECOMMENDATION:

**THAT** the Governance and Services Committee receive for information the Regional Growth Priority Projects Plan report dated February 11, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Todd Cashin  
Director of Community Services

*Prepared by: Danika Dudzik, Senior Planner*

Approved for Committee's Consideration

  
Brian Reardon, CAO

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## Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan:	<p>Receiving the RGS Priority Projects Plan – 2021 Projects for information achieves the following Regional Board Strategic Priorities 2019-2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation and Mobility</li> <li>• Sustainable Communities</li> <li>• Environment</li> </ul>
Policy:	<p>Receiving the RGS Priority Projects Plan – 2021 Projects for information complies with numerous policies outlined in the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336.</p>
Legal/Statutory Authority:	<p>Receiving the RGS Priority Projects Plan – 2021 Projects for information adheres to <i>Local Government Act</i>, Section 452</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) “A regional district that has adopted a regional growth strategy must             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) establish a program to monitor its implementation and the progress made towards its objectives and actions, and</li> <li>(b) prepare an annual report on that implementation and progress.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2) “At least once every 5 years, a regional district that has adopted a regional growth strategy must consider whether the regional growth strategy must be reviewed for possible amendment.”</li> </ul>

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## Background:

### Regional Growth Strategy

The RDCO adopted Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 on June 23, 2014. A regional growth strategy is a long-range planning tool governed by Part 13 of the *Local Government Act* that assists local governments to plan a coordinated future for their communities while dealing with regional issues and decisions that cross local political boundaries. The RGS is also a collective vision from the regional partners for 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 Nation 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 the RGS, through a collaborative process, RDCO staff, RGS Steering Committee members and elected officials developed a 5-year action plan to outline the priority initiatives to implement the RGS. The action plan is the framework for RGS implementation and based on the regional initiatives identified within the RGS. The Priority Projects Plan was endorsed by the Regional Board on July 24, 2017.

The Plan contains nine projects supporting over 25 policies, across eight Issue Areas of the RGS. 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, and with the expectation that there will be efficiencies from conducting work at the regional level.

The Plan is not a rigid five-year work plan. Each year, the RDCO Board will be asked to consider the recommended projects and approve the requisite resource allocations on a case-by-case basis. 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 supporting RGS priorities in environmental, transportation, water stewardship, economic and other areas. The projects highlighted in this Plan are based on gaps identified by the RGS Steering Committee in RGS implementation.

#### Projects - Status Update

- Regional Planning Labs are ongoing.
- The Regional Housing Needs Assessment and Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Program were completed in 2019.
- The Okanagan Climate Projections Report was completed in 2020.
- Phase 2 of the Regional Floodplain Management Plan was completed in 2020.
- The Regional Board endorsed the RGS 5-Year Review Consultation Plan in 2020.
- Phase 3 of the Regional Floodplain Management Plan is currently underway.
- The Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy is currently underway.
- In 2021, the Regional Board will decide on whether or not to undertake a 5-Year Review of the RGS.
- The Regional Board has previously allocated resources for the Regional Housing Strategy and Citizen Survey which are anticipated to commence in 2021.

To date, there are a number of projects identified in the Priority Projects Plan that have not been completed and may be considered by the Regional Board through a future budget deliberation process. These projects include a Review and Update of the RGS, Regional Agricultural Strategy, and Regional Employment Lands Inventory (see attached summary).

#### Projects Summary

- Project Number 1: **Regional Flood Management Plan: Phases 2 and 3**

Description and Rationale: Flooding is a serious concern for developed areas in the Central Okanagan and will only become more of a risk with the effects of climate change. Given this, the RDCO has outlined a three-phase Regional Floodplain Management Framework with the objective of developing a better understanding of flood risk in order to reduce and mitigate damage and impacts from future floods in our region. Completed in June of 2016, the Regional Floodplain Management Plan: Phase 1 Final Report identified flood hazards within the Central Okanagan and established the scope and priorities of Phases 2 and 3.

Phase 2 focused on delineation and confirmation of the flood-prone streams and floodplains identified in Phase 1. Through various funding sources and partnerships, the following projects were completed:

- LiDAR and Aerial Image Acquisition for the Okanagan Valley Watershed: With multiple funding partners, OBWB and GeoBC teamed up to manage the capture of LiDAR and digital aerial imagery for the Okanagan watershed.
- Okanagan Mainstem Flood Mapping: A joint project with RDCO, OBWB, Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen and Regional District of North Okanagan for flood modeling and mapping for the Okanagan mainstem lakes shorelines and reaches of the Okanagan river (completed May 2020).
- The joint initiative by RDCO and Black Mountain Irrigation District to complete the dam inundation study for Ideal (Belgo) Lake Dam (completed June 2018).
- The joint initiative by RDCO and District of Lake Country to complete the dam inundation study for Crooked Lake Dam (completed June 2018).
- The RDCO's Peachland / Trepanier Creeks Floodplain Mapping Project (completed November 2019).
- The joint initiative by RDCO and the City of Kelowna to complete the Mill Creek Flood Mitigation Planning & Mapping Project (completed April 2020).
- The joint initiative by RDCO and the City of Kelowna to complete the Mission Creek Flood Mitigation Planning & Mapping Project (completed May 2020).

It is anticipated that a dam inundation study for Rose Valley Reservoir will be completed in 2021 which is a joint initiative by RDCO and City of West Kelowna.

Phase 3 seeks to use the information collected through Phases 1 and 2 to create mitigation strategies. The project will include 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. This project will be completed in 2021 through funding support of UBCM.

- **Project Number 2: Regional Planning Labs**

Description and Rationale: Planners from across the region are regularly struggling with common challenges and developing effective solutions. However, the collective experience and lessons-learned from this work is not always shared. Further, particularly stubborn challenges often require creative approaches and ideas for problem solving that can only come from multiple perspectives, discussions among experienced professionals, and the lesson learned from piloting potential solutions.

A Regional Planning Lab is a forum for planners and other professionals from around the region to meet (once or several times over a series of meetings) to work through difficult technical challenges related to a specific planning topic, or the production of regionally significant projects. As a forum for discussion and relationship building, the Lab is strengthening the foundation of regional knowledge-sharing and consistency. As a space to identify and test possible solutions to shared problems, the existence of the lab continues to expand the opportunities for collaboration. This latter point is key: the labs begin with an exploration of the challenges faced, and end with actions that can be implemented, learned from, and improved upon.

Since 2018, the RDCO has hosted six Regional Planning Labs. Feedback received from participants continues to demonstrate that there is great interest and value in working collaboratively together to tackle regional issues; the September 2020

Regional Planning Lab provided an overview of the changes to the ALR Exclusion Process as a result of Bill 15, and provided an opportunity to discuss the implications of this change, opportunities for regional consistency and next steps as it may relate to approaches, policies, and procedures throughout the region.

- **Project Number 5: Regional Citizen Survey**

A Regional Citizen Survey is a way of collecting data that cannot be attained any other way, and can be an invaluable resource for staff and elected officials in decision-making, as well as a strong communications tool for raising awareness about regional issues. As area surveys are completed regularly in some local jurisdictions or for other projects, care will be taken to ensure survey tools and questions are not repetitive or redundant; however, parallel projects may also provide an opportunity to leverage resources by combining survey tools.

Similar work has been completed by Regional District of North Okanagan, Metro Vancouver and Regional District of Comox Valley.

- **Project Number 6: Regional Housing Strategy**

The Strategy is a continuation of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, and would develop an Implementation Plan with goals, targets, or planning objectives. Such a plan would identify and clarify roles that different groups would take toward achieving regional housing goals, including the Regional District, member municipalities, First Nations communities, non-profit partners, and other governmental agencies (e.g. Interior Health Authority).

This work can support development of new housing plans/initiatives in communities that do not have them by demonstrating the specific aspects of the housing continuum where they can have the most impact. For communities that already have housing plans in place, the regional level implementation plan can support coordination of groups working on local level actions. Additionally, it may provide the rationale for pooling regional resources to support implementation of actions from a local level housing plan. For example, where some areas lack resources to provide certain services themselves (such as emergency shelters and transitional housing), it may make sense to expand that service in a neighbouring community to support a larger population.

Similar work has been completed by Metro Vancouver and Capital Regional District.

- **Project Number 7: Regional Growth Strategy Five-year Review**

The RDCO has a statutory obligation under Section 452(2) and (3) of the *Local Government Act* to consider, at least once every five years, whether the RGS should be reviewed for possible amendment and to provide opportunity for input into the need for review. This requirement provides an opportunity for the Regional District to periodically assess the RGS and gather feedback from stakeholders to determine if a review of the RGS is warranted. Subsequent to receiving input from the public, affected local governments, First Nations, provincial ministries and agencies, and other levels of government, the Regional Board will decide on whether or not to undertake a 5-Year Review.

Should the Regional Board decide to proceed with a 5-Year Review, the Priority Projects Plan identified that this would be completed at a high-level with input from affected agencies, member municipalities, First Nations, the public, and other stakeholders as listed in the LGA. The review process would include an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the growth strategy, performance and re-evaluate solutions to persistent region-wide issues and responses undertaken

Similar work has been completed by Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen and Metro Vancouver.

#### Other Projects

- **Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy**

As the current Plan is not a rigid five-year work plan, an opportunity was provided to further the work that has been completed by regional community partners over the last several years and build on resources such as the Central Okanagan Community Wellness Analysis.

In February 2020, the RDCO Regional Board approved a collaborative grant application to be submitted to the Union of B.C. Municipalities for the development of a Central Okanagan Wellness and Poverty Reduction Strategy on behalf of the District of Lake Country, City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland, and the City of Kelowna.

This strategy is complementary to many action areas within Regional Growth Strategy priorities, including the development of a Regional Housing Strategy. Further, the strategy aligns with the Regional Board priority of Community Sustainability to initiate and support efforts to create a healthy built environment in which all people throughout the region enjoy access to a diverse range of housing options, remain safe in the face of emergencies and experience a high quality of life. The project also aligns with other priorities and strategies identified by our partner communities.

RDCO has partnered with United Way Southern Interior BC on the strategy development process. As the primary applicant, the RDCO will manage the grant funding on behalf of the regional partners. The RDCO will assume responsibility for the completion of the project, reporting requirements and maintaining proper fiscal management.

- **Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative**

An additional project which presented the RDCO with a unique opportunity was the Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative. This project is being co-led by the Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (OCCP), the South Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program (SOSCP), and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. The Project Team will include members and representatives of Syilx Okanagan Nation, provincial and federal agencies, local governments, academia, conservation organizations, and others who will be identified throughout the process.

The aim of this project is to develop a visioning and experiential learning process that will create a greater awareness and understanding of the challenges and opportunities for protecting the environmental, cultural, and economic values of Okanagan Lake. The visioning process will lead to the development of a strategy that will enhance the ways of caring for, protecting, and restoring the values and interests of Okanagan Lake's foreshore and associated tributaries within the watershed. The work generated through this project will provide the knowledge and expertise to inform important decisions regarding how natural areas are cared for and managed, help address climate impacts, support sustainable development, and help secure resources and funding to carry out the actions that will be identified in the strategy.

The project is addressing current challenges of shoreline protection, and planning for the region's future at a multi-regional scale. The main objectives are to identify the most pertinent issues impacting Okanagan Lake and collaborate to develop a practical and enforceable strategy.

- **Five Year Action Plan 2022-2026**

Being accountable for progress towards achieving the goals of the RGS requires a commitment to implementation. The existing RGS framework provides flexibility for implementation. Subsequent to the current action plan (2017-2021), to ensure continued momentum of the RGS, it is anticipated that a new work plan will be developed which would provide opportunity to assess priorities within the existing framework.

### **Financial Considerations:**

Where applicable, staff has applied for external funding to offset the cost of projects. Any financial considerations for RDCO will be considered as part of the 2021 budget process.

### **External Implications:**

The RGS Priority Projects Plan received direction from staff representing the RDCO, District of Peachland, City of West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, City of Kelowna and District of Lake Country. In addition, detailed input was received from specialized staff of organizations that may be affected by proposed projects, and an early draft was circulated to affected agencies.

In addition to receiving input from the Regional Board and Governance & Services Committee, a draft was also presented for input to all member municipality Councils and Westbank First Nation Chief and Council.

This process allowed a number of opportunities to provide direction and feedback to influence the development of the Plan.

### **Considerations not applicable to this report:**

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

### **Attachment(s):**

- Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan
- Five-Year Action Plan Summary and Status Update