



Regional Board Report

Information

Approved for Board Consideration

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Reardon".

Brian Reardon, CAO

To: Regional Board
From: Todd Cashin, Director of Community Services
Date: May 30, 2022
Subject: Regional Housing Strategy - Project Update

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority (LGA s.207)*

Purpose: To provide the Regional Board with an update on the Regional Housing Strategy.

Executive Summary:

The 2019 Regional Housing Needs Assessment is a baseline report that demonstrates the housing situation and anticipated housing needs across the housing continuum and throughout the region. This project was undertaken due to the growing concern of housing affordability across the Central Okanagan and to better understand local housing issues.

The Regional Board's Strategic Priorities identified the Regional Housing Strategy as priority Project No. 6. The objective of the Regional Housing Strategy is to develop a regional approach to direct how to move forward to address challenges around affordability, supply, supporting housing across the continuum with a heightened focus on continuing to increase the supply of affordable rental housing and of affordable home ownership. The Board also directed staff, through its consultants - Urban Matters CCC Ltd., to conduct a high level review of regional OCP's and to conduct stakeholder engagement with member municipalities and Westbank First Nation.

The Consultant, Nancy Henderson of Urban Matters, will present the draft Regional Housing Strategy recommendations and outline next steps for public engagement.

Recommendation(s):

THAT the Regional Board receives the Regional Housing Strategy report from the Director of Community Services, dated May 30, 2022, for information.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Cashin".

Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

Prepared by: Cheryl Wiebe, Senior Planner

Attachment(s):

- Regional Housing Strategy Recommendations (Draft)
- Urban Matters Presentation May 30, 2022

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Priorities: Sustainable Communities, Economic Development

Values: Regional Perspective, Collaboration, Relationships, Good Governance

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.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment is a baseline report that demonstrates the housing situation and anticipated housing needs located across the housing continuum and throughout the region. This project was undertaken due to the growing concern of housing affordability across the Central Okanagan and to better understand local housing issues. With the larger regional situation defined, this can support a coordinated and consistent response toward regional housing goals.

The Assessment outlines where housing gaps exist for Central Okanagan communities, how individual member communities' housing markets affect the regional housing market, provide consideration of housing supply and demand parallel to the coordination of the Regional Transportation Plan, and assess needs related to the supply of housing.

The Assessment was endorsed by the Board on October 28, 2019, and provides a descriptive analysis, data on regional affordability, other specific challenges related to housing, as well as housing highlights for each jurisdiction: two electoral areas, six First Nation reserve lands (including Westbank First Nation and Okanagan Indian Band), District of Peachland, City of West Kelowna, City of Kelowna, and District of Lake Country. It was prepared through regional consultation, an analysis of relevant housing studies and statistics, and ongoing input from the RDCO and regional partners.

Regional Housing Strategy

Shifting federal and provincial government roles have continued to place considerable pressure on local government to become more active in providing and facilitating affordable housing development. Municipalities have an increasingly important role to play as it relates to affordable market and non-market housing to meet community needs and support community health and well-being. Despite the development of specific policies, zoning regulations, and financial incentives at individual local levels, there is a need for a coordinated regional approach.

The objective of the Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) is to explore tools and actions that can address housing issues, needs, and gaps throughout the Central Okanagan. The strategy's objective is to develop a regional approach to direct how to move forward to address challenges around affordability, supply, and supportive housing across the region and improve coordinated action. The RHS will focus on the regional district as a whole to identify a range of actions at the local level specific to non-market and market housing in the two electoral areas, District of Peachland, City of West Kelowna, City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country, Westbank First Nation, and Okanagan Indian Band.

Collaborative effort is required throughout all levels of government, the housing industry, community groups, and organizations to confront challenges within the region. Taking this regional perspective will ensure that individual communities are working in unison to improve the range of housing opportunities to meet the social and economic needs of the region. The strategy is intended to establish a shared commitment, pool resources for more impact, gain momentum for collective action and advocacy, and promote the advancement of partnerships.

Draft Recommendations include:

- Strengthen coordination between RDCO electoral areas, member municipalities and First Nations.
- Coordinate a regional housing advocacy strategy aligned with Provincial and Federal housing policy to approach higher levels of senior government for additional Central Okanagan resources and support.

- Strengthen mechanisms for information sharing and partnership with First Nations, local governments and non-profit housing providers.
- Develop regional best practices to regulate and protect rental housing stock and facilitate the development of affordable housing.
- Regionally assess policy and development processes to build staff capacity, identify opportunities for policy coordination and streamline approvals with senior government.

The draft recommendations will be presented to member municipalities and First Nations in June. It is available online for public comment which will close on June 10. Finally, the draft recommendations will be presented at the Regional Housing Symposium on June 8th. Final comments will be collated, and the Final Strategy is scheduled to be provided to the Regional Board on June 27, 2022.

Summary of Public Engagement:

What Type of Engagement?	Who Participated?	When?
Community Survey	744 participants	February 8 th to March 7 th , 2022
Stakeholder Groups	4 stakeholder groups with 25 participants, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 representatives of the UDI • 8 local government staff members • 10 representatives of the not-for-profit sector • 1 local developer • 1 IHA representative 	January – February 2022
Lived Experience Interviews	6 participants from across the RDCO experiencing housing challenges	February 2022
Local Government Presentations	5 virtual/in-person presentations and discussion with RDCO local government members	February 2022
RDCO RGS Steering Committee	2 meetings with local government planning staff	October 2021 / February 2022
RDCO Board/G&S Committee	2 meetings	Nov 2021/March 2022
Regional Housing Symposium	RHS presentation to staff and attendees	June 2022
Local Government Presentations	5 virtual/in-person presentations and discussion with RDCO local government members focused on the Draft Regional Housing Strategy	June 2022

NOTE: As there were project synergies and to better understand residents' needs, the Community Survey also included questions relating to the RDCO's Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy (COPAWS). This helped to ensure that target audiences were not experiencing survey fatigue and to maximize use of staff and consultant resources.

Considerations:

Organizational/External: The Regional District is involved in the strategy development process through overall project management, contract management, and other administrative functions.

Financial: As part of the 2021 budget deliberations, the Regional Board approved \$60,000.00 for the development of the Regional Housing Strategy. In 2022, an additional \$20,000 was added to the project to assist with collating OCP information and to enhance stakeholder engagement, communications, and community outreach as directed by the Board.

Considerations not applicable:

- Legal/Statutory Authority
 - Alternate Recommendation
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