Monitoring the
Regional Growth Strategy

2015 Annual Report
Implementation & Progress

March 30, 2016

REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO

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1 OVERVIEW

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)[1] is a strategic plan adopted by the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board that aims to establish a more sustainable pattern of population growth and development in the region over a 25 year period. The RGS encourages and directs most new development in the region within designated Growth Containment Boundaries, thereby keeping urban settlement compact, protecting the integrity of rural and resource areas, protecting the environment, increasing servicing efficiency, and retaining mobility within the region.

The RGS represents a commitment by the RDN and its member municipalities to take a series of actions to improve the quality of life for present and future residents of the region. Part of this commitment involves being accountable to residents about how the RGS is being implemented and the level of progress being made towards reaching the goals of the RGS.

The 2011 RGS addresses implementation in Section 5, stating that: *"Being accountable for progress towards achieving the goals of this RGS requires a commitment to implementation, target-setting, establishing indicators, and monitoring".* Reporting on annual progress shows a commitment to implementation and fulfills a requirement under the Local Government Act *"to prepare an annual report on implementation and progress towards the goals and objectives of the RGS"* (RGS Policy 5.2.1).

This Annual Progress Report briefly describes the RGS purpose, vision and goals in order to set the stage for documenting actions taken in 2015 that showed progress towards implementing the RGS. Appendix 1 of this report also provides a summary of all actions taken to implement the RGS since it was updated in late 2011.

The 2015 Annual Progress Report is the first monitoring report to incorporate performance indicators and targets to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the RGS. The indicators and targets are useful to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of RGS policies in working towards the goals and vision of the RGS. Over time, the indicators may gauge the efficiency of RGS policies in achieving the regional goals.

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[1] On November 22, 2011, the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board adopted "Regional District of Nanaimo Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1615". This document replaced the 2003 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and represents the second time that the RGS has been fully reviewed and updated since it was first adopted in 1997.

2 RGS ROLE & PURPOSE

The purpose of the RGS is to *"promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources"*. Ultimately, it is a coordinated plan to manage growth in the region in a sustainable manner.

The first RGS was adopted in 1997 in response to residents' concerns about the impacts of rapid population growth and development in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Given that the impacts of growth cross jurisdictional boundaries, it was recognized that a coordinated approach to community planning was necessary to effectively address growth management issues.

The RGS provides a framework for member municipalities and the RDN to coordinate growth management issues that cross local government boundaries. The RGS also provides a mechanism to connect with provincial ministries and agencies who have jurisdiction in areas that impact land use and community planning and whose resources are needed to implement projects and programs. Inter-jurisdictional coordination is essential to protecting our environment and achieving a high quality of life for present and future residents in the region.

The RGS applies to six electoral areas and four municipalities within the region as shown by the map below. The RGS does not apply to Gabriola, Decourcy and Mudge Islands (Electoral Area B) as they fall under the jurisdiction of the Islands Trust. It also does not apply to lands under the jurisdiction of First Nations (Qualicum First Nation, Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose First Nation) and Snuneymuxw First Nation).

Map 1: RGS Application
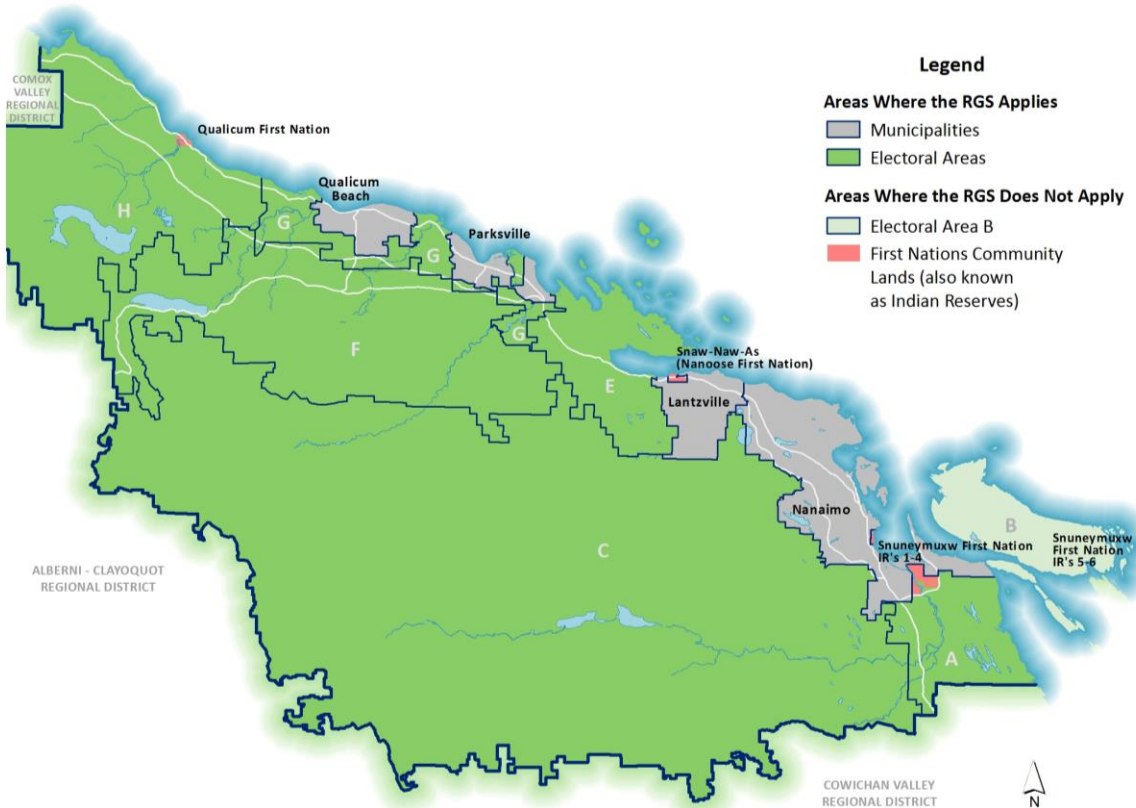
The RGS uses a line on a map called a Growth Containment Boundary (GCB) to separate areas designated for future growth from other areas where environmental protection and resource values are a priority.   Lands designated as Urban Area within municipalities are intended to absorb the majority of the region's future growth. In the RDN's electoral areas, land designated as Rural Village Areas are intended to accommodate lower levels of growth more compatible with their rural settings. Development within the GCB (Urban and Rural Village Areas) is intended to be diverse and provide places for people to live, work, learn, shop and play. This may also include lands to be conserved to support ecosystem functions or other green space purposes. Land outside of the GCB is intended to support ecosystem functions and rural uses that require only limited infrastructure and services to be viable.

Map 2: RGS Growth Containment Boundary and Land Use Designations
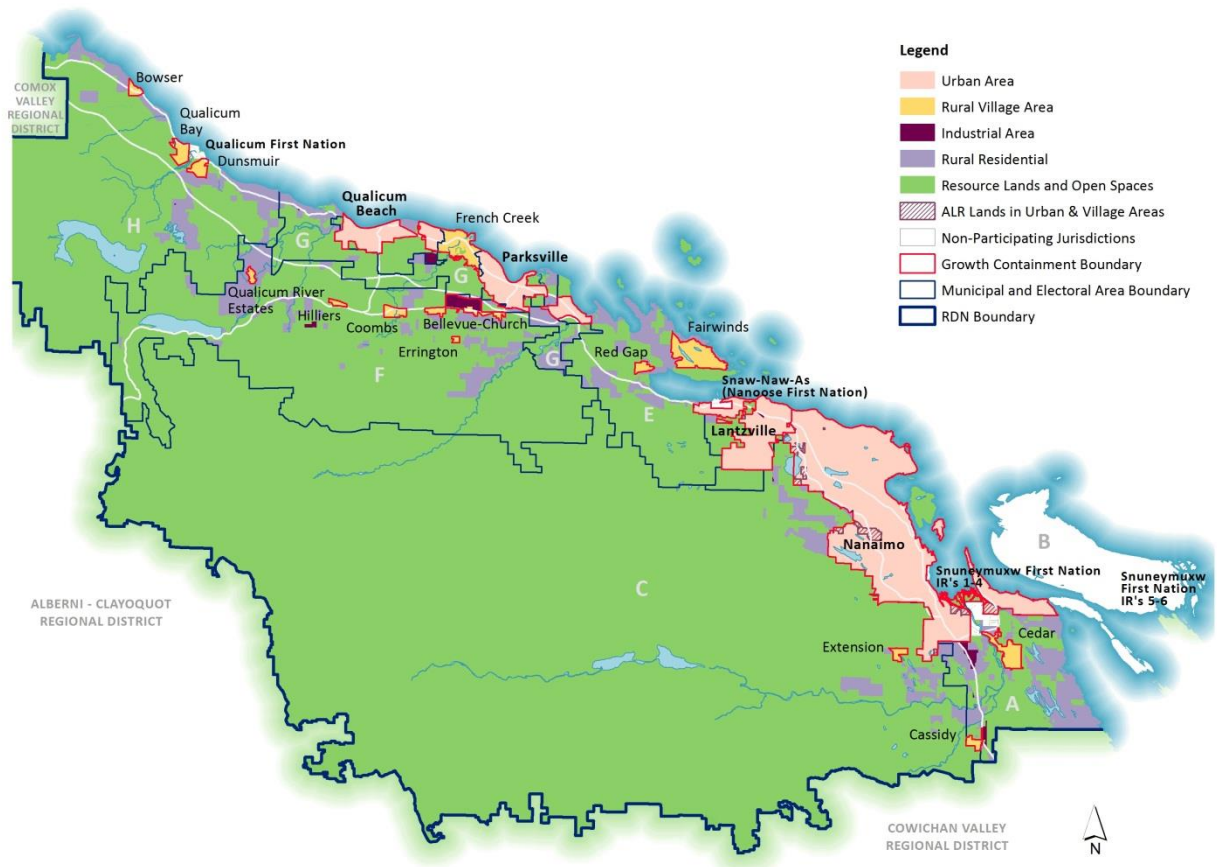
3 RGS VISION

The vision of the RGS is documented below and represents the foundation for the goals and policies in the RGS.

The region will be recognized for an outstanding quality of urban and rural life that is grounded in a strong commitment to protecting the natural environment and minimizing harm to life-sustaining ecological systems. Working in partnership with interested organizations, the RDN and its member municipalities are committed to achieving:

- High standards of environmental protection that preserve habitat, enhance ecological diversity, and maintain air and water quality;

- Enhanced food security in the region;

- Urban development that is contained and distinct in form and character from rural development;

- Complete, compact communities designed to provide housing that meets the needs of all households, and that provide excellent access to nearby workplaces, goods and services, learning institutions, recreation opportunities, and natural areas;

- Expansion and enhancement of mobility options that reduce automobile dependency;

- A strong and resilient economy based on agriculture, natural resource assets, tourism, and information age industries and services, such as health and education; and

- Efficient, state-of-the-art servicing, infrastructure and resource utilization.

4 RGS PRINCIPLES

The goals and policies of this RGS are grounded in the following sustainability principles that are intended to guide how decisions are made regarding the future life of the region:

- Decisions and actions have regard for local and global consequences;

- The interconnectedness and interdependence of natural and human systems are recognized and respected;

- The healthy functioning of ecological systems is nurtured;

- The qualities of place that create pride and a sense of community are nurtured;

- Efficiency, including the concept of zero-waste, is optimized;

- Equity amongst all citizens and across generations, including future generations is ensured;

- Decision-making processes are based on participation, collaboration and co-operation with citizens, other authorities and organizations; and

- We are accountable for our decisions and actions.

5 RGS GOALS

The RGS is based upon 11 goals (listed below) that work towards achieving the collective vision of regional sustainability.   Policies in the RGS provide the direction to take specific actions to implement the RGS goals.

1. **Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption** – Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and energy consumption and promote adaptive measures to prepare for climate change impacts.

2. **Protect the Environment –** Protect and enhance the environment and avoid ecological damage related to human activity.

3. **Coordinate Land Use and Mobility** – Ensure land use patterns and mobility networks are mutually supportive and work together to reduce automobile dependency and provide for efficient goods movement.

4. **Concentrate Housing and Jobs in Rural Village and Urban Growth Centres** – Establish distinctive activity centres and corridors within growth containment boundaries that provide ready access to places to live, work, play and learn.

5. **Enhance Rural Integrity** – Protect and strengthen the region's rural economy and lifestyle.

6. **Facilitate the Provision of Affordable Housing** – Support and facilitate the provision of appropriate, adequate, attainable, affordable and adaptable housing.

7. **Enhance Economic Resiliency** – Support strategic economic development and link commercial and industrial strategies to the land use and rural and environmental protection priorities of the region.

8. **Enhance Food Security** – Protect and enhance the capacity of the region to produce and process food.

9. **Celebrate Pride of Place** – Celebrate the unique natural beauty, culture, history, and arts of the region.

10. **Provide Services Efficiently** – Provide efficient, cost-effective services and infrastructure.

11. **Enhance Cooperation Among Jurisdictions –** Facilitate an understanding of and commitment to the goals of growth management among all levels of government, the public, and key private and voluntary sector partners.

6 IMPLEMENTATION – 2015

Section 5.2 of the RGS addresses implementation and identifies specific projects that are intended to work towards achieving RGS goals. Implementation is an important part of being accountable to RDN residents about what is being done to achieve the goals they identified as important.

6.1   Actions Supporting Education and Awareness

The RGS states that "*a public that is well-informed is more likely to participate in decision-making processes and to work with others to achieve common goals*".

Throughout 2015, the RDN Long Range Planning Department took a continuous approach to education and raising awareness about the RGS and its implementation. This included regularly updating and providing information via website materials, RDN newsletters (Electoral Area Updates and RDN Perspectives), news releases and mail-outs.

Education and awareness of the RGS has also been included into all public engagement activities for the RGS Targets and Indicators project listed later in this report. Furthermore, the public engagement initiatives of a variety of RDN departments have also served to raise awareness of the RGS.

6.2   Monitoring the RGS

In January 2015, the RDN Board approved a final list of 22 indicators and targets to be used in the Monitoring the RGS program (RGS Monitoring). The RGS Monitoring website (www.rdn.bc.ca/rgsmonitoring) was created in August 2015 to report and track changes to these indicators. This annual report incorporates the progress on these 22 indicators and targets to help gauge the effectiveness of RGS policies and implementation to achieve the goals of the RGS.

Complete information is reported on the website for the City of Nanaimo (Nanaimo) and RDN Electoral Areas. However, information for the District of Lantzville, Town of Qualicum Beach and the City of Parksville is not yet available for select indicators. Complete information for all member municipalities will be added in future versions of RGS Monitoring.

6.3   RGS Minor Amendment Process

On October 27, the RDN Board decided to proceed with an amendment to the RGS to revise the criteria for minor amendments in Section 1.5.1. The proposed change to the RGS Minor Amendment process is intended to clarify when a change to the RGS should follow the regular amendment process or when it can be considered under the minor amendment process. The minor amendment process is simpler and faster and requires fewer approvals than the regular process. One type of minor amendment is a change resulting from a full Official Community Plan (OCP) review process. However, due to the way in which the provision is currently worded, there is some uncertainty as to what is

meant by a full OCP review process. The proposed changes to the RGS are intended to address this uncertainty.

7 PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE RGS GOALS

In addition to specific implementation projects of the RGS, the RDN and the member municipalities actively make decisions and take actions that affect the goals of the RGS. The following summaries, grouped by each RGS goal, report on the RDN and member municipality actions to achieve the goals of the RGS. The summaries also report on progress on measurable social, economic or environmental characteristics that indicate progress towards the RGS goals. These measurable characteristics are referred to as indicators. The indicators reported below were reported as part of the RGS Monitoring website, launched in August 2015.

7.1 Goal 1 – Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption

Regional Actions

Green Building Incentives

The RDN and the member municipalities delivered green building incentives to residents who improved the performance of their homes. In 2015 the RDN programs delivered $43,950 in green building incentives and rebates. The Green Building Incentive Program includes rebates for wood stove exchanges, renewable energy systems, home energy assessments and clothes washer rebates; as well as rainwater harvesting and well upgrade rebates through the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) program.

Climate Change Actions and Energy Efficiency Measures

During 2015, to achieve climate change and energy efficiency goals, the RDN:

- Conducted the 2015 Green Building Open House and Workshop series, featuring four homes and four green building workshop sessions.

- Led a Real Estate Energy Efficiency Project in partnership with Nanaimo, training local realtors in home energy efficiency.

- Secured $138,000 in funding for corporate energy efficiency initiatives, including rural fire hall efficiency assessments and upgrades, comprehensive energy study for Ravensong Aquatic Centre, and a heat recovery system at Oceanside Place Arena.

- Gained ownership of 17,500 tonnes CO_2e emission reduction offsets arising from landfill gas capture. This regional emission reduction project will enable the RDN to achieve carbon neutral operations for five to ten years.

RDN Electoral Areas

Green Bylaw Amendments

The RDN completed a project to review the electoral area land use bylaws and regulations to identify barriers to green building features, systems and technologies with the adoption of zoning amendments on February 24, 2015 to accommodate renewable energy systems or more efficient building envelopes. Through the project, the RDN identified bylaw amendments to remove barriers to renewable energy systems, passive design features and rainwater harvesting equipment. The bylaw amendments include higher permitted heights for solar energy systems and micro wind turbines, as well as changes to the definition of floor area to allow thicker insulation without restricting livable floor area.

Town of Qualicum Beach

Qualicum Beach Fire Hall

Construction was completed on a new fire hall that will use 73% less energy than a fire hall built to modern building code. A number of other green building features are also incorporated into the design, such as use of onsite timber, onsite stormwater management and water conservation. It is being built to post-disaster standards and can function as an emergency operations centre.

Qualicum Beach Waterfront Master Plan

The Town completed the first phase of a Waterfront Master Plan that will provide a long-term strategy of climate adaptation for the waterfront. The second phase will begin in January 2016.

District of Lantzville

Water and Energy Efficiency Rebates

Lantzville continued to participate in the provision of green building incentives through the RDN, including incentives for rainwater harvesting, wood stove exchanges, solar hot water, home energy assessments, and residential vehicle charging stations. These actions are consistent with RGS Goal 1: Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption, Goal 2: Protect the Environment and Goal 10: Provide Services Efficiently.

Indicator: Total Community GHG Emissions

The Community Energy and Emission Inventory for 2010 estimates that the region produced 845,695 tonnes of carbon dioxide, based on road transportation, buildings, and solid waste disposal. The transportation sector emitted the greatest volume of emissions in 2010, with 66% of total community emissions. The building sector produced 27% of emissions and the solid waste sector produced 7% of emissions,

respectively. Overall, emissions have increased from 810,054 CO_2 tonnes in 2007, which is the base year for the target. This change represents a 4% increase in emissions in the region.

7.2   Goal 2 – Protect the Environment

Regional Actions

Watershed Protection Measures

During 2015, to achieve watershed and environmental protection goals, the RDN:

- Developed a map-based website for drinking water and watershed program information by Water Region, including information on streams, aquifers, water supply, First Nations significance, community programs and land use.
- Expanded the BC Water Use Reporting Centre, a web-based data tracking and reporting tool for the RDN and municipalities, to the improvement districts and EPCOR to assist with building a regional data repository for water demand information.
- Distributed State of our Streams publications to residents, which profile key streams that have been monitored in the Community Watershed Monitoring program.

- Completed the Team WaterSmart education outreach program including workshops, community events and school visits.
- Continued the rainwater cistern and rural water quality rebates as part of the RDN Green Building Incentive program.
- Continued collecting groundwater level data through the Volunteer Observation Well Network in 22 wells.

City of Parksville

Goose Management Strategy

Parksville Council adopted recommendations contained in the Goose Management Strategy for the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region as prepared by the Guardians of Mid-Island Estuaries Society. A key recommendation of the goose management strategy is to humanely reduce non-migratory resident Canada Goose populations to a level which prevents conflicts between geese and human activities and reduces the ecological damage to local estuaries.

Actions to Reduce Water Use

Parksville offered rebates to replace existing toilets with low flush models to encourage residents to reduce water use.

District of Lantzville

Actions to Protect the Environment

- Provided educational information to residents concerning water conservation and implemented water restrictions consistent with RGS Goal 1: Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption, Goal 2: Protect the Environment and Goal 10: Provide Services Efficiently.
- Participated in the RDN's Drinking Water Watershed Protection Function consistent with RGS Goal 2: Protect the Environment and Goal 11: Enhance Cooperation Among Jurisdictions.
- Provided information to residents concerning outdoor burning consistent with RGS Goal 2: Protect the Environment.

Indicator: Surface Water Quality (Community Watershed Monitoring)

Between 2011 and 2014, the Community Watershed Monitoring Network reported that 28 out of 40 sites sampled met the BC Water Quality Guidelines for more than one parameter in multiple monitoring periods. Conversely, 17 out of 45 sites monitored exceeded more than one parameter in multiple reporting periods. All of these exceedances were observed at sites in more urban areas.

Monitored Streams that Meet the BC Water Quality Guidelines 2011-2014		
Turbidity	**Temperature***	**Dissolved Oxygen**
32 sites met guidelines out of 45 sites that were monitored	**16 sites met guidelines out of 45 sites that were monitored**	**32 sites met guidelines out of 45 sites that were monitored**

7.3 Goal 3 – Coordinate Land Use and Mobility

Regional Actions

Regional Transit

During 2015, to achieve regional transportation goals, the RDN:

- Expanded the conventional transit system by 5,000 hours.
- Implemented weekday and evening handyDART service.
- Distributed an updated 'Z-card' bike/transit route map in conjunction with Nanaimo.
- Procured 24 compressed natural gas buses to be delivered in November 2016.
- Implemented a transit Google transit trip planner.

City of Nanaimo

Linley Valley West Access

Nanaimo is in the process of consulting residents on options to improve access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists on Rutherford Road, adjacent to the Linley Valley West development.

Pedestrian Upgrades in Old City Quarter

Nanaimo made upgrades to sidewalks in the Old City Quarter to create a safe environment for pedestrians by increasing visibility.

Improvements to Departure Bay Beachfront

Nanaimo began upgrades to the existing Departure Bay beachfront to improve accessibility and ensure safe use of the recreational area. The project includes flattening the grade along the seawall walkway, installing pedestrian access ramps, installing new street lights, and improvements to parking.

Hospital Area Project

Nanaimo has initiated improvements to the transportation network in the hospital area, as envisioned in Nanaimo's Transportation Master Plan to create a "mobility hub" with a concentration of population, employment and services that support multiple modes of transportation. The project includes upgrades to sidewalks, cycling facilities, underground utilities and crosswalks in the area.

City of Parksville

Transportation Upgrades

Parksville completed the first phase of upgrades to Temple Street in 2015, including replacement of the roadway, separated sidewalks, grassed boulevards, LED streetlights and bike lanes. Upgrades will provide safe pedestrian and cycling corridor for residents and visitors looking for an alternative to Highway 19A. Parksville also completed a Stormwater Master Plan.

Indicator: Per Capita Transit Use

Since 2011, the number of bus rides has increased in the region. In 2011, there were 2,614,421 rides taken in the RDN, while in 2015 the number increased to 2,725,378 rides, including Gabriola Island's Community Bus Services GERTIE (Gabriola Island's Environmentally Responsible Trans-Island Express). Per capita, the number of transit rides has increased from 17.8 rides in 2011 to 18.6 rides in 2015. The change represents a 4% increase.
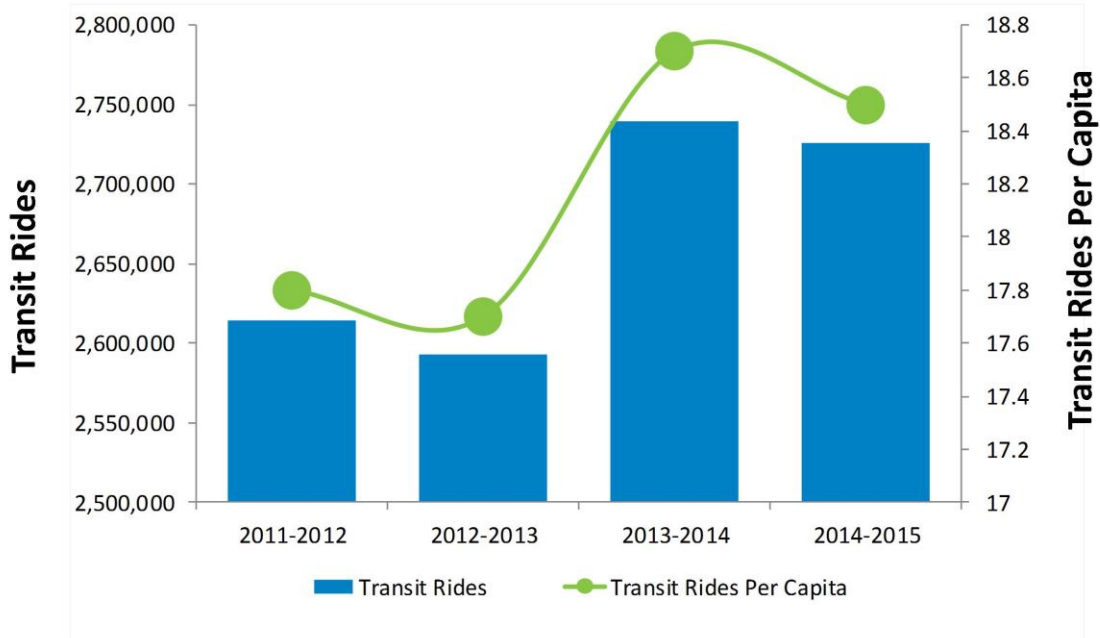
7.4 Goal 4 – Concentrate Housing and Jobs in Growth Centres

RDN Electoral Areas

Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan Review

The RDN initiated a targeted review of the OCP, focusing on those portions of the OCP in need of updates. The OCP describes the long term vision for Electoral Area 'H', including objectives and policies to guide land use, servicing, and social and economic changes within a community. Preliminary topics identified for the review include the economy, housing, natural environment, transportation, Deep Bay, and Horne Lake.

City of Nanaimo

Redevelopment of Waterfront Lands

Nanaimo completed environmental studies on a 26.7 acre waterfront parcel located at 1 Port Drive, adjacent to the downtown. Nanaimo acquired the waterfront land adjacent to downtown in 2013 for enhancement of the waterfront consistent with strategic plan priorities. Nanaimo also has a memorandum of understanding to provide up to three acres of land to the RDN for a transportation hub.

Growth Management

Nanaimo continued to develop within the Growth Containment Boundary (GCB), and advised potential applicants of Plan Nanaimo goals and policies regarding multi-family developments and mixed use corridor zoning. In this regard, Nanaimo encourages infill development at higher densities.

City of Parksville

Growth Management

The majority of Parksville is within the GCB and new OCP policies support directing growth to the city and offering a range of densities throughout Parksville. Also, directing growth to municipal areas within the GCB helps to promote and preserve rural integrity. Parksville has received a rezoning application for an 18 unit multifamily development in downtown Parksville on a presently undeveloped site. The application supports the objectives of infill, densification, additional housing options, and walkability.

New Sign Bylaw

Parksville Council adopted a consolidated Zoning Bylaw incorporating parcels previously within the Regional District of Nanaimo. This provides additional land use guidance and consistency among properties within Parksville. Parksville Council also adopted a new Sign Bylaw, providing additional signage alternatives.
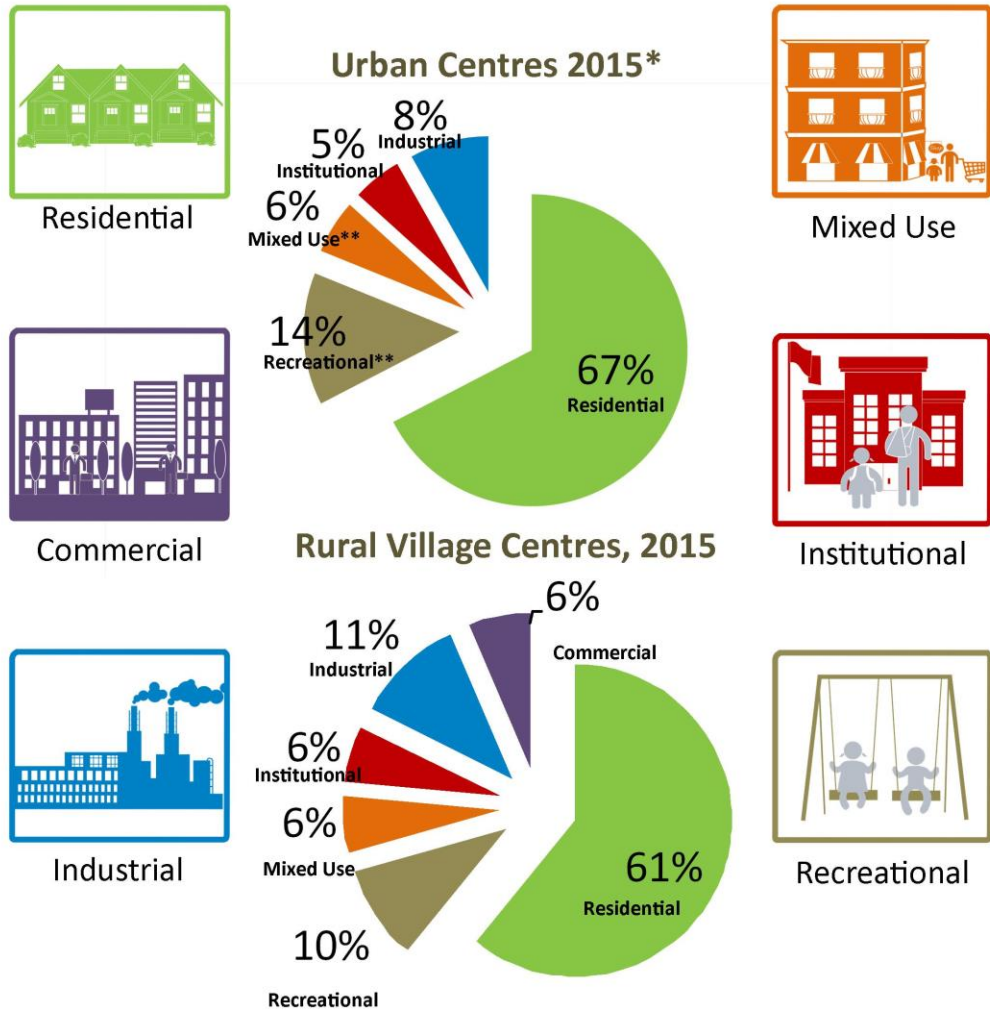
Town of Qualicum Beach

Review of Town-owned Land

The Town of Qualicum Beach (the Town) began a review of Town-owned land in the Village Neighbourhood of Qualicum Beach, including the old fire hall on Harlech Road, to explore the possible use of these sites for initiatives that will advance the Town's long-term goals.

Indicator: Diversity of Land Use (Ratio) Inside the Growth Containment Boundary

This indicator consists of a ratio of land use categories based on zoning designations. These categories summarize zoning designations within the GCB into residential zones, commercial zones, industrial zones, mixed-use and public zones. Within Nanaimo's urban centre, 67% of land is used for residential purposes, 18% for industrial, 14% for recreational, 5% for institutional, and 6% for mixed use (includes commercial). Within Rural Village Centres, 61% of land is used for residential purposes, 11% for industrial, 10% for recreational, 6% commercial, 6% for institutional, and 6% for mixed use. The ideal land use mix, identified in the Rural Village Centre Study in 2013, is 10-15% public uses, 10-40% commercial and employment uses, and 50-80% for residential uses.

Land Uses within the RDN

Urban Centres 2015*

Residential

Mixed Use

Commercial

8% Industrial
5% Institutional
6% Mixed Use**
14% Recreational**
67% Residential

Institutional

Rural Village Centres, 2015

6% Commercial
11% Industrial
6% Institutional
6% Mixed Use
61% Residential
10% Recreational

Industrial

Recreational

*Urban Areas currently only include City of Nanaimo information

** May include data for other land uses

7.5   Goal 5 – Enhance Rural Integrity

RDN Electoral Areas

Electoral Area 'H' Official Community Plan Review

The RDN initiated a targeted review of the OCP, focusing on those portions of the OCP in need of updates. The OCP describes the long term vision for Electoral Area 'H', including objectives and policies to guide land use, servicing, and social and economic changes within a community. Preliminary topics identified for the review include the economy, housing, natural environment, transportation, Deep Bay, and Horne Lake, which have implications for Goal 5 – Enhance Rural Integrity.

Indicator: The number of new lots / units created through subdivision inside and outside the Growth Containment Boundary

This indicator includes the total number of residential lots created between 2013 and 2014 that are located within and outside the GCB. The form of lots considered in the indicator includes fee simple lots, bare land strata lots and building strata units. In comparison with exclusive ownership of the property in a fee simple subdivision, strata owners have their individual lot/unit and together own the common property and assets as a strata corporation. Between 2013 and 2014, 600 lots were created in the City of Nanaimo, District of Lantzville and RDN Electoral Areas, either through subdivision or strata. Within this time period 564 lots were created inside the GCB and 36 lots were created outside the GCB.
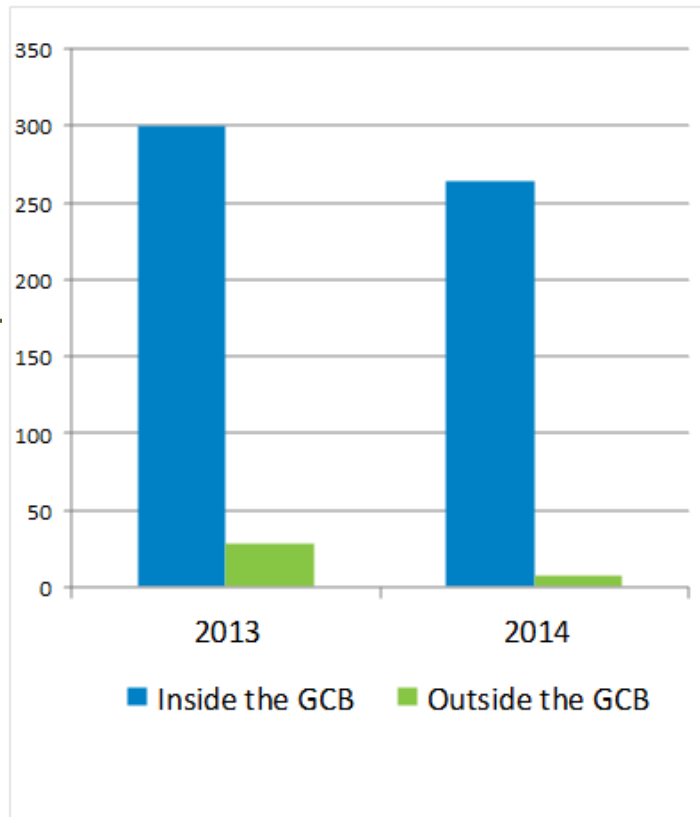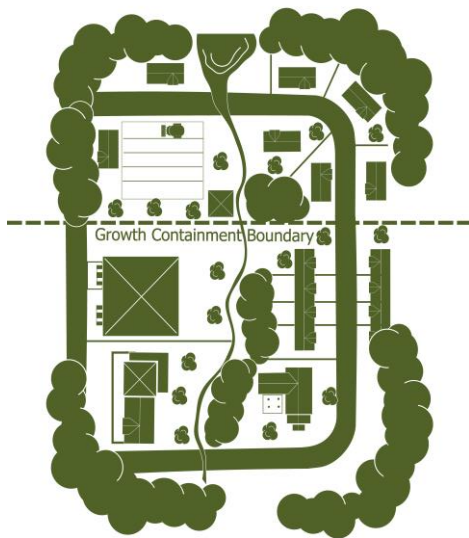
7.6 Goal 6 – Facilitate the Provision of Affordable Housing

Regional Actions

2015 Affordable Housing Online Resources

The web-based resource guide on affordable housing for renters, homeowners and housing providers was updated during 2015 (www.rdnhousing.ca). The website provides access to a comprehensive list of contacts for a wide range of housing topics targeting

different needs. This includes information on market rental, supportive and emergency housing. This is the only resource of this type in the region, and complements other online resources maintained by Nanaimo Affordable Housing and Vancouver Island Crisis Society.

Emergency Shelter and Food Materials

The RDN updated a brochure and poster to be carried on RDN buses to direct people in need to emergency shelter and food resources. The brochure gives information for emergency shelters, extreme weather shelters, hot meal programs and food banks in the region. The brochure also provides bus route information to find the services. The poster, displayed at the front of all RDN buses during times of cold and wet weather, provides information for emergency and extreme weather shelters in the region.

Oceanside Health and Wellness Network Coordinator

The Oceanside Health and Wellness Network (OHWN) was created in 2013 to address social issues within the Oceanside area (School District 69), with top priorities being affordable housing, transportation, and hungry kids. In partnership with Island Health, the RDN agreed to a contract for an OWHN coordinator position in 2015. The OHWN coordinator contract will be awarded in 2016.

City of Nanaimo

Supported Housing Projects

Upland Walk, supportive housing located at 6025 Uplands Drive, opened to tenants in 2015. The project houses 33 previously homeless individuals who face multiple barriers to accessing and retaining housing.   Another supportive housing project at 1597 Boundary Crescent proceeded to the construction phase. The affordable housing projects are two of five sites for supported housing under a Memorandum of Understanding between BC Housing and Nanaimo.
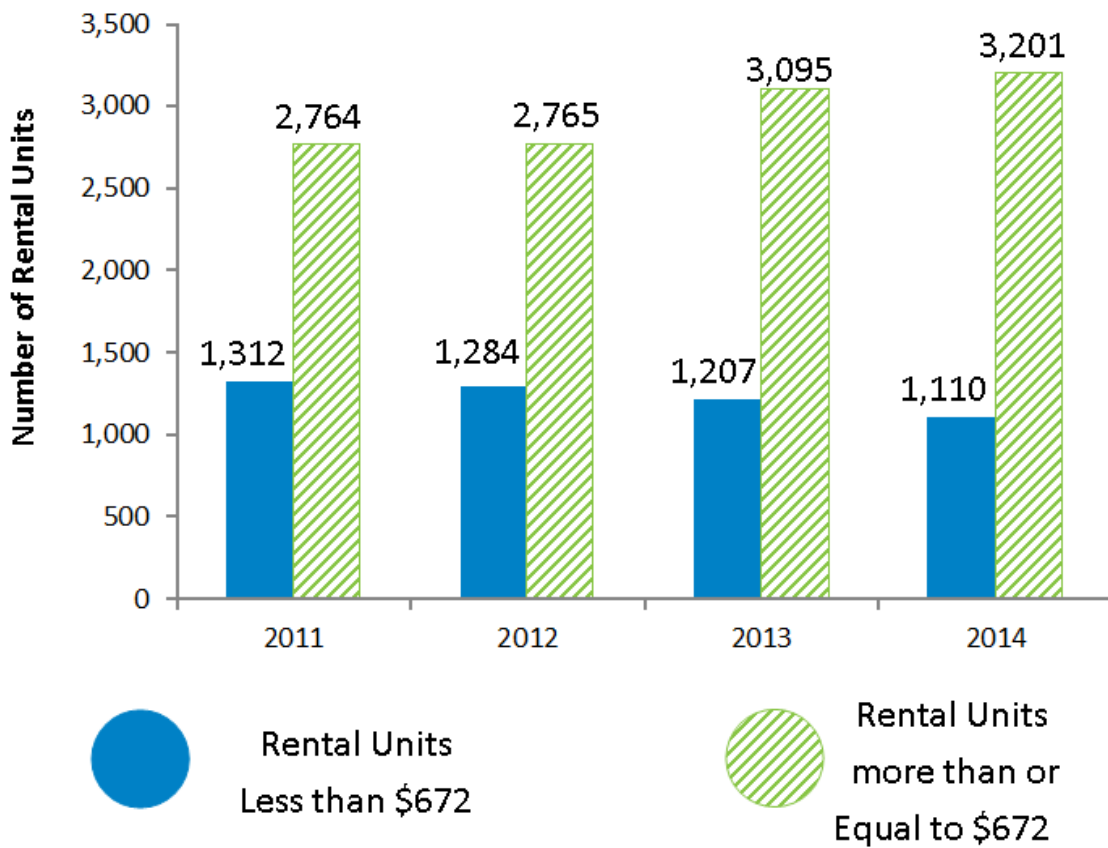
Town of Qualicum Beach

Qualicum Park Village

In collaboration with the Qualicum – Parksville Affordable Housing Society, construction was completed on 34 units of affordable housing next to downtown Qualicum Beach.

Indicator: The total number of rental units affordable to households with income below 50% of the median income for the region

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation estimates that rental units affordable to households with lower incomes has decreased within the Nanaimo and Parksville Census Agglomeration. Between 2011 and 2014, the number of affordable units decreased from 1,312 to 1,100. This represents a 15% decrease in the number of

affordable units. During this time the number of units with a rent more than or equal to $672 increased from 2,764 to 3,201. This represents a 16% increase in the number of units that are not affordable to lower income households.

Number of Rental Units

Year	Rental Units Less than $672	Rental Units more than or Equal to $672
2011	1,312	2,764
2012	1,284	2,765
2013	1,207	3,095
2014	1,110	3,201

Rental Units Less than $672

Rental Units more than or Equal to $672

7.7   Goal 7 – Enhance Economic Resiliency

Regional Actions

Northern Community Economic Development Service

To further RGS Goal 7 - Enhance Economic Resiliency, the RDN continued to deliver programs in 2015 relating to the Northern Community Economic Development Service in order to provide support for economic development initiatives in Parksville, the Town of Qualicum Beach and Electoral Areas 'E', 'F', 'G', and 'H'. The program allows the RDN Board of Directors to contribute to eligible projects that advance the Board's vision for a resilient, thriving and creative local economy. In 2015, the function disbursed over $63,000 in economic development grants in District 69 communities.

RDN Electoral Areas

Nanoose Bay Community Identification Signage

The RDN completed the Nanoose Bay Community Identification and Wayfinding signage program that saw the installation of three signs in the Nanoose Bay area. The signs are part of a pilot community identification program for RDN Electoral Areas to strengthen community identify and attract economic activity to the area.

Indicator: [Unemployment] Employment Rate and Labour Participation

The Unemployment Rate for the Nanaimo Census Agglomeration dropped from 12.6% in 2011 to 5.8% in 2014. Comparatively, the Employment Rate and Labour Force Participation Rate both increased over the same period. The Labour Force Participation Rate increased from 60.7% in 2011 to 61.4% in 2014. The decline in the unemployment rate and increase in the Labour Force Participation Rate indicate that more people are employed in a growing workforce.
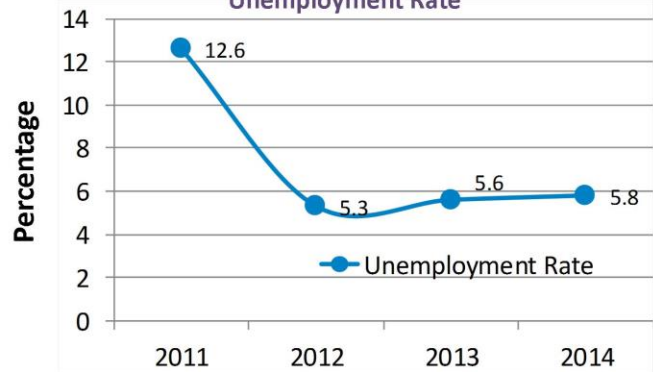
Participation and Employment Rate

Unemployment Rate

* Data is only for the Nanaimo Census Agglomeration, which includes the City of Nanaimo, District of Lantzville, Electoral Area A, Electoral Area C, Snuneymuxw First Nations Lands, and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations Lands.
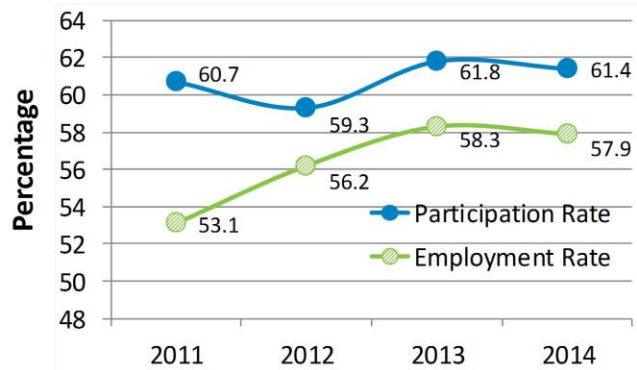
7.8   Goal 8 – Food Security

Regional Actions

Agriculture Area Plan Website

The RDN website for agricultural resources and activities within the region was updated in 2015. The website provides access to the comprehensive information for farming within the RDN, including links to RDN initiatives, provincial agency information, statistics and mapping.

RDN Electoral Areas

Agriculture Area Plan Bylaw and Policy Update Project

The RDN continued with the Bylaw and Policy Update Project intended to remove regulatory barriers and obstacles that hinder agriculture and aquaculture in the region. During the summer and fall 2015, the RDN prepared proposed changes to its zoning bylaws to remove obstacles to agriculture, and sought feedback from the public on these changes. Based on the consultation, the proposed changes will be incorporated into a new zoning bylaw amendment to be considered by the RDN Board in 2016.

Indicator: Number of parcels with Farm Class

Properties that are classed as farm land have been determined to be practicing commercial agriculture by BC Assessment. In 2015, the region had a total of 360 properties with Farm Class. The majority of properties (293) are within the RDN Electoral Areas. Properties with Farm Class are also within the City of Nanaimo (46), District of Lantzville (5), the Town of Qualicum Beach (15), and the City of Parksville (1).

Number of Properties with Farm Class, 2015

Region	Properties
City of Nanaimo	46
City of Parksville	1
Town of Qualicum Beach	15
District of Lantzville	5
Electoral Areas	293
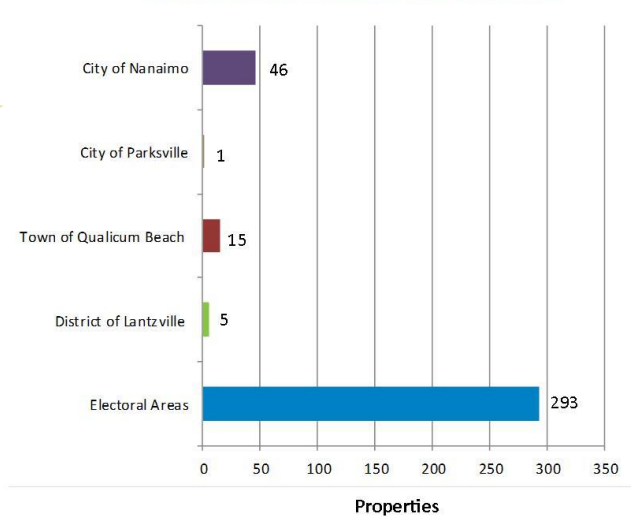
7.9 Goal 9 – Pride of Place

Regional Actions

Regional and Community Parks

The RDN completed projects to create or undertake improvements to existing trails and other park amenities throughout all regional and community parks. Examples include completion of the design for Blueback Community Park, opening of Meadowood Community Park, and a concept plan for improvements at Huxley Park.

Recreation Programs and Facilities

The RDN's recreation programs and facilities play an ongoing role in furthering RGS cultural goals by providing sports and cultural amenities that boost the attractiveness of the region as a place to live and visit. These include ongoing delivery of recreation programs and maintenance of facilities throughout the RDN. Through 2015, the RDN expanded existing recreation programs and continued to attract sports tournaments for youth, adults and seniors. Recreation programs achieved 5,172 registrations during 2015.

RDN Electoral Areas

Nanoose Bay Community Identification Signage

The RDN completed the Nanoose Bay Community Identification and Wayfinding signage program that saw the installation of three signs in the Nanoose Bay area. The signs are part of a pilot community identification program for RDN Electoral Areas to strengthen community identify and attract economic activity to the area.

City of Nanaimo

Partners in Parks Program

Nanaimo continued with the Partners in Parks (PIP) program, intended to improve neighbourhood parks with the involvement of residents through input, fundraising, design, and installation.

Colliery Dam Upgrades

Work continued on the construction of an auxiliary spillway in Colliery Dams Park. The construction is part of a project to ensure the lower and middle dams located in Colliery Dam Park meet required provincial dam safety standards.

Heritage Conservation Program

A review of the Heritage Conservation Program by Nanaimo was initiated in 2015 to better align the program with the Cultural Plan. The consultation seeks input from residents and stakeholders to improve heritage values within Nanaimo.

City of Parksville

Park Upgrades

Parksville made some upgrades to both the Community Park and Foster Park Playground. Upgrades to the Community Park include the repair of drainage along roadways, upgrades to washroom facilities, and the construction of food truck pads. The upgrades to the Foster Park Playground include resurfacing and the installation of new equipment. Also, a recent subdivision at Church Road and Renz Road provided residents with a park in the form of a linear pathway expanding connectivity within Parksville.

Indicator: The amount of publicly owned land designated for parks and community use (including land in protected areas, community use parks, and recreational facilities such as pools, ice rinks, etc.)

Amount of park and community use land
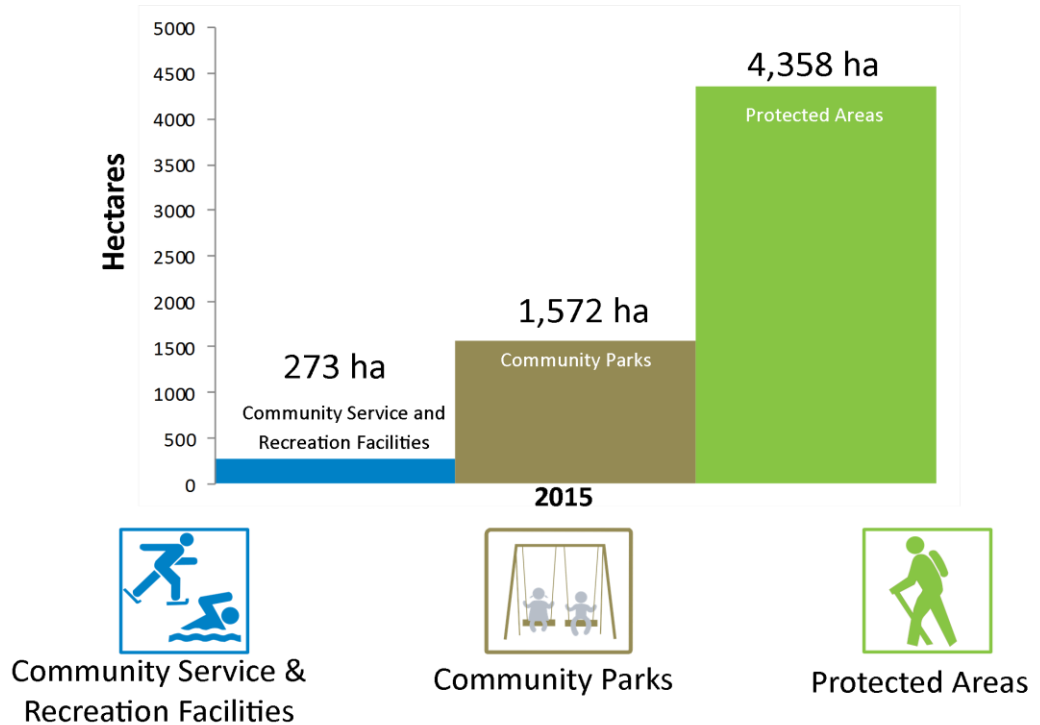
This indicator measures the cumulative amount, in hectares, of publicly owned recreational facilities and parkland. In 2015, the region has a total of 6,203 ha of publicly owned lands within the Nanaimo, District of Lantzville, and RDN Electoral Areas that is designated for park and community use. Parks and community use facilities consist of Community Service and Recreational Facilities (273 ha), protected areas (4,358 ha), and community parks (1,572 ha).

7.10   Goal 10 – Efficient Services

Regional Actions

Solid Waste

RDN Solid Waste continued to achieve the RGS goal to Provide Efficient Services by pursuing an approach to eliminate the need for waste disposal. Consistent with the RGS direction to achieve 'zero waste', the RDN has a region-wide diversion rate of 68% and the second lowest provincial annual per capita disposal rate of 347 kg. During 2015, RDN Solid Waste also continued with its review of the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan.

Water Services

RDN Water Services continued to achieve the RGS goal to Provide Efficient Services by providing community water to lands located within the GCB. Actions in 2015 included the continuation of development of the Englishman River Water Service intake and treatment project along with Parksville.

Wastewater Services

RDN Wastewater Services continued to achieve the RGS goal to Provide Efficient Services by providing community wastewater to lands located within the GCB. Actions in 2015 included the commencement of designs for a collection and treatment system for community sewer within the Bowser Village Centre, and the commencement of the Duke Point Pollution Control Centre capacity review to assess the ability to service the Cedar Village and surrounding areas. Also, approximately 790,000 kWh of electricity was produced at the Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre in 2015 through cogeneration, which is the conversion of waste gas into electricity.

RDN Electoral Areas

Emergency Planning and Disaster Resiliency

RDN action for emergency planning and preparedness in 2015 has been consistent with RGS direction to integrate and coordinate on a regional basis among the RDN and member municipalities. In particular, the RDN continued to hold events to improve emergency awareness, such as through community outreach and the Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness (NEP) program.

City of Nanaimo

New Water Treatment Plant

The New Water Treatment Plant for Nanaimo was completed in 2015. The new treatment plant produces high quality water consistent with RGS goals to provide cost efficient and cost effective services to meet the needs of the residents.

City of Parksville

Englishman River Water Service

Parksville and the RDN continued with a project to upgrade the Englishman River Water Service, including water intake, water treatment, and aquifer storage. In November, residents voted in favour of borrowing $5.6 million for the upgrades. Construction of the new intake is scheduled for June 2016, followed by the design and installation of the water treatment facility in the summer of 2018.

Expedited Building Permits

The Building Department expanded the level of efficiency for the building permit process by offering customers the option of applying for an expedited building permit which has a shorter processing time.

Public Education

Parksville's Planning Department produced a series of public brochures addressing various aspects of development to provide readily available information to the public regarding Parksville processes and bylaws.

Mapping

Parksville released updated mapping software available to the public from the City's website. The expanded map includes several user-layers and provides more accurate information pertaining to Parksville's land use and infrastructure.

Indicator: Per capita cost to provide water and sewer systems

This indicator includes the operational costs of providing water services, sewer services and wastewater treatment within the RDN and member municipalities. The 2014 per capita cost of water and sewer systems provided below is a baseline cost estimate, and will be used to establish a trend for future updates to this indicator. In 2014, the cost of water systems is $76.36 per capita, based on a population of 105,216 people. The cost of sewer systems is $46.10 per capita, based on a population of 94,416. Both water and sewer systems are for Nanaimo and RDN Electoral Areas only. The cost of wastewater treatment is $114.79 per capita, based on a population of 119,509. The cost of wastewater treatment is for all parts of the RDN served by a community sewer system.

Per Capita Cost of Services by Water and Sewer System, 2015
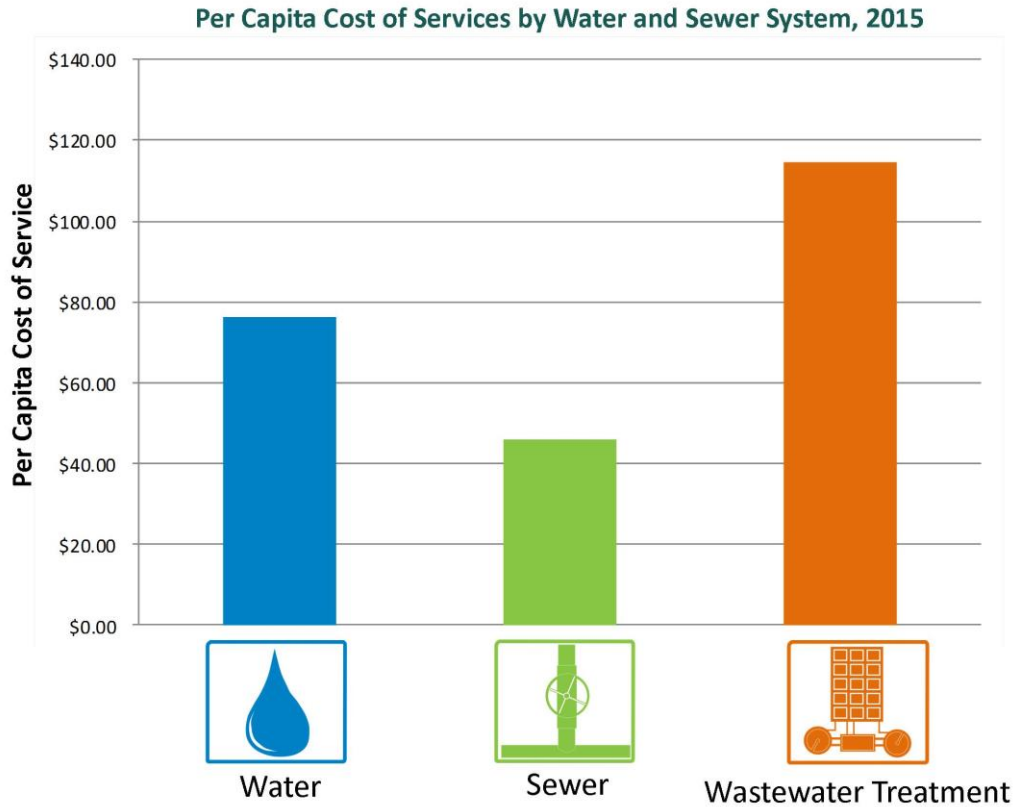
7.11   Goal 11 – Cooperation Among Jurisdictions

Regional Actions

First Nations

Throughout 2015, RDN staff and elected officials met with staff and elected officials from First Nations with existing village sites within the region (Qualicum, Snaw-Naw-As and Snuneymuxw). Discussions involved various planning and implementation projects related to regional growth, development applications, parks, transit, emergency planning and utilities. While some meetings were to address specific matters related to land use planning, development, and servicing agreements, others were focused on strengthening relationships in order to facilitate stronger collaboration on issues of mutual concern.

Adjacent Regional Districts and Municipalities

The RDN continued to host and participate in meetings to network and liaise with staff at adjacent regional districts and staff at member municipalities. On an ongoing basis, outside of these meetings, RDN staff maintains professional relationships that enable effective communication and collaboration. This allows for the RDN to share information on RGS implementation activities in order to support adjacent jurisdictions having long term plans and taking actions consistent with the direction of the RGS.

Redevelopment of Waterfront Lands

Nanaimo and the RDN have a Memorandum of Understanding for Nanaimo to transfer up to 3 acres of land along the waterfront to the RDN for a transit exchange. The transfer exchange is part of the waterfront enhancement of the 1 Port Drive property, which is a downtown waterfront property acquired by Nanaimo in 2013.

8 IMPLEMENTATION - 2016

For 2016 the RDN will continue to make progress on the following implementation items:

1. Continue to monitor, evaluate and periodically report on regional economic, population, social and environmental trends and progress towards achieving RGS goals through RGS Monitoring, as set out in Policy 4.

2. Adopt the revisions to the RGS minor amendment criteria, initiated in 2015.

3. Continue with the Electoral Area H Official Community Plan review, and prepare a draft plan.

4. Complete the Agricultural Area Plan Bylaw and Policy Updates Project with the adoption of changes to the electoral area zoning bylaws intended to remove obstacles to farming in the region.

5. Continue to build strong relationships and pursue protocol agreements with First Nations.

6. Strengthen relationships with major institutions such as Island Health, Vancouver Island University, School Districts 68 and 69 and organizations key to furthering RGS goals (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Groups, non-governmental/community organizations).

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF RGS IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

RGS GOAL / SECTION	ACTION	STATUS JANUARY 2016
Section 5.0	Establish Targets & Indicators to monitor progress.	The RDN created a website for the Monitoring the RGS project at www.rdn.bc.ca/rgsmonitoring. Monitoring of the RGS will be ongoing.
Section 5.0	Corporate Implementation Strategy to show how RDN activities are consistent with RGS.	To be initiated
1. Climate Change	Complete Community Energy & Emissions Plan.	Completed 2013
2. Environmental Protection	Advocate for provincial and federal government support to update and maintain SEI databases.	Ongoing
	Encourage the Province to regulate groundwater, require reporting on water use and protect water resources on a watershed basis.	Ongoing – New Water Sustainability Act includes provisions to create regulations that "require reporting, measuring and testing", which will come in a later phase of implementation. The RDN will continue to advocate for regulations that come out of the Act to protect water resources on a watershed basis.
3. Coordinate land use & mobility	Initiate discussions with provincial and federal transportation authorities to share data collection and analysis and prepare mobility strategy.	Participated in the City of Nanaimo's Transportation Master Plan. Adopted in 2014
	Prepare industrial land supply and demand study and strategy (also applies to Goal 7).	Industrial Lands Study completed Spring 2013.
4. Concentrate housing & jobs	Prepare region-wide study of Rural Village Centres.	Rural Village Centres Study completed Spring 2013.
5. Rural integrity	Policy 5.13: Implementation - Study of options for more sustainable forms of subdivision -	Completed October 2012

RGS GOAL / SECTION	ACTION	STATUS JANUARY 2016
	to limit sprawl and fragmentation on rural residential land.	
6. Affordable housing	Identify next steps to addressing affordable housing issues.	Housing Action Plan Completed 2011. Secondary Suites Bylaw Amendments completed in Spring 2014.
7. Vibrant, resilient economy	7.2 Support and encourage economic development.	Northern Community Economic Development Program Established 2012 with ongoing implementation. Southern Community Economic Development Service Agreement completed 2012 with ongoing implementation.
	7.6 Collaborate in the preparation of a regional industrial land supply strategy and ensure that the region remains competitive in its ability to attract industrial development.	Industrial Lands Study completed Spring 2013.
	7.9 Collaborate in the preparation of a commercial (retail and office) land strategy to ensure that the supply, location, distribution, form and type of commercial development is consistent with sustainability and growth management objectives of the RGS and supports the continued vitality of the sector.	To be initiated.
8. Food security	Prepare study of agriculture in the region to identify issues and present and future needs of the agricultural sector.	Agricultural Area Plan (AAP) completed in 2012.

| | | Agricultural Area Plan 2014-2016 Action Plan completed November 2013.

Committee established in 2013 to oversee carrying out the Action Plan during 2014-2016.

Bylaw and Policy Update project to remove obstacles to zoning bylaw to agriculture is in draft form and will be considered by the RDN Board in 2016.

Emergency Livestock Evacuation Plan approved in 2013. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 9. Pride of Place | Ongoing activities through implementation and development of parks plans and OCPs. | Cedar Main Street Plan adopted 2013.

Nanaimo Cultural Plan, adopted in 2014 and now being implemented.

RDN Community Parks and Trails Guidelines approved 2014.

RDN Community Parks and Trails Strategy for Electoral Areas 'E', 'F', 'G' and 'H' approved 2014

Qualicum Beach Cultural Plan completed 2012 with ongoing implementation. |
| 10. Efficient services | Prepare strategy for servicing Rural Village Centres (See Goal 4). | Will be pursued for different Rural Village Centres as funding permits. Designs for a treatment system are currently being considered for Bowser Village Centre and capacity analysis for Duke Point. |

| 11. Cooperation among jurisdictions | Continue outreach initiatives to First Nations including signing of protocol agreements. | Ongoing outreach initiatives and discussions on areas of mutual interest.

First handyDART servicing agreement signed between Snaw-Naw-As and RDN in 2013. |