



What We Heard Engagement Summary Report

Project Name: Regional Growth Strategy Update: Shaping Our Future 2040

Date: 'What We Heard Engagement Summary Report' Drafted: October 30, 2023

Date: 'What We Heard Engagement Summary Report' Approved: *pending*

Overview of the Project/Process and Objective for Engagement

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board adopted an updated Engagement Plan for the scheduled update of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS): Shaping Our Future 2040. This Plan was approved by the Board on July 27, 2021, to establish a process to guide collaboration with member jurisdictions and to seek input from stakeholders, the public and First Nations on select RGS policies under review.

The implementation of the Plan meets the RDN Board's responsibilities under Sections 434(2) of the *Local Government Act*, RDN Board's Public Consultation/ Communication Framework Policy No. A1.23 and procedures bylaws.

Engagement Objectives

The objectives of this Engagement Plan are:

- To establish a process to share applicable information and to receive input from affected local governments, government agencies, First Nations, residents and other stakeholders.
- To encourage and support stakeholder involvement through the RGS review process.
- Provide affected local governments an opportunity to identify and learn about issues relating to the RGS, and offer direction and insights.
- Communicate the outcomes of consultation to the RDN Board to help inform decision-making about the RGS amendment bylaw.

Outline the Process

Beginning in July 2021, staff implemented several engagement activities including a community survey, and a series of workshops with local government staff and elected officials. This information was also presented to member municipal councils, First Nations, the Electoral Area Service Committee (EASC) and the Agricultural Advisory Committee. Throughout the course of the process, staff have actively maintained an RDN Get Involved Webpage¹ and have responded directly to inquiries.

¹ RDN's Shaping Our Future 2040 webpage: www.getinvolved.rdn.ca/RGSreview

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The engagement activities generated various insights from participants used to enhance the identified policy sections and performance measures presented in the draft bylaw entitled: *Shaping Our Future 2040*. Additionally, the draft document was edited to reduce redundancies, to incorporate new demographic, employment and housing information, references to legislation and key resources, and to improve overall readability, specifically formatting/layout and grammatical style aligned with RDN current practices.

The draft bylaw RGS: Shaping Our Future 2040 was presented to the Board on April 25, 2023, where the Board passed a motion to proceed with the informal referral process.

Awareness and Engagement Activities Undertaken

The *Local Government Act* requires a Regional District to refer a draft bylaw to the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) for comment prior to the Board considering the draft bylaw for adoption. The IAC provides a forum of government representatives from local First Nations, member municipalities, provincial agencies and other organizations identified by the province to help coordinate actions, policies and programs regarding the strategy. In support of this direction the Board passed the following motion on April 25, 2023:

That the Board refer the draft entitled “Draft Regional Growth Strategy: Shaping our Future 2040”, dated February 28, 2023, attached to this report, for comment to the following:

- i. *signatories to the regional growth strategy, including Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area Directors; Mayors and Councils of the City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum and District of Lantzville; and Regional Districts of Cowichan, Alberni Clayoquot and Comox Valley; and*
- ii. *Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As and Qualicum First Nations and other members of the Shaping Our Future 2040 Intergovernmental Advisory Committee including the Province of BC; the Agricultural Land Commission; Island Health; BC Hydro; BC Transit; BC Housing; School Districts 68 and 69, and others so identified by the Province.*

The referral comment period was from May to August 2023. Following this period, RDN staff remained available to receive any further comments from residents or other interested parties.

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Based on the responses received, the draft Shaping Our Future 2040 has been well received. The updated sections on climate change, agricultural and community building have been highlighted as areas where significant improvements have been made to better plan for today and over the next 20 years. Details of these comments and others are provided in Table 1, RGS: Shaping Our Future 2040 Comments and Response.

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Who We Heard From

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff worked with RDN Planning staff to identify organizations and representatives for the IAC, which received a referral package electronically, inclusive of a letter of invitation for comments on the draft document Shaping Our Future 2040. From those IAC members responses were received from: one representative from federal government; thirty-five representatives from provincial government; fourteen from local government, three local First Nation Councils (Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As and Qualicum) and eight interest groups (includes Improvement Districts). Additionally, the comment period was communicated broadly to residents via monthly newspaper ads and RDN Webpage.

Next Steps

The input from the IAC has been considered and where applicable the draft bylaw Shaping Our Future 2040 has been updated. The proposed changes are noted in the Shaping Our Future 2040 Comment and Response Table 1 (below).

The process for adopting or making major amendments to a RGS is set out by the *Local Government Act*. Next, the Board will be asked to give first and second readings of the bylaw then refer the bylaw to all affected local governments to accept Shaping Our Future 2040 by passing a resolution.



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Table 1: RGS: Shaping Our Future 2040 Comment and Response

SOURCE	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
SECTION A - INTRODUCTION (IN SCOPE)		
City of Nanaimo	Page 6: “Coastal Salish Nations” – should this be more specific “(Snuneymuxw First Nation, Snaw-Naw-As First Nation, and Qualicum First Nation)”?	Agree. Change made.
SECTION B - CONTEXT (IN SCOPE)		
Resident/Business	PP 15 through 17 some of the housing unit numbers conflict.	Discrepancy noted. Potential inconsistencies addressed via acquiring updated demographic info based on 2021 Census.
SECTION C - VISION, PRINCIPLES, FRAMEWORKS		
City of Nanaimo	Page 18: Vision section – change phase “urban development described as contained” to “urban development described as compact”.	Agree. Change made.
SECTION D - LAND USE DESIGNATIONS		
Resident	Noted, single road access to Errington Village. Prefers change Land Use designation from resource lands to residents for subdivision to support building 2nd road access.	Noted. No change recommended; not within scope and further planning study would be needed.
Agriculture Land Commission (ALC) - Regional Planner	Request clarification, Section D: ALR Lands w/in Urban & Rural Village Centres (RVCs) and Goal 7- Policy 7.14(b), by adding in accordance with the ALCA or approved by the ALC	Agree. Change made.





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ALC - Regional Planner	<p>ALC staff find no record of previous Commission endorsements of the GCB encompassing ALR lands. ALC staff are concerned that ALR land within the Growth Containment Boundaries (GCBs) creates false expectations that land is available for future potential development. For this reason, ALC staff recommend the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the maps be amended to remove all ALR land from the GCB; or • that information be provided in the RGS (on maps and in text) that ALR lands within the GCB have not been endorsed by the Commission. 	Agree. Change made to Section D: GCB Land Uses Appendix A. Maps 5 and 6 and Appendix B- All Maps.
Ministry of Agriculture and Food	Noted, lands provincially designated ALR within the Town of Qualicum Beach, RVC & City of Nanaimo (Sheets 5,9,10,11 & 14) within the GCBs may create false expectation for future development of these properties given they are subject to the ALC Act & regs and are heavily restricted.	Changes made as noted above.
Couverdon Real Estate	Under Resource Lands and Open Space designation, 'destination Resorts' and 'golf courses' are included as allowable uses, however, a definition for either of these uses is not included in the RGS or Bylaw 500. Can staff clarify what land uses are covered under destination Resorts and golf courses?	Designation to be read in entirety and where applicable are further defined via a zoning bylaw. Staff also referred comment for consideration as part of the on-going update of RDN Zoning Bylaw No.500.



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GOAL 1 CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION (IN SCOPE)		
Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD)	CVRD Board endorsed staff's comments in support of the draft RGS. Of particular note strategies related to: GHG emission reduction, natural hazards, particular with the goal to direct new development away from hazardous areas and to protect and restore natural areas and policies to improve air quality.	No action required.
City of Nanaimo	<p>Page 26: Policy 1.1 – does it matter that the City of Nanaimo targets do not match the targets in this policy? (e.g., City target is 50%-58% below 2010 by 2030 and 94%-100% below 2010 by 2050).</p> <p>Page 26: Delete Policy 1.6.b – as these standard now in the code.</p>	<p>Noted, variations on policy direction is to be identified and address by each municipality as part of an update to their RCS, following adoption of RGS BL.</p> <p>Agree. - removed Zero Carbon Step Code.</p>
GOAL 2 PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT		
Resident (RDN Get Involved webpage)	I am concerned about uncontrolled tree cutting in rural areas, un-monitored smoking chimneys that smoke for hours (clearly unacceptable), excessively noisy vehicles and more buffer areas around eco-sensitive lands.	<p>No change recommended.</p> <p>Policy 2.5 promotes air quality improvements; Trees preservation addressed more broadly over several policies to support preservation of ESA and ecological function. New policy 2.10 promotes sustainable site planning. No additional change recommended.</p>
Ministry of Forests, South Island Natural Resource District	<p>Beneficial to add specific reference to the WSA, perhaps to Section 2.2</p> <p>Further RAPR is applicable to all RDN residents and must be adhered to, I think vital that the document at makes mention of this specific legislation.</p>	Agree, changes made: Figure 2 and Section 2.2 updated with specific legislation



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GOAL 3 COORDINATE LAND USE AND MOBILITY (IN SCOPE)		
CVRD	Draft RGS policies that emphasize the importance of active transportation also align with the CVRD's Active Transportation Network Plan.	Agree. No action required.
CVRD	Draft RGS policy 3.5, encourages continued collaboration between neighbouring regional districts. Recently CVRD Board directing staff to work with RDN staff and BC Transit to investigate service connection between the two transit systems. This is also directly supported by Section 22(6) of the CVRD OCP: "Provide for coordinated transportation infrastructure and services within the electoral areas and between adjacent jurisdictions." Draft RGS Policy 3.6 goes further in advocating for a Central Island Transportation Strategy to worked on by BC Transit and all affected regional governments.	Agree. No action required.
Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure Transit Strategy & Policy Branch	Overall, the draft RGS aligns well with Provincial priorities for greenhouse gas reductions and increasing use of transit.	No action required.
	Page 32 – Policy 3.1c Suggest inserting "along transit corridors" to help define transit-oriented development.	Agree. Change made.
	Page 32 – Policy 3.2 In addition to increasing neighbourhood densities, would it be helpful to identify supporting mixed-use development which can support shorter trips by providing more jobs and services within walking and cycling distances.	Policy ref to 'new development'. Adjusted to also include mixed-use dwellings
	Page 32 – Policy 3.4 Suggest removing "and align schedules accordingly for students and employees". BC Transit works with schools and major employers to develop bus schedules as part of its ongoing service and operational planning.	Adjusted to recognize BC Transits efforts to collaborate with users on scheduling.





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	Page 32 – Policy 3.6 While <u>BC Transit</u> works with local governments to develop Transit Future Plans, it does not normally lead broader regional transportation planning studies. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is responsible for working with local governments on regional transportation strategies such as the South Island Transportation Strategy.	Agree. Change BC Transit to MOTI
	Page 32 – Policy 3.7 Should cycling infrastructure also be mentioned?	Agree. Adjusted to include cycling infrastructure
GOAL 6 DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHOICES (IN SCOPE)		
City of Parksville	As I am in concurrence with the overall policy direction of the RGS review my specific comments are limited to the following: Policy 6.9 on page 39 (pdf page 40) appears to mandate a housing needs assessments every 5 years. This may be something that a future provincial government could provide different direction on or be something where there may be a desire by local governments for greater flexibility, given the resource that such undertakings entail.	Adjust to more broader terms while retaining importance of data gathering and monitoring.
District of Lantzville	Expressed concern new housing policies 6.3 and 6.4 too prescriptive; each municipality to have the autonomy to decide for themselves their housing needs and solutions.	6.2 to 6.4 (now 6.2) Adjust to acknowledge common goal with potential local solutions/strategies that could be pursued through plans, policies and actions.





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GOAL 7 ECONOMIC RESILIENCY		
City of Nanaimo	Page 39 – Goal 7, third point, second paragraph – change phrase “is key to a healthy economy future” to “is key to a healthy economy in the future.”.Page 40 – first paragraph – change phrase “recreation the attraction to natural features and facilities, means” to “recreation and the attraction to natural features and facilities means”.Page 41 – Section 7.9 – change phrase “commercial development consistent” to “commercial development is consistent”.Page 42 – Section 7.14.f. – change phrase “activity on agricultural lands non-ALR. to “activity on non-ALR agricultural lands.”Page 42 – Section 7.15.c. – change phrase “encouraging and support businesses” to “encouraging and supporting businesses”.Page 42 – Section 7.17. – change phrase “development of green economy” to “development of the green economy”.	Suggested text edits noted for change where appropriate.
GOAL 8 FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCY (IN SCOPE)		
Ministry of Agriculture and Food	Ministry staff were pleased to see that Goals 5, 7 and 8 describe a series of agriculturally strong policies that recognize the social, environmental and economic benefits of farming.	No action needed.
CVRD	The reworked preamble of this section makes a much clearer connection between food system resilience and land use planning, is a strong foundation for the protection of farmland and shorelines. Land use policies around agricultural use and subdivision within the ALR are aligned with CVRD policies. Further, the addition of draft RGS Policy 8.10, recognition of climate-related impacts on food systems and agricultural practices, is also beneficial, and is reflected in updates to the CVRD Agricultural Plan received by the EASC earlier this year.	No action required.



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GOAL 10 EFFICIENT SERVICES (IN SCOPE)		
Couverdon Real Estate	10.3 now lists 'Industrial Lands' as being "not permitted to receive direct provisions for community water and/or wastewater". This change in policy has significant implications on the viability of future development of industrial lands. As an example, the Duke Point Sewer Treatment Plant was designed solely for industrial use. This policy would seem to prevent future connections to this sewer treatment plant even for existing vacant properties. In essence, there could be a plethora of unintended consequences if this proposed policy change is adopted.	Confirmed land use designations with Planning and Water Services; correction made by deleting 'Industrial Lands'.
North Cedar Improvement District	The District expressed importance of collaboration with the RDN to balance growth in Cedar to ensure any new demand for water can be supported by the current water system.	Noted. Addressed under Goal 10 Servicing, especially policy 10.5 related to role o DWWP
SECTION H - MONITORING PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS		
City of Nanaimo	<p>Page 55 – Goal 1 Target Section – does it matter if first target does not match City's GHG targets? Add additional target as follows: "Reduce emissions from new buildings."</p> <p>Page 55 – Goal 2 Indicator Section – consider adding new indicator "Capacity of water reservoir" – this is a key indicator for City of Nanaimo's City Plan monitoring strategy, which is being worked on.</p> <p>Page 56 – Goal 5 Indicator and Goal 8 Indicator– Percentage of agricultural lands being actively farmed – can this be retrieved easily through statistical or GIS data – if not, could be problematic to generate?</p>	<p>No change.</p> <p>Goal 1 new target for building emissions not added due to lack of regional data source.</p> <p>Goal 2 suggested reservoir indicator noted; unable to confirm if data availability for region.</p> <p>Goal 5 indicator - confirmed data available - calculation based on BC Assessment data and GIS</p>
CVRD	The performance measures added to the draft RGS improve the ability of RDN staff to accurately monitor and evaluate progress towards the outlined goals.	No action required.





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