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**REPORT TO PLANNING AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2021**

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**SUBJECT**    Regional Growth Strategy Indicator Report

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To receive the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Indicator Report.

**BACKGROUND**

The *Local Government Act (LGA)* section 452 sets out requirements for regional districts with adopted regional growth strategies. Specifically, a regional district must:

- a) establish a program to monitor RGS implementation and the progress made towards its objectives and actions; and
- b) prepare an annual report on that implementation and progress.

The RGS Indicator Report was developed in 2019 to support consistent annual reporting and meet legislative requirements. The report consists of 20 indicators that measure progress towards achieving RGS targets and objectives. Each indicator includes a description of what is being measured, why it is important and a discussion of trends. Over time, the indicators will help identify progress being made toward RGS implementation or alert the region to a need for change if progress is not being seen.

Criteria for selection of indicators included: relevance, data availability, accuracy, cost, and effort. While many indicators use data that is available annually, some indicators rely on Census data that is only available every five years.

For 2021, 14 of the 20 indicators were updated with new data. In addition, several indicators have been edited for clarity and improved understanding of desired trends. See Appendix A for the report and detailed information about the new data.

It should be noted that several of the indicators likely experienced impacts in the 2020 reporting year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also important to note that changes in year-to-year performance do not always equate to a long term trend. It may take several years of data collection to reliably identify a trend.

Following receipt by the Board, the information will be posted on the CRD's website.

**ALTERNATIVES**

*Alternative 1*

The Planning and Protective Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the Regional Growth Strategy Indicator Report be received for information.

*Alternative 2*

That the Regional Growth Strategy Indicator Report be referred back to staff for additional information based on Planning and Protective Services Committee direction.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### *Regional Growth Strategy Implications*

Achieving RGS objectives requires collaborative partnerships between local, regional and provincial levels of government, each with specific jurisdictional authorities. The RGS indicators show how we are doing as a region rather than the performance of a specific CRD service. The region's growth management approach, policies and targets are to be reevaluated during the RGS update process if progress toward RGS implementation is not being seen.

Managing and Balancing Growth, Housing and Community and Climate Action are RGS policy areas where the indicators suggest a need to closely watch for progress against RGS objectives.

1. From a growth management perspective, the region has not expanded the growth area since RGS adoption in 2018 (1.1b), and has built 5.2% of new dwelling units outside of the growth boundary in the past 10 years (1.2a). Regionally, only 20% of growth has been located in areas with greater than 42% active transportation in the past five years (1.1a). This would suggest that focusing new dwellings within the growth boundary alone is not sufficient to create compact complete communities.
2. From a housing affordability perspective the region is making steady progress to increase the supply of affordable housing, adding 2,621 units between 2016 and 2020 (3.2d), 1,046 of which were added between March 2019 to March 2020. However, low rental vacancy rates especially on the low end of the price spectrum indicate a market that is difficult for renters (3.2c). Low vacancy rates are compounded by average rent increases that have outpaced inflation (3.2b).
3. From a climate action perspective the region has made a 9.6% reduction in total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions since the base year of 2007 (7.1a). The 5% decline in emissions in 2020 over 2018 are largely associated with changes in transportation patterns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Our current trend suggests the region is not on track to meet the goal of a 61% reduction in GHG emissions by 2038. While a 9.6% reduction is modest there has been a 23% reduction in per capita emission since the base year which speaks to efforts by the CRD and local governments to reduce GHG emissions.

### *Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities*

Annual indicator reporting addresses the Planning and Development Community Need, specifically initiative 11a-3 Report on & Advance RGS Implementation/Indicators.

### *Service Delivery Implications*

The legislation stipulates that all services undertaken by a regional district after the Board has adopted a regional growth strategy must be consistent with its RGS. Through 2021, the CRD approved several new service-level strategies that will guide action on a number of indicators, including:

- Solid Waste Management Plan and implementation next steps, developed to reduce the region's waste per capita rate.
- Climate Action Strategy, renewed to reflect the CRD Board's declaration of a climate emergency.
- Regional transportation priorities and implementation strategies for each, developed to reduce congestion, increase mode share and take action on climate change.

Any additional adjustments to service levels in support of achieving RGS objectives can be considered through the CRD’s established service planning and budgetary processes. Based on current data, there are no items requiring adjustment.

**CONCLUSION**

The RGS Indicator Report monitors the region’s progress towards the targets outlined in the RGS, and is updated annually. 14 of the 20 indicators were updated with new data in 2021. The RGS Indicator Report will be posted on the CRD website.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Planning and Protective Services Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the Regional Growth Strategy Indicator Report be received for information.

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| Submitted by: | Emily Sinclair, MCIP, RPP, Senior Manager, Regional & Strategic Planning     |
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**ATTACHMENT**

Appendix A: Regional Growth Strategy Indicator Report 2021