



# REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

Bylaw No. 1874, 2023

Shaping Our Future 2040

January 19, 2024

# Regional District of Nanaimo

## Bylaw No.1874

### Schedule A

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## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Regional District of Nanaimo and member municipalities of Nanaimo, Parksville, Lantzville, and Qualicum Beach respectfully acknowledge and recognize the Traditional Territories of the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, and Qualicum Coast Salish First Nations where the region's residents live, work and play.

*[Insert image here]*

# A | Introduction

## Legislative Authority and Purpose of the Regional Growth Strategy

The *BC Local Government Act* authorizes each Regional District to create a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). This Strategy is a long-term plan that coordinates efforts to address regional land use challenges spanning multiple jurisdictions. It tackles issues like climate change, transportation and mobility, housing, economic development, and environmental protection, aiming to foster socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable communities. Reflecting this, the strategy adopted by the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is named “Shaping Our Future 2040.”

Alongside the RDN Board’s Strategic Plan, Shaping Our Future 2040 serves as the RDN’s blueprint for regional planning. It provides the following functions:

- **Coordination:** Facilitates collaboration between member municipalities, the regional district, and provincial and federal governments while encouraging meaningful and collaborative relationships with Indigenous communities.
- **Regional Thinking:** Ensures collective interests are considered for better decision-making on regional matters such as housing, transit, protection of the environment, and agricultural lands.
- **Future Planning:** Guides growth and development over the next 20 years, focusing on sustainable communities and efficient services for future generations.
- **Communication:** Communicates the region’s priorities and strategic approach to existing and new residents, investors, all levels of government, and others, addressing key issues relevant to the region’s long-term vitality.

Shaping Our Future 2040 is a land use bylaw adopted by the RDN Board of Directors and accepted by the local governments affected by it. This bylaw was accepted by the regional member municipalities of the City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach, and District of Lantzville, as well as the adjacent jurisdictions of Cowichan Valley Regional District, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District, and Comox Valley Regional District.

The region’s first RGS was adopted in 1997 to address the rapid population growth experienced in the late ‘80s and early ‘90s. This period saw extensive land development to accommodate the influx of new residents. Subsequent reviews and updates occurred in 2003, 2008, and 2011. Ongoing updates address contemporary challenges such as climate change (including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and rising sea levels), housing diversity, and food security. The Strategy also outlines a process for minor amendments.

Shaping Our Future 2040 is an enhanced version of the RGS, building on the strengths of the previous version. It updates policies addressing climate adaptation and mitigation, land use and mobility, housing diversity, and affordability. Additionally, insights from demographic information guide our upcoming efforts to plan for a sustainable future.

## Relationship with Official Community Plans and Other Bylaws

Shaping Our Future 2040 is a key management plan guiding future growth and land use activities across the RDN. This Strategy establishes a policy framework for regional planning, integrating sustainability principles into land use planning for utilities (water, liquid, and solid waste), housing, transportation, and the environment. Implemented alongside the RDN Board's Strategic Plan, it is applied through each electoral area's Official Community Plan (OCP) and each municipal member's Regional Context Statement included in each community's OCP. Detailed land use policies and regulations are specified within each jurisdiction's OCPs and Zoning Bylaws.

## Working Together with Member Municipalities

Section 446 of the *Local Government Act* provides the criteria to ensure a regional growth strategy and OCP aligns. A member municipality's OCP must include a Regional Context Statement, indicating how it addresses the goals and objectives established in Shaping Our Future 2040 and, if applicable, how the OCP is to be made consistent with the Strategy over time. The RDN Board will not accept Regional Context Statements or proposed amendments unless there is a corresponding bylaw amendment. These include changes to:

- Lands designated as Resource Lands or Open Spaces in the Regional Context Statement proposed for other uses.
- Altering the designation of lands outside the Growth Containment Boundary (GCB) to Urban Area.
- Adding or removing lands from the Urban Area designation.

All bylaws adopted by the RDN Board, including OCPs for electoral areas and all services provided by the Board, must align with Shaping Our Future 2040. However, this alignment does not compel or authorize the RDN to initiate the projects outlined in the Strategy.

## Working Together with First Nations

For more than 8,000 years, the land covered by Shaping Our Future 2040 has been the traditional territories of the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, and Qualicum First Nations. Each Nation has federally designated Reserve lands within the RDN boundaries. The RDN engages and collaborates with these First Nations on matters of shared interest, including regional planning. Within this Strategy:

- We recognize that regional growth planning and land development occurs in the Traditional Territories of Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, and Qualicum First Nation governments
- We acknowledge the roles and responsibilities that all levels of government have in implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action
- We commit to engaging with local First Nations on updates to the regional strategy, land use changes, and other land use planning initiatives
- We strive to foster strong government-to-government relationships with local First Nation governments and encourage member municipalities to do the same
- We share existing regional planning reports, aiming to engage early with those affected by Shaping Our Future 2040, OCPs, and other land use management plans
- We work in a way that is mutually respectful and supportive

## Working with Senior Government and Other Contributors

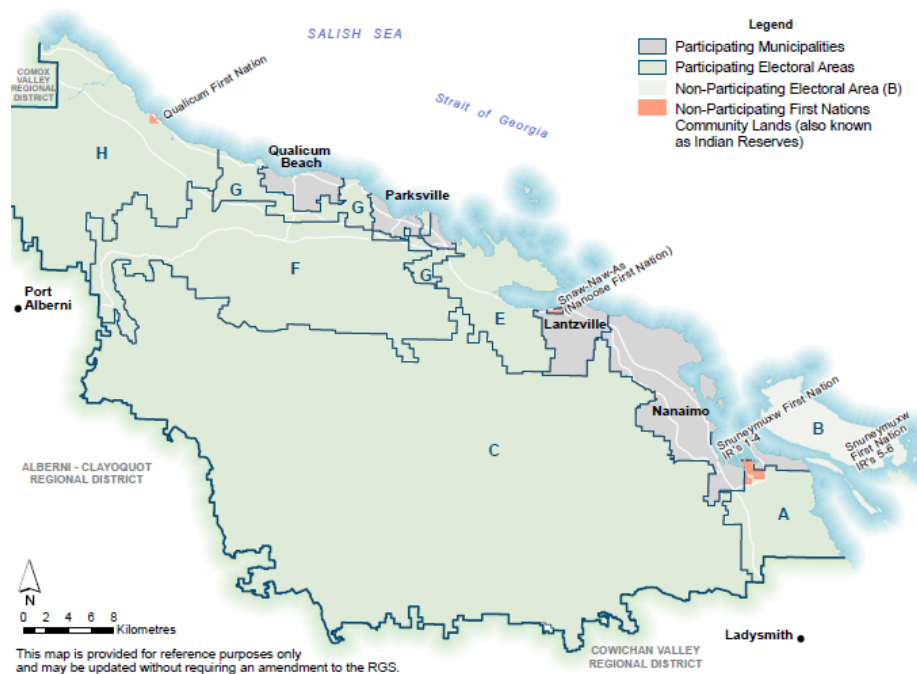
The federal government oversees and funds facilities like ports and airports. In contrast, the provincial government is responsible for transportation planning, education, agriculture, childcare, and health care. The RDN seeks collaboration with all levels of government and community organizations, fostering dialogues on housing, ports, airports, highways, and industry, while respecting each jurisdiction's authority.

## B | Context

### RDN Mandate

The RDN is a federation of municipalities and electoral areas established to provide regional and local services for the social, environmental, and economic well-being of residents.

The RDN Board is comprised of elected representatives from four incorporated municipalities and seven unincorporated electoral areas. Each local government has one representative, except the City of Nanaimo, which has eight members, and the City of Parksville, with two members.



The four member municipalities are the City of Nanaimo, the City of Parksville, the Town of Qualicum Beach, and the District of Lantzville.

The electoral areas are:

- **A:** Cedar, South Wellington, and Cassidy;
- **B:** Gabriola, Decourcy, and Mudge Islands;
- **C:** Extension, Nanaimo Lakes, East Wellington/Pleasant Valley;
- **E:** Nanoose Bay;
- **F:** Coombs, Hilliers, Errington;
- **G:** French Creek, San Pareil, Dashwood, Englishman River; and
- **H:** Bowser, Qualicum Bay, Horne Lake, Spider Lake.

Although Gabriola, Decourcy, and Mudge Islands in Area B are represented on the RDN Board, Shaping Our Future 2040 does not apply to Area B. Land use planning for Area B is administered by the Islands Trust according to the *Islands Trust Act*. Nevertheless, engaging and involving all regional partners is a valuable way to strengthen relationships between municipalities and electoral areas when dealing with important regional issues. These partnerships are made possible in varied ways, including Protocol Agreements.

The regional partners respectfully acknowledge that the Regional District and members' municipal boundaries lie within the Traditional Territory of the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, and Qualicum First Nations. Within these lands, there are six Reserve areas:

- Snuneymuxw First Nation (Nanaimo I.R. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6);
- Snaw-Naw-As (Nanoose First Nation); and
- Qualicum First Nation.

The regional partners recognize the Snuneymuxw Treaty of 1854, a trade and commerce treaty to forever and always preserve and protect Snuneymuxw villages, waters, enclosed fields, harvesting and gathering sites, and the right to hunt and fish. In addition to the six First Nation Reserve lands, the RDN may transfer lands to First Nations or corporations wholly owned by First Nations through Treaty Settlement processes. Shaping Our Future 2040 will be updated to reflect any new jurisdiction over land as determined by Treaty Implementation Agreements.

The regional partnership is committed to the important work of advancing Truth and Reconciliation through government-to-government relations. The partnership respectfully invites the development of Protocol Agreements with Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As, and Qualicum First Nations to strengthen positive and constructive relations with First Peoples.

## Regional Planning

Shaping Our Future 2040 is one of two coordinating documents that link land use plans with servicing plans (Figure 2). The RDN Board of Directors approved a four-year strategic plan that sets broad strategic goals for the region and identifies actions on how to achieve them. These two plans make sure that the region's local services are consistent with the regional goals to manage the impacts of growth and create complete, sustainable communities.

The RDN delivers a variety of regional services to electoral areas and member municipalities, such as sewage treatment, recreation, regional parks, solid waste disposal, and transit. The Regional District also provides specific local services to electoral areas, such as community planning, watershed protection, community recreation, community parks, and utilities. Member municipalities provide similar services within their jurisdictions.

Senior levels of government also provide the services and funding needed to achieve RDN’s growth management and sustainability objectives. For example, the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) is responsible for constructing and maintaining roadways within electoral areas. The RDN and MOTI must work collaboratively to maintain consistent design standards for roads and pedestrian facilities. These facilities support land use and mobility objectives for the region. They are particularly important in Rural Village Centres (RVCs) where growth is focused.

**Figure 2 | Summary of Relationship of the Strategy to Other Legislation, Plans and Bylaws**



## Regional Geography

The Regional District of Nanaimo covers an area of approximately 208,000 hectares. It is located on the central east coast of Vancouver Island, in the Georgia Strait-Puget Sound Basin, shown in Figure 3.

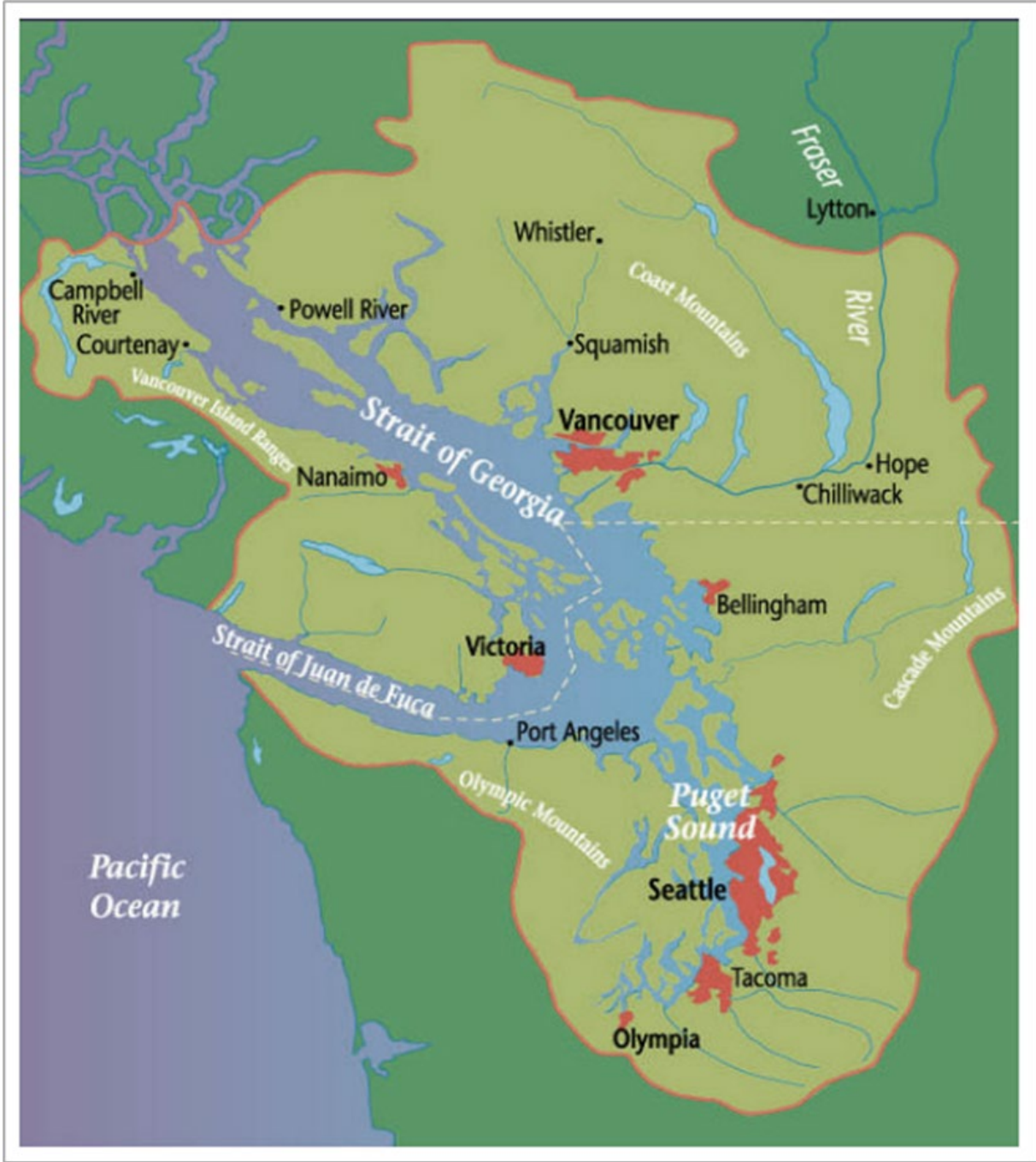
The Georgia Strait and Puget Sound areas form a natural bioregion known as the Salish Sea. This bioregion runs north to south along a coastal corridor. It stretches from Campbell River and Powell River to the north in British Columbia, through to Olympia, Washington State, in the south, and extends as far east as Hope, British Columbia, and the Cascade Mountain Range in Washington State.

An estimated 70 per cent of British Columbia’s population is clustered in the basin’s urban areas of Greater Vancouver and Greater Victoria. The balance is made up of smaller urban centres in the Lower Fraser Valley, on Vancouver Island, and along the Sunshine Coast, north of Vancouver.

Rare Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystems, which have been heavily impacted by human activity, are of great significance in the area. Land development due to population growth continues to threaten the remaining Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystems, and other ecosystems.

In 2000, approximately 853 square kilometers of land (41 per cent of the total RDN area) was recognized as the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Reserve (MABR) by the Man and Biosphere Program of the United Nations’ Education, Science, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The MABR includes Vancouver Island’s Mount Arrowsmith watershed and the adjacent marine areas. See Map 1 Appendix A for details.

Figure 3 | Georgia Strait-Puget Sound Basin



Source: Environment Canada, Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative

## Population Estimates and Projections

Projections for population, housing, and employment growth are included in this document to encourage regional collaboration for land use and infrastructure planning. Note: The predictions in Figure 4 do not indicate targets for growth in the region, electoral areas, or member municipalities.

Population and housing projections were developed using demographics and past migration patterns. This model was first shown in the RDN’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment in 2020 and updated after the release of the 2021 Census. Since the 2016 Census, more people have immigrated to the area. This trend is expected to continue as federal immigration targets are increased.

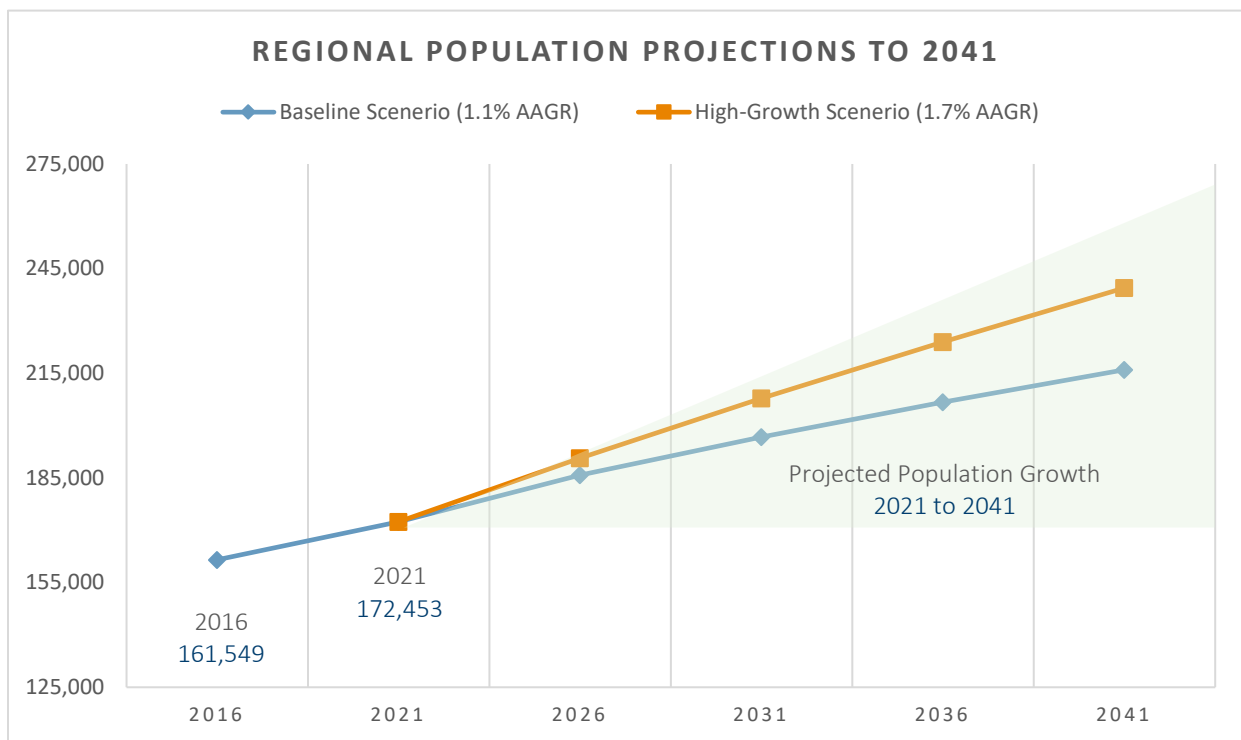
The following information uses baseline projections unless otherwise indicated. Additional data sources are also noted.

### Regional Profile

Historically, the region has grown slowly and steadily. This trend is expected to continue. Over the next 20 years, growth is projected to add about 43,555 new residents and give the RDN an estimated population of 216,008 by 2041. In 2021, the region’s population was estimated at 172,453 people. The forecasted estimate means a 25 per cent population increase in the RDN between 2021 and 2041, at an average projected increase in growth of 1.1 per cent per year.

Figure 4 illustrates the projected population change over time. The graph compares two population projections. One is the baseline scenario that is consistent with the RDN’s historical average annual growth rate of 1.1 per cent and the other is a high-growth scenario based on increasing growth to 1.7 per cent per year.

**Figure 4 | Regional Projected Population, 2021 to 2041**



Source: RDN Population, Housing and Employment Projections, 2023

## Population Growth Distribution

Data shows that approximately 74 per cent of the RDN population lives in urban areas, with 25 per cent living in rural areas and the remainder living on First Nation Reserve Lands<sup>1</sup>. To track how growth is spread across the regions, the population distribution trend is applied to the baseline populations at a sub-regional level, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 | Actual and Projected Population Distribution Between Urban and Rural Areas. 2021 to 2041

	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
Urban Areas	129,288	140,363	149,250	157,616	165,633
Electoral Areas	43,165	45,456	47,502	49,099	50,375
<b>Regional Total</b>	<b>172,453</b>	<b>185,819</b>	<b>196,752</b>	<b>206,715</b>	<b>216,008</b>

Source: RDN Population, Housing and Employment Projections, 2023

## Age Profile

According to the 2021 Census Population, the RDN has a significantly older age profile than the rest of the province. In 2021, the median age of RDN residents was 53 years compared to the median age of 43 for BC. A total of 25 per cent of the region's population is 65 years of age or older. The aging population is expected to increase to 33 per cent in five years and to 35 per cent of the total population by 2041.

## Projected Housing Demand

Projections about the age of RDN residents affect us now and in the future. These projections inform land use planning, services, employment, and housing demand in meeting the needs of the aging population. The demand for housing units in the region is projected to be an average of 1,201 units per year, as shown in Table 2. According to current census data, the projected figure of 1,201 units is being exceeded while the demand for housing continues.

In 2016, there were an estimated 68,600 private dwellings compared to 80,056 in 2021. This number amounts to an additional 11,456 dwellings, or 2,291 dwellings added annually over the past five years. While these numbers indicate a steady increase in the housing supply, they do not include economic influences such as income per household or interest rates.

Equally important for housing considerations is ensuring there is a range of options available so all residents can find adequate and suitable affordable housing. In response to the need for more housing, the predictions consider a gradual increase in apartment buildings (multi-unit dwellings) at a rate of 2.0 to 2.5 per cent per year. In comparison, the rate for houses (single-detached dwelling units) is expected to increase by 1.1 per cent per year.

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<sup>1</sup> Note, the Indigenous population is likely under reported in the population census record.

**Table 2 | Projected Population and Housing Demand, 2021 to 2041**

	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	Growth 2021-2041	Average Annual Change 2021-2041	Average Annual Growth Rate	Distribution of Net New Units
<b>Age (Years)</b>	<b>172,453</b>	<b>185,819</b>	<b>196,752</b>	<b>206,715</b>	<b>216,008</b>	<b>43,555</b>	<b>2,178</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	
0 to 14	21,367	22,254	22,286	22,639	23,220	1,853	93	0.4%	
15 to 24	15,529	16,432	18,353	19,035	19,366	3,837	192	1.1%	
25 to 34	18,541	18,613	17,807	18,685	20,780	2,239	112	0.6%	
35 to 44	19,728	23,056	24,370	24,486	23,940	4,212	211	1.0%	
45 to 54	19,536	20,894	24,410	27,710	29,249	9,713	486	2.0%	
55 to 64	27,128	25,452	24,265	25,619	29,259	2,130	107	0.4%	
65 to 74	29,142	31,457	31,595	30,097	29,286	144	7	0.0%	
75 to 84	15,720	21,100	25,300	27,122	27,324	11,604	580	2.8%	
85+	5,763	6,561	8,366	11,322	13,585	7,822	391	4.4%	
<b>Housing Unit Demand</b>	<b>74,885</b>	<b>82,165</b>	<b>88,214</b>	<b>93,848</b>	<b>98,907</b>	<b>24,022</b>	<b>1,201</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	
Single-Detached	50,730	53,899	57,503	60,565	63,169	12,439	622	1.1%	52%
Other Ground-Oriented	9,885	11,457	12,398	13,332	14,175	4,290	215	1.8%	18%
Apartment < 5 storeys	9,795	11,540	12,494	13,534	14,546	4,751	238	2.0%	20%
Apartment > 5 storeys	1,475	1,885	2,058	2,243	2,422	947	47	2.5%	4%
Movable	3,000	3,384	3,760	4,174	4,595	1,595	80	2.2%	7%

Source: RDN Population, Housing and Employment Projections, 2023

## Regional Context

Vancouver Island’s population is forecast to increase from an estimated 864,864 people in 2021 to about 1,110,441 people by 2041. This number represents a 28 per cent increase in population, at a projected average rate of 1.2 per cent per year.

**Table 3 | Regional Population Trends, Actual and Projected to 2041**

Vancouver Island/Coast	Total Population		Per cent of Change	Projected Population	Per cent of Change
	2016	2021		2041	
	799,400	868,946	9	1,110,441	28

Source: Statistics Canada Census and BC Statistics P.E.O.P.L.E, accessed October 2023

## Economic Trends

Projected employment in the RDN will increase from 72,665 jobs in 2021 to 94,570 jobs by 2041 (see Figure 4 and Table 4). Based on the total population, 35 per cent would be in their prime working years (age 25 to 54) in 2041. As current workers transition into retirement, the total number of 'job openings' may increase by 60,000 jobs by 2041.

**Table 4 | Regional Population, Dwelling Unit and Employment Projections to 2041**

	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041
Total Population	172,453	185,819	196,752	206,715	216,008
Total Dwelling Units	74,885	82,165	88,214	93,848	98,907
Total Employment	72,665	78,795	85,090	90,430	94,570

*Source: RDN Population, Housing and Employment Projections, 2023*

The region's projected employment growth rate is 1.3 per cent per year. Like national trends, the long-term transition from producing goods to providing services will continue. This is supported in part by an aging population and an increasing demand for health and personal services. The health sector is already the largest employer in the region and is projected to have the fastest growth in the future. The retail and education sectors' growth rates follow closely behind.

Most of the fastest-growing sectors have high educational requirements. These well-paid jobs include professional, scientific, business services, education, and health care. The regional economy may only face a labour supply shortage if there is strong growth in population or other adjustments are made. Adjustments could include reversing the trend of people working outside the region travelling for work or increasing the number of people joining the workforce. Table 5 provides employment projections by industry to 2041.

**Table 5 | Regional Employment Projections by Sector to 2041**

	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	Average Annual Growth 2021 - 2041
Agriculture and fishing	1,150	1,160	1,200	1,230	1,255	0.4%
Forestry and logging with support activities	595	555	530	525	520	-0.7%
Mining, and oil and gas extraction	220	270	280	280	285	1.3%
Utilities	330	355	380	400	420	1.2%
Construction	7,705	7,990	8,165	8,335	8,560	0.5%
Manufacturing	2,700	2,740	2,810	2,895	2,950	0.4%
Wholesale trade	1,560	1,690	1,810	1,935	2,035	1.3%
Retail trade	10,325	11,125	11,780	12,375	12,930	1.1%
Transportation and warehousing	3,555	3,700	3,955	4,210	4,420	1.1%
Finance, insurance, and real estate	3,800	4,100	4,370	4,630	4,860	1.2%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	5,285	5,295	5,935	6,575	7,095	1.5%
Business, building, and other support services	3,750	4,065	4,355	4,655	4,900	1.3%
Educational services	4,995	5,735	5,930	6,050	6,220	1.1%
Health care and social assistance	11,685	13,685	15,855	18,090	19,605	2.6%
Information, culture, and recreation	2,715	2,880	3,075	3,120	3,215	0.8%
Accommodation and food services	4,975	5,200	5,530	5,835	6,105	1.0%
Repair, personal, and non-profit services	3,510	3,780	4,010	4,215	4,405	1.1%
Public administration	3,810	4,165	4,350	4,495	4,610	1.0%
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>72,665</b>	<b>78,495</b>	<b>84,300</b>	<b>89,845</b>	<b>94,395</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

Source: RDN Population, Housing and Employment Projections, 2023

## C | Vision, Principles and Framework

Creating more vibrant and sustainable communities involves engaging individuals, interest groups, businesses, all levels of government, local First Nations, and others. A regional federation, like the RDN, is an enormous benefit in coordinating and developing options to address regional issues, such as growth management, climate impacts, housing, transit, etc.

*Shaping Our Future 2040* is based on the understanding that all decision-making and actions undertaken by the RDN must be founded on the principles of sustainability. At its core, sustainability means recognizing and respecting the connections between the environment, society, and economic activities. The ecosystem includes humankind and all other living beings and natural systems. In prosperous and vibrant communities, how we live, and work must include a deep respect for the environment and decisions that enhance the environment while reducing and eliminating harm to it.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that global climate change affects both nature and human systems more often and in more challenging ways. Working together and making informed decisions to achieve a shared vision for managing growth in the region and improving everyone's quality of life is not only possible but essential for the future we all share.

### Vision

The region will be recognized for the outstanding quality of its urban and rural life through commitments to protect the natural environment and minimize harm to life-sustaining ecological systems. The RDN and its member municipalities, working with its partner organizations, are committed to achieving the following:

- high standards of environmental protection to 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, more compact communities connected by sustainable transportation choices that offer a range of opportunities to live, work, play and learn;
- expansion and enhancement of mobility options to reduce automobile dependency;
- a strong and resilient economy based on agriculture, natural resource assets, tourism, and information technologies and services, such as health and education; and
- efficient, innovative servicing, infrastructure, and resource utilization.

## Sustainability Principles

Shaping Our Future 2040 is grounded in the principles of sustainability. These principles are woven through all RDN goals and policies to create a framework guiding the decisions for the region's future. This results in actions that are mutually supportive and moves the region toward a way of living that is more sustainable.

Shaping Our Future 2040 is based on the following sustainability principles:

- decisions and actions consider local and global consequences;
- interconnectedness and interdependence of natural and human systems are recognized and respected;
- healthy functioning of ecological systems is nurtured;
- qualities of place that create a sense of pride and community are cultivated;
- efficiency, including the concept of Zero Waste, is optimized;
- equity amongst all residents and across generations, including future generations, is ensured;
- decision-making processes are based on participation, collaboration, and cooperation with residents, governments, and organizations; and
- accountability for our decisions and actions.

## Growth Management Framework

Long-term growth and development in the region must adhere to the sustainability principles. The following planning tools are vital to achieving the vision and 11 goals of Shaping Our Future 2040:

- Land Use Designations;
- Growth Containment Boundaries (GCBs); and
- Shaping Our Future 2040 Policies.

## D | Land Use Designations

### Growth Containment Boundary (GCB)

The GCB is intended to contain most of the future industrial, institutional, commercial, and residential growth, except when located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Where the GCB overlaps with the ALR, non-agricultural land use is not permitted unless it is consistent with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* or otherwise approved by the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).

The GCB is intended to prevent urban sprawl. It encourages the development of compact, complete, and connected communities within municipalities and within the Rural Village Area of electoral areas. Development within GCBs is intended to be diverse. It may include lands intended as conservation areas to support ecosystems or other green space functions. Land located outside GCBs is primarily intended

for rural use because it requires only limited infrastructure and services to be viable.

Shaping Our Future 2040 contains the following five different regional land use designations:

1. Resource Lands and Open Space
2. Rural Residential
3. Urban Area
4. Rural Village Area
5. Industrial

The following intent statements for regional land use designations and GCBs should be read with the policies that apply to them. The boundaries of these regional designations are established from parcel-based maps maintained by the RDN. They are depicted in *Appendix A, Map 4: Land Use Designations*, and *Appendix B, Map of GCBs*.

### Resource Lands and Open Space

The 'Resource Lands and Open Space' land use designation includes land primarily intended for resource uses, such as agriculture, forestry, aggregate, and other resource development, and for land designated for long-term open space uses. This designation includes:

- land in the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR);
- Crown Land;
- land designated for resource management or resource use purposes, including forestry, in OCPs;
- recognized and ecologically sensitive conservation areas;
- provincials, regional and large community parks;
- cemeteries;
- existing public facilities outside of areas planned for mixed-use centre development;
- destination resorts; and
- golf courses.

Resource activities on land in this designation should be encouraged to avoid or reduce harm to the function of its natural ecosystems. The control and resource management of this land use designation is shared between landowners and local, provincial, and sometimes federal governments. Much of the forest land is privately owned. Forest companies, farmers, shellfish aquaculture (and their associated research facilities), and aggregate resource development companies have the right to operate on land within this designation in compliance with local, provincial, and federal government regulations.

No new parcels of land smaller than the size supported by the OCP in effect at the date of the adoption of this *Regional Growth Strategy* may be created on land in this designation.

### Rural Residential

Land within the rural setting primarily intended to accommodate rural residential development is designated as 'Rural.' This designation includes land already subdivided into relatively small parcels in a rural area. It also includes land where modest rural residential subdivision development could occur

without affecting the rural economy or environmental quality.

Except as provided, under Policy 5.13, the minimum parcel size of lands designated as Rural Residential will not be reduced below the minimum parcel size established by OCPs in place at the date of the adoption of Shaping Our Future 2040.

### Urban Area

Land located within the GCBs of a municipality is primarily intended to contain urban development. It is designated as an 'Urban Area.' Land in this designation should be serviced with community water and sewer systems. It should accommodate a wide range of urban land uses at typical urban densities or have commitments in place to service and develop the land to meet expected urban densities.

Urban Areas should contain public or privately owned open spaces such as protected natural areas; water and coastal features; public parks and gardens; playfields; golf courses; public greens and plazas; agricultural areas (including community allotment gardens); woodlots; and walkways, and bikeways landscaped with vegetation.

New development in Urban Area land designations should be primarily focused on mixed-use centres located adjacent to development and are designed to support commercial vitality as well as provide direct and convenient mobility options to access the centre.

An Urban Area should include one or more mixed-use centres. These centres are intended to be complete, compact, and connected neighbourhoods including places to live, work, learn, and play. Local jurisdictions may define and create a wide variety of mixed-use centres in Urban Areas to suit the community's best interests.

### Industrial

In electoral areas and in the Town of Qualicum Beach, land primarily intended for industrial use is designated as 'Industrial. This designation includes all land on which an OCP supports industrial uses. Most industrial lands in a municipality are included in the Urban Area designation as shown in *Appendix A, Map 4: Land Use Designations*.

Land designated as Industrial should only be used for industrial uses. Introducing commercial, residential, or other uses would reduce the inventory of the lands designated for industrial purposes.

Industrial uses on land designated as Industrial should be developed to minimize potential conflicts with surrounding non-industrial land uses and avoid damage to the natural environment.

### ALR Lands within Urban and Rural Village Areas

While most ALR lands are within the Resource Lands and Open Space land use designation, some ALR lands are within other land use designations. All ALR lands within Urban and Rural Village Areas are intended for agricultural use, except where urban land uses have already been established at the date of the adoption of Shaping Our Future 2040 and in accordance with the *ALC Act* or approved by the ALC. These lands are recognized as *ALR Lands within Urban and Rural Village Areas* on *Appendix A, Map 4*, and *Map 5*.

## E | Goals and Policies

Shaping Our Future 2040 is based on 11 goals and related policies to guide the region's growth towards a desired future. The goals and policies, combined with the mapping information delineating the GCBs and land use designations, provide a pathway for the RDN, member municipalities, and others to achieve this shared vision for sustainable growth.

Note: The numbering of the following goals and priorities intends no priority or ranking.

### Goals

1. **Climate Adaption and Mitigation** – To increase energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate the impacts of climate change in the region.
2. **Protect the Environment** – Protect and enhance the environment and avoid ecological damage related to human activity.
3. **Coordinate Land Use and Mobility** – To ensure land use patterns and mobility networks are mutually supportive and work together to foster complete communities.
4. **Community Building** – Establish distinctive activity centres and corridors within Growth Containment Boundaries to provide access to places to live, work, play, and learn.
5. **Enhance Rural Integrity** – Protect and strengthen the region's rural economy and lifestyle.
6. **Diverse and Affordable Housing Choices** – Support and facilitate appropriate, adequate, attainable, affordable, and adaptable housing.
7. **Enhance Economic Resiliency** – Support strategic economic development and link commercial and industrial strategies to the region's land use and rural and environmental protection priorities.
8. **Food System Resiliency** – Protect and enhance the capacity of the region to produce and process food.
9. **Pride of Place** – Celebrate the region's unique natural beauty, culture, history, and arts.
10. **Efficient Services** – Provide efficient, cost-effective services and infrastructure.
11. **Working Together** – Facilitate and foster cooperation among jurisdictions through an understanding of and commitment to growth management goals among all levels of government, the public, and key private and voluntary sector partners.

### Policies

The policies in this strategy are mutually supportive. They work together to manage growth and to promote and enhance the sustainability of the region's natural, social, and economic systems. Reference to a statute in this Bylaw refers to a statute of the Province of British Columbia unless otherwise indicated. A reference to any statute, regulation, bylaw, or other enactment refers to enactment as it may be amended or replaced from time to time. If any part of this Bylaw is held to be

invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalid part is severed, and the remainder continues to be valid.

## Goal 1 | Climate Adaption and Mitigation

*To increase energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impacts of climate change in the region.*

Climate change is intensifying the water cycle, changing weather patterns, and raising sea levels. It has increased global warming by 1.2 degrees Celsius. The impacts of these changes include more frequent extreme heat events, prolonged wildfire seasons, extended drought, intense rain events, coastal storm surge, erosion, and flooding. These impacts could potentially worsen within our lifetime.

While some impacts of climate change are already unavoidable, urgent climate action is required through mitigation, adaptation, and resilience strategies. Mitigation actions reduce the emissions responsible for increasing global temperatures. Adaptation actions help us prepare for significant climatic changes. Resiliency actions help predict and recover from severe climate-related impacts, as shown in Table 6.

As signatories to the *British Columbia Climate Action Charter*, the RDN, and its member municipalities play a critical role by supporting zero-emission design options and integrated approaches to support adaptation and mitigation. These approaches are demonstrated by the policies under Goal 1 and across other topic areas, such as Goal 2 – Protect the Environment, Goal 3 – Coordinating Land Use and Mobility, and Goal 10 – Efficient Services. Together, these policies are designed to incorporate best practices while promoting innovation to maximize co-benefits, including nature-based approaches and cost savings.

**Table 6 | Major Natural Hazards and Climate Impacts in the Region**

Natural Hazard	Climate-Related Impacts
Fire (wildfire & urban interface)	warmer temperatures, longer drought periods, reduced air quality
Overland flooding (relates to rainwater management)	includes all precipitation, snow melt falling on the land or water; increase rainwater resulting in pressures on both natural assets and built infrastructure (i.e., drainage systems reaching capacity)
Wind events	damage to the natural environment, especially trees and potentially property; localized and regional electrical outages, incl., disruption to all services
Drought	warmer temperatures, reduced river stream flow and water availability for a multitude of required uses
River, lake, stream flooding	temporary damage to natural environment; potential damage to private property; displacement of people, and disruption of roads and services.
Coastal flooding	storm surge events, coastal erosion further influenced by future change in sea level and atmospheric conditions
Landslide	vulnerability increased by extreme weather events, incl., rainfall, drought and loss or diminished vegetation and/or tree health
Mega Thrust earthquake	Earthquakes can trigger landslides or tsunamis, flooding of the coast or inland rivers and damage the natural and built environments

*Source: RDN Hazard Vulnerability Risk Assessment, September 2019*

## Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 1.1** Adopt provincial targets to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions to 40 per cent below 2007 levels by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Aim to exceed these targets to achieve net-zero emissions as soon as possible.
- 1.2** Encourage land use, infrastructure, and human settlement patterns that reduce fossil fuel and the associated emissions, create carbon storage opportunities, and improve connectivity.
- 1.3** Support and advocate, where feasible and appropriate, local energy recovery, renewable and clean energy generation, storage, and transmission systems.
- 1.4** Promote best practices in the development and implementation of corporate actions to reduce fossil fuel use and the associated emissions from vehicle operations. Potential strategies include:
  - a. prioritizing fuel-efficient vehicle fleets or alternative modes of transportation in day-to-day operations;
  - b. creating a 'Green Fleet Strategy' to schedule the turnover of internal combustion engine vehicles to zero emissions vehicles; and
  - c. replacing idling with solar photovoltaic (PV) generation and electricity storage options for vehicles used in local government activities.
- 1.5** Prepare for and respond to low- and zero-emissions technologies and other e-mobility infrastructure in collaboration with the province, member municipalities, and adjacent regional districts, where possible and appropriate. Potential strategies include:
  - a. participating in establishing a regional EV charging network;
  - b. ensuring all new buildings are EV charging infrastructure ready; and
  - c. developing a multi-unit residential building EV charging infrastructure retrofit strategy and supporting other low-carbon mobility options and technologies as they emerge.
- 1.6** Ensure OCP Bylaws recognize and support new buildings designed to be highly energy efficient and low-carbon emitting. Potential strategies include:
  - a. applying the BC Energy Step Code and Zero Carbon Step Code and any future iterations;
  - b. anticipating GHG performance standards in forthcoming iterations of the BC Building code; and
  - c. looking for opportunities to implement sustainable building design, such as building-level solar PV generation.
- 1.7** Ensure OCP Bylaws recognize and support updates to existing buildings to encourage high energy efficiency and low-carbon emissions and consider the following strategies:
  - a. coordinating the development and delivery of an energy efficiency retrofit program under which buildings are upgraded with improved envelope performance and efficient thermal

energy systems; and

- b. coordinating and promoting new and existing building energy efficiency incentive programs such as rebates or financing mechanisms (e.g., property-assessed clean energy – PACE).

- 1.8** Ensure the region’s approach to waste management is optimized by exploring opportunities to share resources, respect the entire lifecycle of materials, minimize greenhouse gas emissions associated with waste, and work towards diversion targets.
- 1.9** Maximize co-benefits by coordinating land use planning and future infrastructure investment efforts (including natural assets) to reduce the risk of climate change impacts (i.e., wildfires, extreme weather events, flooding, coastal storm surge, erosion, and sea level rise), and to reduce costs.
- 1.10** Collaborate in developing and sharing data and information on natural hazards, risks, and vulnerabilities in the region, which may include hazard mapping and risk assessments, down-scale climate projections, mitigation options, implementing strategies, and long-term funding mechanisms.
- 1.11** Advocate for the provincial and federal governments to improve local flood hazard management legislation and guidelines, including flood design standards, acquiring and sharing new data and information, and permanent funding for local and regional climate adaptation and resiliency planning.
- 1.12** Work with property owners, businesses, the provincial government, and First Nation communities to improve and support the essential role of forests in the lives and economy of the region by:
  - a. supporting ecological diversity and a healthy natural environment;
  - b. providing ecological services, i.e., natural stormwater management, erosion reduction, and water filtration;
  - c. storing carbon dioxide and moderating air temperature, i.e., reducing the urban heat island effect; and
  - d. spiritual and cultural enrichment.

## Goal 2 | Protect the Environment

*Protect and enhance the environment and minimize ecological damage from growth and development.*

The RDN lies within the Georgia Strait-Puget Sound Basin. It is one of the most ecologically diverse bioregions in the world. The area includes a variety of interconnected habitats ranging from marine, coastal, river, stream, lake, wetland, and estuary to fertile forest and mountainous sub-alpine ecosystems. Together, they support abundant terrestrial, aquatic, and marine life (Map 1).

A significant portion of the RDN lies within the Coastal Douglas Fir Zone. It is one of British Columbia’s rarest ecosystems. One-third of the RDN is designated as the *Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region* because it is recognized for its significant ecological value. Through collaborative efforts, the Biosphere Region promotes the conservation of biological and cultural diversity, as well as social and economic development.

The following policies set out a broad framework for coordinating efforts to protect, restore, and enhance ecosystem function and resources essential to the long-term sustainability of the region.

*The Region's goals and objectives relating to water for community needs and for ecosystem requirements are explained in more detail in the RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Action Plan 2020-2030.*

## **Policies**

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 2.1** Work in collaboration with property owners, developers, businesses, and appropriate provincial and federal agencies to protect the life-supporting qualities of fresh (surface and ground) and seawater from degradation and depletion. Key strategies include:
- a. protecting the function of watersheds, including the capacity of groundwater to recharge;
  - b. protecting the quality and quantity of groundwater and surface water resources;
  - c. undertaking watershed-based planning, integrated with the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, including wildlife corridors;
  - d. participation in Source Water Protection projects to protect sources of drinking water on a watershed basis;
  - e. promoting best management practices in water conservation, surface water/groundwater management, and ecosystem protection;
  - f. considering supply and sustainability of water resources in land and resource use decisions;
  - g. education and awareness programs;
  - h. preventing soil erosion;
  - i. treat rainwater as a resource by participating in integrated rainwater management projects;
  - j. preventing contamination and pollution from entering water systems;
  - k. preventing development in areas adjacent to water bodies from causing inappropriate interference with water flows and ecosystem habitats;
  - l. monitoring water quality and quantity; and
  - m. restoring damaged ecosystems.
- 2.2** Protect streams and streamside areas in accordance with applicable provincial and federal government legislation, such as the *Water Sustainability Act* and the Riparian Area Protection Regulation (RAPR).
- 2.3** Advocate for provincial and federal government support to assist local governments in developing and implementing measures to protect and enhance streams and streamside areas.

- 2.4** Advocate for provincial and federal government support to assist local governments in developing and implementing measures to reduce pollution from any source entering the ocean.
- 2.5** Promote measures to maintain good air quality in the region. Key strategies may include:
- increasing opportunities for walking, cycling, and taking transit;
  - reducing the need for automobile travel;
  - supporting and promoting the use, generation, and transmission of clean, renewable energy;
  - promoting the BC air quality data map – Air Quality Health Index; and
  - undertaking other initiatives to improve air quality.

Ideas for local initiatives to improve air quality:

- Share real time information available on the BC Air Quality Index Map
- Promote efficient wood-burning fireplaces
- Restrict backyard burning

- 2.6** Work with the federal and provincial governments to identify and protect open spaces that are representative of the region’s ecosystems. These spaces reflect the region’s character and form systems of interconnected areas and natural corridors capable of sustaining native plant and animal communities.
- 2.7** Recognize the importance of conservation areas and parks within the context of planning initiatives in protecting the long-term sustainability of the region’s ecosystems, including the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region.
- 2.8** Conserve and enhance biodiversity and ecological services by protecting ecologically important features and corridors, including floodplains, shorelines, intertidal areas, stream systems, aquifers, and urban forests.
- 2.9** Preserve and protect the coastal zone by promoting greater public awareness of the importance of coastal habitats and natural processes (e.g., geological and ecological diversity, climate impact mitigation, and cultural).
- 2.10** Minimize the environmental impacts of development by promoting and supporting options to lower the impact of construction, landscaping, and major renovations on the natural environment, such as sustainable site planning and programs like *Green Shores for Homes* for waterfront properties.
- 2.11** Prepare a complete bio-inventory of regionally significant, Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), species-at-risk, and the natural biodiversity of the region.
- 2.12** Encourage the provincial and federal governments to conduct or financially support field checks and updating of ESA information, data entry, and collection methods and to make their databases available and affordable.

- 2.13** Consider the ecological structure and function of land use decisions and require an environmental review for projects with the potential to negatively affect ESAs, the coastal zone, or environmental quality.
- 2.14** Adopt OCPs and Parks Plans that include strategies and policies to protect and conserve the natural environment, such as:
- a. prioritizing lands identified for protection;
  - b. identifying mechanisms to protect lands;
  - c. protecting connectivity corridors to ensure the safe movement of wildlife between critical habitat areas;
  - d. establishing appropriate buffers between ESAs and development;
  - e. establishing criteria to identify areas to improve accessibility and how public access is provided;
  - f. protecting riparian areas from run-off from farms, industrial areas, residential areas, and other forms of land use and development;
  - g. establishing education and awareness programs about the significance of ESAs to the health and vitality of the region; and
  - h. establishing Development Permit Areas to protect groundwater aquifers and environmentally sensitive areas from development impacts.
- 2.15** Discourage new development in natural hazard areas to the extent possible through regulations, policies, and plans, such as land use plans, hazard-specific Development Permit Areas, and managed retreat policies. Reduce and mitigate the risks associated with natural hazards where development in hazardous areas is unavoidable.
- 2.16** Work in collaboration with provincial and federal governments and property owners to ensure appropriate safeguards to protect property and life from natural hazards, such as wildfires, flooding, slope instability, soil erosion, coastal storm surge, and rising sea levels.
- 2.17** Continue to improve the coordination for environmental protection and its management in the region.

### Goal 3 | Coordinate Land Use and Mobility

*To support climate mitigation, ensure land use patterns, and transportation and mobility networks are connected to achieve more compact, complete, and accessible communities.*

Transportation and mobility networks connect communities, provide options for getting around, and influence travel patterns, land use, and future development. These networks ultimately form a feedback loop where mobility influences accessibility, land use development, and people’s engagement with the land. As the region grows and strives for a higher level of choice and efficiency, well-integrated approaches in land-use designing and operating transportation are needed. RDN’s integrated transportation and mobility network has a focus on:

- working regionally to improve networks within and between different jurisdictions;

- land use patterns designed to reduce the distance between home and work, school, commerce, and amenities;
- encouraging people to optimize their trips;
- sustainable mobility options, such as walking, cycling, transit, green vehicles, digital technologies, and;
- advocating for the provincial government to invest in green infrastructure, transportation system efficiency, and zero and low carbon energy sources.

The region serves as a trans-shipment hub for Vancouver Island. Land use decisions should consider locating businesses and industries where they can take advantage of the economic opportunities offered by transportation facilities and services (i.e., deep water harbours, seaports, ferry terminals, railways, airports, and highways).

Responsibility for land use decisions lies with local government authorities. At the same time, the transportation infrastructure design of roads, bridges, ferries, and airports rests with the provincial and federal governments. Collaboration between all levels of government is needed to finance and achieve the region’s vision for a sustainable transportation and mobility network.

- *Major Regional Transportation Facilities*
- *Highways 19, 19A, 4 & 4A;*
- *Duke Point Harbour and ferry terminal;*
- *Nanaimo Harbour and Departure Bay ferry terminal;*
- *French Creek Harbour, Deep Bay Harbour;*
- *Nanaimo Airport, Qualicum Beach Airport; and*
- *E & N Railway Corridor*

## Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 3.1** Prioritize land use patterns and transportation systems to achieve sustainable and efficient outcomes. Key strategies include:
- a. focusing the majority of growth within the GCB, consistent with Goal 4 – Community Building;
  - b. encouraging greater housing density, including multi-family options, within GCB consistent with Goal 4 – Community Building;
  - c. prioritizing transit-orientated development along transit corridors to support walkable, mix-use development and more affordable and connected communities;
  - d. ensuring regional and member municipal transit-related spending will support a sustainable land-use transportation system, and;
  - e. when road upgrades are required, work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to provide new or enhanced walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure.

- 3.2** Support and prioritize mixed-use development in areas of existing residential and commercial density to provide more jobs and services within walking and cycling distances.
- 3.3** Consider industrial development in locations that:
- a. facilitate the efficient movement of goods;
  - b. provide easy access and egress to major transportation routes and services (e.g., highway, airport, and rail);
  - c. are located within GCBs or designated Industrial Areas;
  - d. minimize environmental impacts (e.g., upon aquifers and other Environmentally Sensitive Areas);
  - e. hold potential as a multi-modal hub and/or distribution centre;
  - f. present appropriate site conditions (e.g., level site); and,
  - g. minimize the impact on the quality of life in residential areas.
- 3.5** Continue to support collaboration with regional partners, neighbouring regional districts, provincial ministries, BC Transit, and the federal government to improve inter-regional transportation opportunities, including inter-regional transit routes.
- 3.6** Advocate for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) to coordinate transportation planning and infrastructure projects with the RDN and adjacent regional districts. This work may include preparing a Central Island Transportation Strategy in support of the Strategy's goals.
- 3.7** Advocate for the provincial and federal governments to increase and permanently fund expanding, upgrading, and operating the regional transit system, municipal cycling, and pedestrian infrastructure and to develop mobility strategies.
- 3.8** Work with partners to collect and analyze regional travel data to better inform decision-making.
- 3.9** Use planning tools, like Development Permits Areas to incorporate active transportation infrastructure into new development.
- 3.10** Implement the recommended actions in the RDN Parks and Trails Strategy to connect people of all ages and abilities with nature and to enhance livability.
- 3.11** Work together to implement the RDN Transit Redevelopment Strategy to increase overall transit ridership in the region.
- 3.12** Adopt OCP policies recognizing the E&N Railway Corridor and the importance of regional collaborations in developing a future vision for the lands.

## Goal 4 | Community Building

*Create compact complete communities within distinctive centres of activity and provide easy access to places to live, work, play and learn.*

Protecting rural areas from urban sprawl relies on containing most of the growth within the GCBs. The region's GCBs encompass 7.6 per cent (15,751 hectares) of the total land base. Currently, 74 per cent of residents live within the Urban Centres. Over the next 20 years, the RDN will absorb approximately 54,063 more residents. Most of this growth is expected to occur within the existing GCBs and primarily within the municipal Urban Centres near major highway corridors. Creating strong, vibrant Urban Centres throughout the region generates numerous benefits, such as:

- increased service efficiency, such as transit, water, wastewater, and solid waste disposal;
- reduced consumption of land for development, resulting in fewer impacts on environmentally sensitive areas and water sources;
- more efficient use of schools, libraries, and recreation facilities; and
- enhanced feasibility of district energy systems in higher-density, mixed-use neighbourhoods.

As the population grows, so does the need to provide more mobility options (i.e., walking, rolling, cycling, and transit). Providing these options decreases the distance to jobs, goods, services, and amenities for all ages, abilities, and incomes. At the same time, planning for and providing more choices in the kinds of housing and ownership types now will help proactively manage future demand and support the overall vision for sustainable regional growth.

### **Rural Village Centres**

Village centres protect farmland and open spaces from the impacts of sprawl. They also attract and maintain the level of local goods and services available and provide a sense of place for visitors and residents. Shaping Our Future 2040 recognizes designated Rural Village Centres (RVCs) and provides for 'Local Service Centres.' The RDN Rural Village Study (2013) evaluated the potential for RVCs to evolve into compact, complete communities. The study ranked them from most likely to least likely to evolve into the desired mixed-use centres as follows:

- Cedar – most likely
- Bowser, Red Gap, Coombs and Fairwinds – likely
- Bellevue – Church Road, Cassidy, Errington, Dashwood, Deep Bay, Extension, Hilliers, Qualicum Bay and Dunsmuir – less likely
- Qualicum River Estates – least likely

Site-specific cost analyses consistently show water and wastewater infrastructure costs are the most significant factor preventing the RVCs from growing into complete communities. As a result, less feasible village centres could be recognized as 'Local Service Centres' instead. These smaller-scale service centres could still provide a limited range of goods and services and be supported through Shaping Our Future 2040 and local OCP policies.

## Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 4.1** Designate GCBs consistent with Shaping Our Future 2040 in their OCPs to define Urban Centres and RVCs. In cases where the two containment boundaries are inconsistent, the municipality will ensure its Official Community Plan:
  - a. recognizes the GCB as shown in Shaping Our Future 2040;
  - b. identifies an Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) that clearly defines its urban area; and
  - c. addresses the difference between the two containment boundaries in the Regional Context Statement.
- 4.2** Except for minor amendments, review and, if necessary, amend GCBs only every five years in conjunction with a review of the Shaping Our Future 2040 or at an interval specified in an OCP. The RDN and member municipalities agree that all potential GCB changes should be considered according to the process and minor amendment criteria set out in this Bylaw.
- 4.3** The proposed expansion of GCBs should be supported by a/an:
  - a. land inventory supply and demand analysis to assess the need for additional land to be included within the GCB and the impact the proposed expansion would have on the development of land inside GCBs located elsewhere in the region;
  - b. land use concept plan;
  - c. environmental impact assessment identifying environmentally sensitive areas;
  - d. surface water or hydro-geological study to assess the potable water supply and quality to support the proposed development of a community water system and the potential impacts of development on watershed function, including recharge capacities, surface runoff, and long-term water supply to existing development and undeveloped lands located within GCBs;
  - e. study to identify how wastewater disposal will be addressed and what the impacts will be on the capacities of existing treatment facilities;
  - f. assessment of community hazards and risks related to vulnerabilities to disasters and impacts to emergency services;
  - g. inventory of aggregate deposits within the proposed boundaries of the GCB;
  - h. transportation study to identify:
    - i. existing road traffic conditions;
    - ii. downstream impacts of additional traffic resulting from the proposed development; and
    - iii. demand for transit service.
- 4.4** Encourage a wide range of housing types and unit sizes within GCBs. Special consideration should be given to the housing needs of an aging population, those differently abled, and those with moderate or low incomes.

- 4.6** Plan and design mixed-use centres, designated in OCPs, to be pedestrian-oriented and transit-supportive, compact, complete neighbourhoods compatible in character with their rural village or urban context.
- 4.7** Areas designated Urban Area (Map 4) are to be fully serviced with community water and sewer systems (consistent with servicing areas identified in OCPs) and support the broadest range of urban land uses and densities.
- 4.8** Urban centres are the primary locations for growth and development in the region. They are only located within the GCBs of a municipality.
- 4.9** Urban centres include one or more mixed-use centres. They must be more compact, complete, and connected communities with places to live, work, learn, play, shop, and access services.
- 4.10** Nanaimo is identified as the Regional Urban Centre because it is more prominent in scale (i.e., population and geography), complexity, and function, distinct from the other Urban Centres and rural areas in the region.
- 4.11** RVCs are intended to be mixed-use centres (Policy 4.6). They should attract and support a range of services and amenities appropriate to the rural village context and scale, including:
  - a. local commercial development;
  - b. local community services and amenities (e.g., schools, community centres, libraries, etc.);
  - c. regular transit service, and;
  - d. demonstrating how RVC development contributes to the goals in Shaping Our Future 2040.
- 4.12** Existing RVCs considered to have limited potential to evolve into mixed-use centres may be recognized as ‘local service centres.’ An electoral area’s OCPs may accommodate small-scale development in local service centres provided it:
  - a. serves the needs of the local population;
  - b. will not directly compete with existing services and retail development with a broader customer base;
  - c. is in keeping with the rural character of the area and
  - d. can be serviced with adequate, long-term, on-site water and wastewater treatment facilities without harming the environment or degrading water sources.

## Goal 5 | Enhance Rural Integrity

*Protect and strengthen the region’s rural economy and functioning rural landscapes.*

Most of the region’s rural land use base is for agriculture, shellfish aquaculture, forestry, and other primary industries and activities conducted in rural areas. Complementary uses include rural residential, parks, open space, environmental protection, and recreation. These rural areas are characterized by large parcel sizes, on-site servicing (i.e., septic), limited transportation and mobility options, and a limited range of community services. Typically, rural residents travel to urban communities for work, school, and to access a broader

range of goods and services.

Large rural residential lots may potentially subdivide and create new lots with residential housing. Traditional rural subdivision patterns, sometimes characterized as ‘rural sprawl,’ with basic road layouts and regularly shaped square or rectangular lots, are inconsistent with effective growth management policies guided by sustainability principles. A concerted effort is needed for lands already zoned rural residential to direct more of the region’s growth inside GCBs and promote alternative approaches to subdivision and development, such as conservation design, clustering development, or density transfer. For example, appropriate housing siting can reduce ecological systems from being fragmented and allow for a buffer zone between incompatible land uses (e.g., rural residential and agriculture and forestry) while reducing land conflicts.

While the region’s economy is strong, changing economic conditions indicate a shift in resource-based industries, especially forestry. Some forestry businesses are diversifying to include land development. In contrast, shared ownership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses offers a new approach to management by incorporating First Nations’ values. These changes require a collaborative effort with the forestry sector, First Nations, the province, and local governments to ensure potential land use issues align with the Strategy’s goal to preserve and protect the environment and support economic sustainability for the region.

## **Policies**

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 5.1** Designate land for rural forms of land use and development on large land holdings, as shown on Map 4, into one of the following categories:
  - a. Resource Lands and Open Space; or
  - b. Rural Residential.
- 5.2** Minimum parcel size for lands designated Resource Lands and Open Space or Rural residential will not be decreased below the minimum size established in the relevant OCP that is in place at the time Shaping Our Future 2040 is adopted.
- 5.3** Requested changes of land use designations from Resource Lands and Open Space to Rural Residential will not be supported.
- 5.4** Lands designated as Resource Lands and Open Space primarily accommodate agricultural activities, forestry, aggregate mining, other primary industries, and recreational and/or environmental protection.
- 5.5** Encourage land uses compatible with agricultural, forestry, primary natural resource uses, and recreation, provided such uses enhance the economic viability of the primary uses and/or contribute to protecting environmentally sensitive lands. Such uses may include but are not limited to, nature-based tourism activities and development, small-scale food processing industries, and value-added wood product industries.
- 5.6** Work collaboratively with the forestry industry, First Nations, the provincial government, local governments, and others to identify ways to protect the land base for the long-term viability of

forest management activities.

- 5.7** Support small and large-scale aggregate resource development only on land designated as Resource Lands and Open Spaces by Shaping Our Future 2040 when designed to minimize impacts on watercourses, sensitive ecosystems, and adjacent land uses.
- 5.8** Permit small-scale aggregate removal only on lands designated as Rural Residential, Rural Village Centre, or Urban Area where aggregate removal is part of an approved land use development (i.e., building or structure).
- 5.9** Lands designated as Rural Residential are intended to accommodate residential development on larger parcels of land and may or may not be serviced with community water and sewer systems.
- 5.10** Include provisions in OCPs to prevent the designation of additional Rural Residential lands.
- 5.11** Notwithstanding policy 5.2, an OCP may allow for smaller minimum parcel sizes outside the GCB in the Rural Residential Land Use Designation provided:
  - a. there is no increase in the overall density, or;
  - b. there is no increase in the potential number of new lots and
  - c. the new parcels can be serviced with potable water and wastewater disposal systems provided the system(s) do not degrade the environment or water sources.

Potential options may include rezoning of land, clustering development, and/or density transfers. OCP policies that create opportunities to develop alternative forms of rural residential land shall require the conservation of residual lands in perpetuity for agricultural, forestry, environmental, or ecological purposes, or other public good purposes. Options for alternative forms of development shall be consistent with the sustainability principles and growth management policies in Shaping Our Future 2040.

- 5.12** New land use designations that abut a GCB should acknowledge the potential for conflict between rural and urban land uses. The requirements governing development in the new land use designation should include appropriate measures to minimize potential negative impacts on existing land uses and development located on the other side of the existing GCB.

## **Goal 6 | Diverse and Affordable Housing Choices**

*Support and facilitate provisions for appropriate, adequate, affordable, and adaptable housing.*

An adequate supply of diverse and affordable housing is essential to individual quality of life, community health, and economic and social well-being. Affordability depends on the availability of a range of housing types and ownership (market and non-market) supported by an integrated mobility network. Refer to Goal 3 – Coordinating Land Use and Mobility for more information.

Like other areas of British Columbia, the RDN is experiencing a challenging housing market. The market is driven by population and household increases, rental and ownership costs, historical disinvestment in publicly supported and rental-tenure housing, and a reliance on the private market.

The latest Regional Housing Needs report, completed in 2020, reported an aging and expanding population, an increased housing demand across the region, and a persistently challenging housing market. The cost of owning and renting is up, and median-income households, single-income households, and seniors are increasingly concerned about housing stability. Despite recent progress to meeting housing demand by Nanaimo and Parksville, the demand for affordable housing options has outpaced this progress.

The supply of affordable housing to accommodate the projected population increase is the responsibility of many partners, including the RDN, local, provincial, and federal levels of government, private enterprise, and the not-for-profit sector. A collaborative approach should build on the results and direction of the 2020 Regional Housing Needs Report, the RDN's 2010 Housing Action Plan, municipal action plans, and the work of community-based organizations and others throughout the region.

## Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 6.1** Periodically review and update Housing Action Plans or Strategies to respond to current and future housing needs as outlined in the 2020 Regional Housing Report and any future updates.
- 6.2** Adopt OCPs and Zoning Bylaws that define how they will work toward meeting the future housing needs of diverse households of all ages, abilities, and incomes. Potential strategies may include local plans, policies, and actions that:
  - a. increase the density and supply of diverse forms of housing, including duplex, triplex, multiplex, townhouses, and low-rise apartment buildings in designated Growth Centres;
  - b. promote housing tenure options, such as attainable homeownership, rental, co-op housing, rent-to-own models, and cohousing;
  - c. incentivize non-market and purpose-built rental developments in designated Growth Centres, including affordable and appropriate rental for low to moderate-income households and seniors;
  - d. remove barriers for non-market and supportive housing in designated Growth Centres; and
  - e. prioritize transit-orientated development to help reduce housing and transportation costs for households.
- 6.3** Review Zoning and Subdivision Bylaws every ten years to align them with Shaping Our Future 2040 and OCPs. Where appropriate, explore and adopt new zoning mechanisms to address housing affordability issues.
- 6.4** Explore partnership opportunities for locally funding affordable housing initiatives in the region.
- 6.5** Advocate for the provincial and federal governments to fund support for the development and update of Housing Strategies or Action Plans aligned with the Housing Needs Assessment report.

- 6.6 Advocate for the provincial and federal governments to fund support to implement Housing Action Plans or Strategies and the Shaping Our Future 2040's goals and policies relating to housing needs.
- 6.7 Assist regional partners in developing housing assessments, strategies, policies, or action plans by providing analysis of regional housing demographics and trends through specific projects and annual analysis through this Strategy's Monitoring Program. See Section H for more on Monitoring Progress Towards Goals.

## Goal 7 | Economic Resiliency

*Support strategic economic development and link commercial and industrial strategies to the region's land use, rural, and environmental protection priorities.*

The economy of the region is strong and expanding. It is moving from being a resource-based region to being more diversified. Three significant dynamics are influencing the economic well-being of the region:

- Growth in the service sector, especially health, education, and retail is mainly due to tourism and pre-retirees and retirees moving within the same region. Both economic drivers are sensitive to quality-of-life factors and the physical attractiveness of the region.
- Significant challenges in the natural resource sector, especially forestry and commercial fishery.
- Labour force shortages due to an aging population and the high living costs for low and moderate-income workers. Significant factors for the high cost of living are the cost of housing and the necessity to travel by car.

Recognizing and building on the economic strengths of the region is vital to a healthy economy. Potential strategies include:

- supporting growth in the agricultural, seafood, and forestry sectors that are consistent with the environmental goals of Shaping Our Future 2040;
- recognizing the significant economic benefits from aggregate mining and processing; and
- promoting and supporting service sector growth, especially health, social services, education, and technology.

Anticipating change and opportunities now and for the future is essential. The fastest-growing economic sectors are professional, scientific, business services, education, and health care. The increasing demand for recreation and the attraction to the region's natural features and facilities means it is well situated to expand tourism opportunities. Shifting toward a greener economy that includes technologies, services, and skills may provide new opportunities for innovation and low-carbon solutions. Key areas for potential future economic growth include:

- health care and social assistance;
- professional, scientific, and technical services;
- tourism (e.g., eco, agri, local), accommodation and food services;
- green economy contributors (e.g., food processing & services, green building design and construction, clean energy); and
- partnerships among First Nations businesses and economic development organizations.

Ensuring economic resiliency means safeguarding employment lands. Implementing Shaping Our Future 2040 will periodically assess the balance between land supply and demand (i.e., industrial, agricultural, retail, and commercial lands) to improve land use decisions, policies, and plans.

## **Policies**

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 7.1** Coordinate economic development initiatives in the region by working independently and with partners on strategic economic development projects and initiatives.
- 7.2** Support and encourage economic development activities most likely to result in a more vibrant and sustainable economy by working independently and with partners to:
  - a. update and provide information about economic development opportunities;
  - b. market the region as an attractive, business-friendly location for new businesses and industries;
  - c. identify opportunities to diversify the economy;
  - d. ensure sufficient land is available in appropriate locations for desirable economic development activity;
  - e. develop plans and agreements with the appropriate authorities to improve infrastructure and access to the region (e.g., communication networks, airports, ferries, servicing, ports) to attract desirable economic development; and
  - f. streamline regulatory and approval processes.
- 7.3** Protect the land and coastal waters from the impacts of urban and suburban growth and support the capacity of the region to generate agricultural, shellfish aquaculture, and other primary economic activities.
- 7.4** Adopt OCPs with provisions to encourage and support a broad range of industrial, commercial, and institutional development in appropriate locations.
- 7.5** Recognize the value of appropriate investment in public infrastructure and facilities in fostering economic growth and development.
- 7.6** Collaborate to periodically update a regional industrial land supply inventory to ensure the region remains competitive and attracts a suitable mix of industrial development.
- 7.7** Limit retail and office commercial development on lands intended for industrial development.
- 7.8** Encourage the development of renewable energy facilities.
- 7.9** Collaborate and plan how commercial (retail and office) land is used to ensure the supply, location, distribution, form, and type of commercial development is consistent with the sustainability and

growth management objectives in Shaping Our Future 2040 and supports the continued vitality of the sector.

- 7.10** Support and promote the development of the region’s health and education sectors.
- 7.11** Enhance the attractiveness of the region for tourism by:
- a. supporting the provision of new tourism facilities and developments to attract new visitors and increase the length of their stay; and
  - b. promoting the region as a destination for eco-tourism and sports tourism.
- 7.12** Support small-scale agri-tourism and aqua-tourism activities and development as secondary activities on lands actively used for agriculture, aquaculture, and related research and education.
- 7.13** Recognize the economic importance of aggregate mining and processing by:
- a. supporting aggregate resources where significant deposits exist in locations with minimal impact on environmentally sensitive areas, watercourses, and existing residential communities; and
  - b. limiting aggregate removal to lands designated Rural Residential, Rural Village Area, or Urban Area as part of the requirement of development approval (i.e., development of a new building or structure).
- 7.14** Recognize the importance of agriculture to the region’s economy by:
- a. supporting the provincially designated Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) where agriculture is the priority land use, farming is encouraged, and non-agricultural uses are restricted;
  - b. supporting the agricultural use of ALR lands within designated areas, including Urban Areas or Rural Village Areas, except in instances where urban land uses have already been established at the time Shaping Our Future 2040 is adopted and in accordance with the *ACL Act* or approved by the ALC;
  - c. recognizing that all ALR lands are subject to the administrative authority provided to the ALC under the *ALC Act*;
  - d. supporting further discussion, plans, or strategies to identify issues and needs that apply to the agricultural sector in the region;
  - e. encouraging regenerative and value-added agricultural activities, and
  - f. supporting opportunities for agricultural activity on non-ALR lands.
- 7.15** Recognize the importance of the seafood sector (i.e., processing, aquaculture, wild fisheries, research and development, and industry associations, etc.) to the economy by:
- a. supporting the management of the Shellfish Aquaculture leases by the provincial and federal governments;
  - b. collaborating with the provincial and federal governments to protect the shellfish aquaculture leases from wastewater or industrial runoff contamination; and
  - c. encouraging and supporting businesses (e.g., Centre for Seafood Innovation at Vancouver

Island University) and First Nations in launching new products and ventures in the seafood sector.

- 7.16** Collaborate with the provincial government and private forestry companies to develop strategies designed to enhance the long-term economic stability of the forestry sector by recognizing the role forestry lands play in:
- a. supporting the health of ecological systems;
  - b. removing GHG emissions from the atmosphere; and
  - c. providing recreational opportunities.
- 7.17** Encourage and support the development of the green economy (i.e., businesses using sustainable materials and practices to produce their product and/or services) in appropriate locations.
- 7.18** Adopt OCP policies supportive of eco-industrial networks and business parks in appropriate locations.

## Goal 8 | Food System Resiliency

*Protect and enhance the capacity of the region to adapt, produce, and process food and mitigate the impacts of disruptions.*

A food system is the sum of all farm-to-table activities, including planting, irrigating, harvesting, processing, waste management, distribution, preparation, marketing, and consumption. A viable and resilient local food system is critical to the sustainability and overall well-being of the region.

The strength of a food system depends on the land. When planned well, protecting farmland and shorelines for food production generates numerous economic, environmental, and social benefits. There were 345 farms reported in the region in 2021. The average age of the producers was 60.

The region has approximately 18,711 hectares of land in the provincially designated ALR, equaling 9 per cent of the RDN's total land base. The ALR was established by the province in 1973 and has reduced the loss of agricultural land in the region. Shaping Our Future 2040 recognizes the jurisdiction of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) over all ALR lands and strongly supports the retention and use of all ALR lands for agriculture.

Forage production remains the most common agricultural activity in the region, mainly providing food for horses. The sector includes beef cattle, other livestock, dairy, poultry and egg production, horticultural crops, and apiculture. Although agricultural producers are used to adjusting to changing conditions, climate change is a significant challenge for producers in all parts of BC. Central Vancouver Island climate projections indicate a longer and warmer growing season. Over time, this might permit higher yields and a greater diversity of crops. Delayed planting and harvesting may follow warmer and wetter winters and springs with an increased risk of extreme precipitation, floods, and pests.

Ensuring the long-term viability of agriculture requires leveraging new opportunities and coordinating efforts on the part of local, provincial, and federal authorities and producers/processors. Aligned with or in addition

to the agricultural policies in Goal 5 – Enhance Rural Integrity, and Goal 7 – Economic Resiliency, the RDN and member municipalities can work towards achieving a more resilient regional food system based on the following principles and policies:

- protect and preserve the agricultural land base;
- avoid land use conflicts between urban and rural uses;
- encourage economic opportunities across all aspects of the food system (land and sea);
- promote farm-level climate adaptation practices (e.g., water and pest management and soil enhancements); and
- support First Nations food interests and rights.

## Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 8.1** Develop and implement initiatives that align with the regional food system principles outlined under Goal 8 – Food System Resiliency.
- 8.2** Support the continued protection of the ALR land base and its priority use for agriculture through collective work with the provincial government and the ALC.
- 8.3** Preserve contiguous areas of agricultural land and discourage subdivision of agricultural land.
- 8.4** Reduce land use conflicts by minimizing the potential impacts that non-farm uses may have on farming operations by including supportive policies in OCPs.
- 8.5** Support the enhancement of regional and local food systems, including the seafood sector, from the beginning through the production, processing, distribution, and sale of locally harvested products.
- 8.6** Support the ongoing viability of farming operations by including provisions in OCPs to support permitted and complementary land uses and activities (e.g., agri-tourism).
- 8.7** Increase the viability of farm businesses by adopting OCPs provisions that recognize the economic importance of value-added and complementary land uses, including:
  - a. providing agricultural support services and infrastructure that are appropriately located;
  - b. reducing barriers to agricultural processing and related land uses;
  - c. allowing compatible, complementary land use activities (e.g., agri-tourism); and
  - d. allowing farmers’ markets, farm gate sales, and other outlets to sell local produce.
- 8.8** Increase awareness and opportunities for local food production in the region by encouraging urban agricultural initiatives, activities, and programs.
- 8.9** Improve access to markets for agricultural and seafood products by collaborating with provincial and federal governments, adjacent regional districts, producers, processors, and others.

- 8.10** Build capacity to mitigate climate change impacts (e.g., water storage, irrigation system efficiency, integrated pest management, social well-being, etc.) by supporting adaptive farm practices.
- 8.11** Prioritize soil health by supporting farmers in regenerative and ecological-based farm practices.
- 8.12** Work with and advocate for the provincial and federal governments to address climate change impacts identified in the *Vancouver Island BC Agriculture and Climate Change Regional Adaptation Strategy*.

## Goal 9 | Pride of Place

*Celebrate the region's unique beauty, culture, history, and arts.*

Outstanding natural beauty, rich cultural history, and thriving arts communities attract residents and visitors to the region. Pride of place celebrates our histories and cultures. It connects people and places to enhance the livability of the community and well-being for all.

Communities in the RDN will work together to foster the sense of pride residents experience and value. Actions may include:

- protection of natural environments;
- provision of an extensive network of regional and local trails and parks;
- attention and care of the built environment;
- promotion of public spaces and public art as focal points for the community;
- protection of cultural and historical resources;
- support for public artistic and cultural events; and
- actively engaging residents in dialogue and processes to help improve public spaces, physical and social recreation, and cultural and wellness pursuits.

## Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 9.1** Adopt OCPs with strategies and policies to:
  - a. preserve, enhance, and protect valued historical and cultural resources and sites;
  - b. contribute to the quality of life for people and businesses by enhancing natural and built amenities; and
  - c. collaborate on place-making initiatives with First Nations in celebration of their Traditional Territories and cultural values.
- 9.2** Adopt OCPs inclusive of strategies and policies to:
  - a. promote excellence in architectural and urban design
  - b. promote and support public artistic and cultural endeavours; and
  - c. reflect the identity, values, practices, and heritage of all residents.

## Goal 10 | Efficient Services

*Provide efficient, cost-effective services and infrastructure that contribute to compact and sustainable growth.*

A significant share of government financial resources is directed to maintaining aging infrastructure and continues to increase. Designing and building more compact, complete communities is one of the most effective ways to reduce infrastructure costs. Compact development reduces the need for new, expanded systems and lowers maintenance costs. Aging infrastructure also risks potential failure and non-compliance to environmental requirements. To better manage risk and engage in forward investment planning, the RDN and member municipalities should establish an asset management process and program that fully integrates with financial planning.

The RDN and member municipalities have a critical role in reducing GHG emissions and the projected impacts of climate change through the effective management of lands, buildings, water, waste, transit, and purchasing. Examples of existing adaptive measures include investing in alternative technologies, such as biomass as a renewable energy source, sustainable procurement, a long-term commitment to Zero Waste to divert 90 per cent of waste by 2029, and demonstrating leadership by adopting corporate sustainability policies, such as the Wood First Program.

Emergency services ensure public safety and maintain positive community relationships. The RDN and regional partners should continue modernizing its emergency planning by incorporating best practices. Practices should include the *United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, emphasizing prevention/mitigation, preparedness, and response. These efforts continue to improve community resiliency to disasters and promote a better understanding and collaboration between all levels of government, agencies, First Nations, and individuals.

Refer to the related policies under Goal 1 – Climate Adaptation and Mitigation – To increase energy efficiency, reduce the region’s greenhouse gas emissions, and mitigate impacts of climate change.

### Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 10.1** Improve safe and efficient access to essential utilities by determining if green infrastructure and emerging technologies can provide improvements and maximize future financial investments.
- 10.2** Prepare a strategy to provide community water and wastewater services for lands inside the RVCs that have the most potential to evolve into complete communities, as identified in the RDN Rural Village Study (2013).
- 10.3** Land designated as Rural Residential or Resource Lands and Open Space are not permitted to receive direct provisions for community water and/or wastewater. Notwithstanding this general rule, the Board may make exceptions under specific circumstances, which are limited to:
  - a. the connection to community water and/or wastewater services is the only viable means for preventing a public health or environmental contamination risk due to failing private

water and/or wastewater management, or

- b. for providing services to development in the electoral areas that are consistent with Policy 5.11 in this Bylaw.

**10.4** Where policy 10.3 applies, the provision for community water and/or wastewater services is subject to the following requirements:

- a. The property owner pays the full cost of the service provision, and
- b. The level of development does not increase beyond the level supported by this Bylaw, particularly Policy 5.2 (minimum parcel size) or Policy 5.11 (sustainable forms of rural subdivision).

**10.5** Only support new community water and wastewater systems that are publicly owned. New, privately owned community water and wastewater systems may be permitted if used for servicing developments supported by Policy 5.10 in this Bylaw.

**10.6** Protect the region's water resources and support better land use decisions through the RDN's Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program. This Program emphasizes a water-centric approach to planning and policy. It promotes ongoing community education to ensure sustainable water resources.

**10.7** Develop an asset management program and regularly update service area/departamental asset management plans aligned to current and projected populations to meet servicing needs (i.e., parks, solid waste disposal, liquid waste management, water provision, transit, and emergency planning).

**10.8** Collaborate with the member municipalities, applicable provincial government, and agencies in developing and updating Capital Plans to address infrastructure requirements and accommodate sustainable growth.

**10.9** Advocate for the provincial government to develop and update, as required, Capital Plans to meet the needs of the projected population for services delivered in the region by the province (e.g., roads, ferries, health care).

**10.10** OCP policies that accommodate for higher density development without community water and sewer may be permitted for:

- a. lands within designated rural growth areas known as RVCs and/or;
- b. development supported by Policy 5.11 (for Alternative Forms of Rural Development).

**10.11** Actively pursue the Zero Waste goal of long-term ethical, economical, efficient, and visionary solid waste management to guide people in changing to eliminate all discharges to land, water, or air as outlined in the *RDN's Solid Waste Management Plan*.

**10.12** Ensure all new high-density developments support full recycling, including food waste collection, and prohibit materials from entering the RDN landfill.

- 10.13** Recognize the benefit of integrating solid waste and wastewater disposal streams with private sector initiatives for resource recovery where appropriate. The *Solid Waste Management Plan* may co-locate solid waste facilities with compatible industries to promote partnerships in resource recovery from solid waste disposal.
- 10.14** Recognize the potential impact of solid waste disposal and processing on adjacent land uses and locate future recycling, composting, and residual waste disposal sites away from residential communities and the natural environment to minimize impact.
- 10.15** Consider the potential for aggregate mining sites to be reclaimed for future solid waste disposal sites, if necessary.
- 10.16** Support and promote energy-efficient subdivision, site, and building design and construction.
- 10.17** Support and promote clean energy technologies to support growth and development (e.g., district-energy systems, geothermal, solar, wind).
- 10.18** Undertake integrated, coordinated emergency preparedness planning on a regional basis, including strategic planning for fire protection services and natural hazard management.

## Goal 11 | Cooperation Among Jurisdictions

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

Implementing *Shaping Our Future 2040* requires collaboration with all levels of government, especially between regional, local, and provincial authorities. Commitments to implement the plan at the local level will be expressed in the Regional Context Statements included in each region's OCPs and through the adoption of other policies and strategies.

Subject expertise and funding from the province are crucial to achieving the goals of this plan. Recognizing that regional growth planning and land development occurs on Traditional Territories of local First Nations governments and that the RDN commits to meaningful engagement supports these goals. The RDN also recognizes the significant contributions made by various private and voluntary sector organizations. The RDN will continue this collaborative work to achieve the strategic goals.

### Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

- 11.1** Every municipality and electoral area in the region must make provisions in their OCP and all necessary land use and other regulations to implement *Shaping Our Future 2040* fully.
- 11.2** Recognize the key and often primary roles private and voluntary sectors play in development, tourism, and environmental protection. Consider partnerships and strategic alliances with groups

and organizations prepared to invest in and/or support the goals and policies of Shaping Our Future 2040.

- 11.3** Recognize the importance of coordinating land use planning with local First Nations. The regional partners wish to engage with and nurture meaningful relationships by:
- a. involving First Nations in its planning processes to invite and create opportunities for participation in growth management initiatives;
  - b. striving to listen and learn about what matters to Indigenous peoples to build mutual appreciation and understanding of land use planning priorities and interests;
  - c. incorporating Indigenous knowledge and methods when supported by First Nations;
  - d. considering amendments to Shaping Our Future 2040, following the settlement of First Nation Treaties and other related agreements, to harmonize plans for regional land use;
  - e. inviting local First Nations to provide comments and/or formally accept Shaping Our Future 2040; and
  - f. respectfully encourage community-to-community meetings and invite the development of Protocol Agreements.

See Section A, *Working Together*, and Section F, *Regional Context* in this Bylaw for more .

## F | Regional Growth Strategy Implementation

Working together on projects and studies ensures a coordinated approach to addressing regional issues to leverage opportunities, such as the cost advantages for economies of scale and avoiding duplication of efforts and/or redundancies. Implementing projects aligned with Shaping Our Future 2040's goals will be subject to available funding, departmental resources, and work plans. While some projects may be funded solely through the RDN's *Regional Growth Management Service*, with no additional costs to member municipalities, others may require financial contributions from provincial and federal governments and participating member municipalities.

### Communication and Engagement

Communities are constantly changing, and so is how people get involved and share information. Through the implementation of Shaping Our Future 2040, the RDN commits to providing the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in learning about the role and purpose of Shaping Our Future 2040 and to encourage residents to participate in local government processes.

#### 12.1 Policies

The RDN and member municipalities agree to the following:

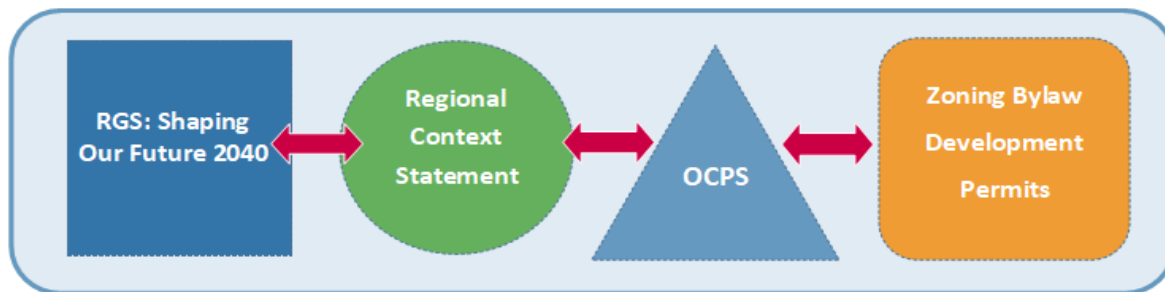
- a. Ensure decisions relating to Shaping Our Future 2040 are transparent and clearly communicated to the public.

- b. Ensure proactive communications, using a range of formats, to convey:
  - i. the role and purpose of Shaping Our Future 2040;
  - ii. how Shaping Our Future 2040 relates to other planning documents and processes;
  - iii. how decisions are made; and
  - iv. how implementation occurs, and which government agencies are responsible.

## Regional Context Statements

A Regional Context Statement identifies the relationship between an OCP, and the matters included in Shaping Our Future 2040. If applicable, it also includes how an OCP is made more consistent with the Strategy over time. Section 446 of the *Local Government Act* outlines the procedure and requirements to ensure consistency between Shaping Our Future 2040 and an OCP. Each member jurisdiction prepares an updated OCP and Regional Context Statement within two years of Shaping Our Future 2040 being adopted or with a Type 1 Amendment. Member municipalities must submit their Regional Context Statements to the Regional District Board of Directors for acceptance.

**Figure 5 | Relationship Between the Strategy and Regional Context Statement**



## Implementation Agreements

Under section 451 of the *Local Government Act*, a local government may enter into agreements to coordinate activities to implement Shaping Our Future 2040. Implementation Agreements detail how aspects of this Strategy are achieved between a regional district and other levels of government, their agencies, Indigenous governments, or others.

The main emphasis is on provincial ministries and agencies, like the Agricultural Land Commission, to encourage coordinated actions by local and provincial governments. These agreements are the primary method for the regional district and the provincial government to commit to actions outlined in Shaping Our Future 2040.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Section 452 of the *Local Government Act* requires a regional district with an adopted regional growth strategy bylaw to establish a monitoring program on implementation to help measure the progress made

toward its objectives and actions. It also directs the preparation of an annual report to evaluate and publicly communicate the progress made towards achieving the RGS goals. The RDN annual report is produced in collaboration with the member municipalities.

The RDN and member municipalities established a comprehensive Monitoring & Evaluation Program in 2018. Key performance indicators are central to the program's ability to gauge progress toward a specific goal or objective. Indicators are assigned measurable targets showing the level of effort needed to achieve the desired outcome (e.g., the desired percentage of increase in transit ridership over an identified period of time). See Section H for more on Monitoring Progress Towards Goals.

## 12.2 Policies

The RDN will work in partnership with the member municipalities, provincial and federal governments, and others to:

- a. Develop Regional Context Statements within the Official Community Plans (OCPs) of member municipalities within two years of adopting Shaping Our Future 2040 to outline the relationship between the OCPs and the goals and policies of this bylaw.
- b. Consider the need to review or amend Shaping Our Future 2040 at least once every five years.
- c. Maintain the Monitoring Program and prepare an annual report on the implementation and progress towards achieving Shaping Our Future 2040 goals.
- d. Consider the use of Implementation Agreements to coordinate provincial actions to advance Shaping Our Future 2040 goals and policies.
- e. Establish a Shaping Our Future 2040 Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from each regional partner, to develop implementation actions and report on progress.
- f. Maintain a Geographic Information System (GIS) digital database with up-to-date regional spatial information.

## G | Amendment Process

Section 437 of the *Local Government Act* provides for amending Shaping Our Future 2040 in one of two ways: Type 1, a regular amendment, or Type 2, a minor amendment process. The process to initiate amendments, regardless of the amendment process, may only proceed through a resolution supported by the Regional District Board of Directors. Municipalities and electoral area directors are encouraged to discuss the rationale for an amendment with the regional district before submitting a request.

### 13.0 | Criteria and Procedure for Type 1 Regular Amendment

Shaping Our Future 2040 amendment is considered a Type 1 regular amendment when the proposed changes include one or more of the following:

- a. addition or deletion of Shaping Our Future 2040 goals and/or policies;
- b. amendments to the minor amendment criteria and procedures as specified in Shaping Our Future 2040;
- c. changes to the land use boundaries; and/or
- d. matters specified in section 437(4) of the *Local Government Act*.

All regular amendments to the Shaping Our Future 2040 must be accepted by all affected local governments in accordance with the provisions of section 436 of the *Local Government Act* and must follow the same process required to adopt a land use Bylaw.

## 14.0| Criteria and Procedure for Type 2 Minor Amendment

A RDN Board of Directors resolution determines if an amendment request can proceed as a Type 2 minor amendment. It must comply with one or more of the following criteria:

- a. amendment requests resulting from an entire electoral area or municipal OCP review and bylaw adoption process;
- b. text and map amendments are required to correct errors or to update information as more up-to-date or accurate information becomes available;
- c. amendments to population and employment projections, tables, figures, grammar, or numbering that does not alter the intent of the Shaping Our Future 2040; and/or
- d. changes to the Monitoring Program outlined in Shaping Our Future 2040, Section H.

## 15.0| Process for Approving Type 2 Minor Amendments

- a. Should a local government wish to request an amendment, the request must be forwarded to the RDN Board of Directors as a resolution of the municipal council. The submission must be accompanied by a report explaining the rationale and planning justification. All proposed amendments will be presented to the Board to determine if the request will proceed as a minor or regular amendment and determine the need for a public hearing.
- b. On receipt of the amendment request through a resolution, RDN staff will prepare a report and make a recommendation(s) for the RDN Board's consideration and decision.
- c. A land use, development proposal, or text amendment is assessed based on the criteria for minor amendments. The RDN Board of Directors may resolve, with a two-thirds majority vote by attending Board members, to treat an amendment application as a minor amendment. Where the Board resolves to proceed with a minor amendment application, the Board will:
  - i. Determine the appropriate form of engagement required in conjunction with the proposed minor amendment;
  - ii. Give 45 days written notice to each affected local government, including notice that the proposed amendment has been deemed a minor amendment. The notice shall include a summary of the proposed amendment, staff reports, other relevant supporting

- documentation, and the date, time, and place of the board meeting where the amending bylaw is to be considered for first reading; and
- iii. Consider the written comments provided by the affected local governments before giving first reading to the proposed amendment bylaw:
  - d. The bylaw may be adopted without a public hearing after second reading if the amending bylaw receives an affirmative vote of all Board members attending the meeting.
  - e. Consider the third reading and determine whether to adopt the amending bylaw.
  - f. Minor amendment bylaws shall be adopted in accordance with the procedures that apply to the adopted regional growth strategy under the *Local Government Act*.

## H | Monitoring Progress Towards Goals

**Table 7 | Goals and Performance Measure**

Goal 1: Climate Adaptation and Mitigation		
Indicator	Target	
Total community greenhouse gas emissions	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 2007 levels by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050	
Total corporate greenhouse emissions		
Tonnes of carbon storage in natural areas, incl. rural, conservation, recreation, and agricultural land designations		Increase tonnes of stored carbon related to natural areas
Level of municipal & electoral area adoption of Step Code		Increase the number of Step Code related Building Permits
Goal 2: Protect the Environment		
Indicator	Target	
Total average water consumption (m <sup>3</sup> )	Decrease per capita consumption of potable water	
Surface water quality (Community Watershed Monitoring)		Improve surface water quality
Amount of land in protected areas		Increase amount of land in protected areas
Goal 3: Coordinate Land Use and Mobility		
Indicator	Target	
Number of households within 400 m of employment lands, shopping, schools, transit, and recreation facilities	Increase the number of households living within close proximity (400 m) to places to work, play, learn and shop	

Per capita transit use	Increase per capita transit use
<b>Goal 4: Community Building</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Percentage of new dwelling units inside and outside the GCB	Increase the proportion of new dwellings living within the GCB
Density of dwelling units inside and outside the GCB	Increase the density of dwelling units within the GCB
Diversity of land use (ratio) inside the GCB	Increase the land use diversity inside the GCB
<b>Goal 5: Enhance Rural Integrity</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
The number of new lots created through subdivision inside and outside the GCB	Increase the proportion of new lots inside the GCB
Percentage of agricultural lands being actively farmed	Increase the percentage of lands actively farmed
The amount of land classified as Private Managed Forest Land	Increase the amount of land available for natural resource uses (farm, forestry, outdoor recreation)
<b>Goal 6: Diverse and Affordable Housing Choices</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
The total number of affordable rental units available to households with incomes below 50% of the median income for the region	Increase the proportion of households living in housing that meets their needs (appropriate, adequate, adaptable, sustainable, affordable, and attainable)
The portion of units in each housing type inside the Growth Containment Boundary (diversity of housing types in GCB)	Increase the portion of multi-unit dwellings inside the GCB
Median sales price by housing type	Cost stability or decrease relative to inflation and median income
Number of waiting applications for subsidized BC Housing units	Decrease the number of waitlisted applications for subsidized housing units
<b>Goal 7: Economic Resiliency</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
[Unemployment] Employment rate and labour participation rate	Maintain an unemployment rate between 3% and 6% and increase the labour force participation rate
<b>Goal 8: Food System Resiliency</b>	

Indicator	Target
Same as Goal 5: Percentage of agricultural lands being actively farmed	
<b>Goal 9: Pride of Place</b>	
Indicator	Target
The amount of publicly owned land designated for parks and community use (including land in protected areas, community-use parks, and recreational facilities)	Increase the amount of land for parks and recreational facilities
Per capita length of maintained public trails (including trails, paths, and laneways)	Increase the per capita length of maintained trails
<b>Goal 10: Efficient Services</b>	
Indicator	Target
Per capita waste disposal	Decrease the per capita amount of waste going to the landfill (amount of waste sent to the landfill per person) below 350 kg per person
Per capita cost to provide wastewater treatment	Stabilize per capita cost of providing wastewater treatment to 2022 levels
Per capita length of roads (length of paved roads per person)	Decrease the per capita length of roads

## I | Glossary

### **Affordable Housing**

In British Columbia, housing is generally considered affordable when housing costs total 30 per cent or less of a household's income before expenses are deducted.

### **Agricultural Lands**

Agricultural lands are 'the land base upon which agriculture is recognized' as the priority use. Farming activities are encouraged, and non-farm uses are restricted. Although agricultural land is primarily required to produce food for human and animal consumption, agricultural activities can also include the growing of plants for fibre and fuels (including wood), and for other organically derived products (pharmaceuticals, etc.) and agri-tourism activities secondary and compatible with the agriculture activities.

Note: The use of the term 'Agricultural Lands' includes but is not limited to lands designated as Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) by the ALC. The use of the *ALC Act* refers to the Agricultural Land Commission Act.

**Capital Plan**

A capital plan outlines the method of getting the financial resources needed to provide a service or infrastructure. It is combined with the RDN Financial Plan.

**Climate Adaptation**

Climate adaptation means making changes for today and the future in how we manage our ecological, social, and economic systems to deal with the effects of climate change. Climate adaptation reduces harm and can provide new opportunities.

**Climate Mitigation**

Mitigation means acting to lower emissions and improve the absorption of carbon. These actions include policies, incentives, and investments that cover various sectors, promoting more renewable energy, adopting new technologies like electric vehicles (EVs), and changing our practices or behaviours.

**Community Sewer Service**

Community sewer service is a shared way of managing wastewater. It involves a treatment plant, recycling the treated liquid or releasing it responsibly into a body of water or the ground, and dealing with solid residues in an environmentally approved way.

**Community Water Service**

Community water service is a shared way of providing domestic water. It usually includes a water source (ground or surface water), facilities for treatment and/or disinfection, and storage and distribution facilities.

**Electoral Areas**

Electoral areas are geographic zones within a regional district represented by elected officials. These areas may include rural or unincorporated areas and are distinct from incorporated municipalities within the region.

**Goal**

A goal is an objective or desired result that a person or an organization aims to achieve. It represents a purpose to work toward, providing direction and motivation for efforts and actions. Goals often outline specific achievements or outcomes within a defined timeframe.

**Growth Containment Boundary (GCBs)**

GCBs are geographic lines on land use maps used to define where growth is meant to happen. GCBs help control urban sprawl and promote the development of compact, complete communities within municipalities or the Rural Village Centres (RVCs) of electoral areas. Land outside the GCB lines is mainly for rural purposes and has limited local government infrastructure and services.

**Housing Diversity**

To meet the various housing needs of residents, communities should aim to have a wide variety of different types of housing, including market and non-market housing (for sale and those not for sale), like single houses, semi-detached houses, duplexes, townhouses, and apartments.

**Implementation Agreement**

An implementation agreement is one way the regional district and the provincial government agree to act on Shaping Our Future 2040. The *Local Government Act* empowers local governments to make these agreements with various authorities, like provincial governments and their agencies, First Nations, school district boards, and other local authorities.

### ***Intergovernmental Advisory Committee***

The Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) provides a forum of government representatives from member municipalities, provincial agencies, other organizations, and local First Nations identified by the Province to help coordinate actions, policies, and programs related to the Strategy.

### ***Jurisdiction***

Jurisdiction is the official authority or power of a government or legal entity to make and enforce decisions within a specific area or subject matter. It sets the limits of control and responsibility for that entity.

### ***Land Use Regulation***

Land use regulations are rules within bylaws that define how land is used. These regulations encompass bylaws, such as zoning, subdivision, sign, and noise bylaws.

### ***Member Municipality***

Four municipalities are members of the Regional District of Nanaimo. They are the City of Nanaimo, the City of Parksville, the Town of Qualicum Beach, and the District of Lantzville.

### ***Mixed-use Centres***

A mixed-use centre has space for living, working, learning, playing, learning, and shopping within a walkable area.

### ***Official Community Plan (OCP)***

Under section 471 of the *Local Government Act*, an official community plan is a ‘statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government.’

### ***Regional Context Statement***

Division 5 of the *Local Government Act* sets out the requirements for regional context statements. A regional context statement must specifically identify the relationship between each member municipality’s OCP and the matters in Shaping Our Future 2040. If applicable, defining how the OCP will be consistent with the Strategy over time. Member municipalities must submit the regional context statement to the Regional District Board of Directors for acceptance.

### ***Regional Growth Management Function***

Unlike municipalities, regional districts can only provide services as authorized by bylaws, which determine the purpose and scope of each function or service area.

### ***Regional Growth Strategy (Shaping Our Future 2040)***

Under Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*, a regional agreement that includes a vision, goals, policies, and actions outlines a commitment between the regional district and affected municipalities. This agreement promotes ‘human settlement that is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and efficiently uses public facilities and services, land, and other resources’ (*Local Government Act*, section 428 (1)). This regional growth strategy is entitled Shaping Our Future 2040. It is referenced throughout this Bylaw as ‘Shaping Our Future 2040’ or ‘The Strategy.’

***Regional Growth Strategy Policy: Shaping Our Future 2040***

Statements within the policy document outline actions needed to achieve an objective or goal. The statements guide Official Community Plans (OCPs) and other land use decisions and actions.

***Regional Urban Centre (RUC)***

A Regional Urban Centre is a member municipality recognized as a major urban centre. A RUC hosts the region's most diverse mix of land uses and the highest population densities. See Section D for more on Land Use Designations.

***Rural Village Centre (RVC)***

Rural Village Centres are communities in electoral areas defined by GCBs and designed to support a specific range of land uses and development as specified in the official community plan of the electoral area. See Section D for more on Land Use Designations.

***Urban Centre***

Urban Centres host a diverse mix of land uses, including medium to high-density development within a municipality. See Section D for more on Land Use Designations.

***Vision Statement***

A vision statement is the aspirations for the future. Shaping Our Future 2040 describes the desired future for the RDN. The vision shapes sustainability goals and guides planning, policies, and actions. See Section C for more on Vision and Sustainability Principles.

## J | Resources/References

The creation of Shaping Our Future 2040 considers, and when suitable, includes information from various studies, plans, and strategies. Key documents are listed below and are available on the RDN website at [www.rdn.bc.ca](http://www.rdn.bc.ca) or by request.

### List of Resources:

- i. RDN Agriculture Area Plan, 2012
- ii. RDN Industrial Land Supply and Demand Study, 2013
- iii. RDN Rural Village Centre Study, 2013
- iv. RDN Liquid Waste Management Plan, 2014
- v. RDN Hazard Vulnerability Risk Assessment, 2019
- vi. RDN Solid Waste Plan, 2020
- vii. Vancouver Island Agriculture Adaptation Strategy, 2020
- viii. RDN Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2020
- ix. RDN Sustainable Site Planning Guide, 2021
- x. RDN Social Needs Assessment and Strategy, 2021
- xi. RDN Transit Redevelopment Strategy, 2022
- xii. RDN Parks and Train Strategy, 2022
- xiii. RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Action Plan 2.0 (2020 – 2030)
- xiv. RGS Annual Reports, various years & Five-year Review
- xv. Stewardship Centre for BC, Green Shores for Homes Program [www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca](http://www.stewardshipcentrebc.ca)

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## Contact Information

Regional District of Nanaimo

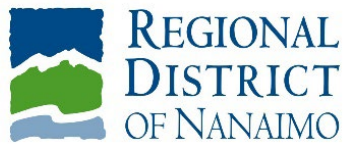
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**Separate Page (not part of document - bylaw)**

Revision History				
Revision #	Date	Status	Revision	Author
1	Feb 28, 2023	draft		JS
2	May 10, 2023	draft	context	JS
3	October 10, 2023	draft	To include IAC comments, updated projections data & maps.	JS
4	November 10, 2023	draft	Text edit review	KH
5	December 14, 2023	proposed	Proposed text edits – accessibility standards	VE
6	January 3, 2024	proposed	Incorporate suggested text edits	JS
7	January 9, 2024	proposed	Incorporate suggested text edits	VE
8	January 19	proposed	Response to suggested edits	JS