

# Regional Context Statement

# 5



## OVERVIEW

The City of Victoria is a partner in the implementation of the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), adopted by the CRD Board on August 13, 2003, and supports its goals, principles, policies and initiatives. As the Capital Region's population continues to increase, growth must be managed to ensure that regional sustainability and livability is enhanced over time. Local Government Act section 866 requires member municipalities to include within their OCP, a regional context statement that indicates how the OCP conforms to the provisions of the RGS or will be brought into conformity over time. Context statements need to identify:

1. The extent to which the OCP is consistent with the RGS;
2. If it is not consistent, how the OCP will be brought into consistency; and,
3. The elements of the RGS which are not applicable to the municipality.

This regional context statement illustrates how Victoria implements the eight strategic directions of the current RGS:

1. Keep Urban Settlement Compact
2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities
3. Protect Regional Green and Blue Space
4. Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably
5. Build Complete Communities
6. Improve Housing Affordability

7. Increase Transportation Choice
8. Strengthen the Regional Economy

More than seven years have passed since the adoption of the RGS. Several implementation initiatives have been completed including TravelChoices: A Long Term Transportation Strategy for the Capital Region (April 2005), and the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (March 2007), both of which propose future policy amendments to the RGS. Annual monitoring of RGS implementation since 2004 has identified areas where policy shifts are necessary.

The CRD is currently undertaking a major review of the 2003 RGS with the intention of developing a more explicit focus on regional sustainability, addressing among other things, the challenge of climate change, signaling this intention through a name change from RGS to Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS). This process is expected to conclude with approval of a new regional strategy in 2012. Legislation requires the City to amend and update its regional context statement and submit it to the CRD Board for acceptance within two years of adoption of the new RSS.

## REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY CONSISTENCY

Figure 6 summarizes how this plan is consistent or working towards consistency with the RGS.

**Figure 6: Regional Growth Strategy Consistency**

RGS Strategic Direction	Consistency Requirements	Plan Policy Response and Reference
<p>1. Keep Urban Settlement Compact</p>	<p>Define the location and establish policies to support the regional urban containment and servicing policy area boundary.</p> <p>Establish the location and policies associated with the metropolitan core and major centres identified on RGS Map 3, including those related to mix of use, housing, and transit access.</p> <p>Indicate the extent to which housing options by type, tenure and market segment are addressed.</p> <p>Increase the designated capacity for ground oriented housing by 5% over levels in the OCP in August 2003.</p>	<p>Victoria is fully within the regional urban containment area and in addition to the downtown focused Metropolitan Core, has two Major Centres wholly or partially within its municipal boundaries: one at Mayfair Mall Major Centre, the other at Hillside Mall, both of which are partially within the District of Saanich. A key RGS target is that a minimum of 15% of the region's cumulative new dwelling units are accommodated within Victoria to 2026. Between 2001 and 2007 Victoria's cumulative share of new dwelling units averaged 22% of the regional total. As well, total population of the Metropolitan Core increased 17% between 2001 and 2006, from 9,955 to 11,750.</p> <p>The Metropolitan Core is identified as that area designated Urban Core on Map 1 and supported by policies to accept approximately 50% of Victoria's forecast growth to 2041, or a minimum of 10,000 new residents. The plan requires the City to maintain a local area plan focused on the Urban Core, and the City has developed the Downtown Core Area Plan to give this policy effect, providing policy direction to support population increase, business growth, cultural development, and a walkable core served by high capacity frequent public transit.</p> <p>This plan designates Town Centres at Mayfair and Hillside Malls on Map 1, and provides policy direction for their development as walkable, transit focused, mixed use residential and employment centres. The Mayfair and Hillside Town Centres, together with transit oriented Large Urban Villages elsewhere in the city, are forecast to accommodate 40% of Victoria's population growth to 2041, or approximately 8,000 new residents. The plan anticipates that the balance of forecast growth to 2041, approximately 10% or 2,000 new residents, will be accommodated in small urban villages and existing neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Over the next 30 years Victoria is forecast to need designated housing capacity to meet demand for an additional 13,500 apartment units and an additional 2,700 ground oriented housing units, by 2041. Zoned land capacity analysis prepared for this plan indicates that there is sufficient zoned capacity in 2011 to just match this demand. The plan designates additional housing capacity, primarily for apartment units and attached ground-oriented housing, to ensure that developable capacity is more than sufficient to meet forecast demand.</p> <p>The plan proposes policies to address housing need across the entire breadth of the housing continuum with a particular focus on meeting housing demand for an aging population, for housing suitable to families, and to address homelessness. The Urban Residential and Traditional Residential designations of the plan provide greater scope for housing stock diversity than conventional exclusive use designations.</p> <p>[SEE SECTIONS 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT; 7 – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY; 8 – PLACEMAKING; 13 – HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS; AND, 14 – ECONOMY].</p>

RGS Strategic Direction	Consistency Requirements	Plan Policy Response and Reference
<p><b>2. Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities</b></p>	<p>Establish policies and land management designations for the protection of rural character.</p> <p>Designate Capital Green lands and Renewable Resource Lands consistent with RGS Map No. 3.</p> <p>Establish policies and mechanisms to limit the extent of rural development.</p>	<p>While Victoria does not include rural areas, it plays a role in protecting the Capital Region's rural communities by housing a significant proportion of regional population growth in walkable, transit accessible communities in the region's most diverse housing stock. As well, Victoria provides a significant market for local agricultural products and the plan establishes policies respecting food security and Victoria's role in the regional food system.</p> <p>All lands identified as Capital Green Lands in Victoria, including Beacon Hill Park, Summit Park and Gonzales Hill Regional Park, are designated Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space as identified on Map 1 and further defined on Map 8, with these designations supported by policy direction for their protection.</p> <p>[SEE SECTIONS 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT; 9 – PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE; AND 16 – FOOD SYSTEMS]</p>
<p><b>3. Protect Regional Green and Blue Space</b></p>	<p>Designate green and blue space areas consistent with RGS Map No. 4 and establish policies to protect these lands and waters from development.</p> <p>Establish policies for the protection of lands identified as Unprotected Green Space on RGS Map No. 4.</p>	<p>The plan designates for protection all areas designated green and blue space in the RGS through Marine and Working Harbour designations or designated Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space, as further defined on Map 1. The plan protects the alignment of the E&amp;N Rail Trail through the Rail Corridor designation, and gives policy direction for ongoing updates to the Greenways Plan and the completion of a Parks Master Plan. Key elements of these plans are the completion of the proposed Harbour Pathway system.</p> <p>The plan designates Sensitive Ecosystems on Map 9 and establishes Development Permit Area guidelines for the protection of identified sensitive ecosystems including Coastal Bluff, Garry Oak Woodland, and marine areas of high ecological importance. The plan also provides policy guidance to the development of an Urban Forest Master Plan, and gives policy consideration to the ecological services performed by natural systems.</p> <p>[SEE SECTIONS 9 – PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE; AND, 10 – ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT]</p>
<p><b>4. Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably</b></p>	<p>Establish policies and targets for sustainable environmental management respecting waste discharge and diversion, resource conservation, and ecosystem health.</p> <p>Participate in integrated watershed planning approaches to manage surface water and drainage.</p> <p>Participate in the establishment of regional policies and targets for air quality, environmental quality and energy efficiency.</p>	<p>The plan establishes policies for sustainable resource management including policies with respect to mitigating the impacts of climate change, sustainable resource management, greenhouse gas reduction, renewable and district energy, green building and infrastructure, biodiversity, improved ecological function, air and water quality, marine and shoreline management and the urban forest.</p> <p>The plan includes policies respecting integrated watershed planning initiatives including those for Cecilia Creek and Bowker Creek.</p> <p>[SEE SECTIONS 10 – ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT; 11 – INFRASTRUCTURE; AND, 12 – CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY]</p>

RGS Strategic Direction	Consistency Requirements	Plan Policy Response and Reference
<p><b>5. Build Complete Communities</b></p>	<p>Establish policies to facilitate urban development that contributes to greater community completeness, in particular by supporting: growth in and within 500 metres of the Metropolitan Core and Major Centres; the co-location of housing, employment, services and recreation; new housing within a ten minute walk of existing business and community services and facilities; projects that avoid or include mitigation measures for areas of high seismic risk; and, locate new growth within 400 metres of transit routes.</p>	<p>Victoria is a very compact and complete community. It has an average density of approximately 40 persons per hectare, the highest population density in the Capital Region and the sixth highest in Canada, equivalent to Toronto. On only 2.8% of the Capital Region's land base Victoria houses nearly a quarter of the region's population. The plan includes policies to support a broad vision to build complete communities, in particular focusing 50% of forecast residential growth in the Urban Core and surrounding Urban Residential designations, and 40% in two Town Centres and ten Large Urban Villages linked by rapid or frequent transit, and situated near community and business services and employment centres. The plan includes policies to focus the delivery of community services through hubs located in walkable centres.</p> <p>Virtually all of Victoria is within 500 metres of a transit route and approximately 50% of residents live within 400 metres of one of four frequent transit routes (Douglas Street; Fort/Yates Streets; Hillside Avenue; and Craigflower Road). The plan contains policies to further focus new employment growth in the Urban Core, the Mayfair and Hillside Town Centres, and in employment districts served by rapid and frequent transit service.</p> <p>The plan includes policies for emergency management focused on preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery and identifies areas of seismic vulnerability on Map 14, and policies respecting additional development information requirements for these areas.</p> <p>[SEE SECTIONS 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT; 7 – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY; 15 – COMMUNITY WELL BEING; 17 – EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; AND, 18 – PLAN ADMINISTRATION]</p>
<p><b>6. Improve Housing Affordability</b></p>	<p>Participate in the development and implementation of a Regional Housing Affordability Strategy.</p> <p>Establish policies to address housing affordability.</p>	<p>Victoria participated in the development and approval of the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy, is a founding member of the Regional Housing Trust Fund, has established the Victoria Housing Trust Fund, and is a funding partner in the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness. The plan establishes policies to address the twin challenges of housing affordability and homelessness across the housing continuum, consistent with the three regional goals to: increase the supply of more affordable housing; reduce the number of people in core housing need especially low income renters; and, to reduce the number of homeless people and to support the transition out of homelessness. The plan includes policy direction to update Victoria's Comprehensive Housing Strategy, which provides a local strategic response to the regional directions established in the CRD Regional Housing Affordability Strategy.</p> <p>[SEE SECTIONS 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT; AND, 13 – HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS]</p>

RGS Strategic Direction	Consistency Requirements	Plan Policy Response and Reference
<p><b>7. Increase Transportation Choice</b></p>	<p>Participate in the development of a Regional Transportation Strategy that aims to increase walking, cycling and transit mode share, establish a regional major route system, and link the Metropolitan Core and major centers with high capacity transit.</p> <p>Participate in the development of a permanent framework for transportation planning, governance and funding in the Capital Region.</p>	<p>Victoria participated in the development and approval of the TravelChoices Strategy and has partnered with the CRD, BC Transit and others in subsequent implementation initiatives including BC Transit’s Westshore – Victoria Rapid Transit project and the 25 Year Transit Future Plan. The RGS 2026 target for non-auto mode share for Victoria’s business core of 40% was exceeded in 2006, when Victoria achieved a city-wide non-auto mode share of 46% for journey to work trips, tied with Montreal as the highest in Canada.</p> <p>The plan supports integrated regional approaches to transportation planning and service delivery, and gives priority to walking, cycling, public transit and goods movement over single occupancy vehicle travel. The plan’s land management vision supports development of a walkable urban pattern composed of a strong downtown core, town centres, and large urban villages linked by rapid and frequent transit service and a network of pedestrian and cycling priority greenways. The land management and transportation policies of the plan focus on the broad objective that all residents of Victoria can reach goods and services to meet daily needs within a 15 minute walk of home, including public transit. The plan gives priority to the development of more detailed local area plans for rapid transit and frequent transit oriented town centres and large urban villages.</p> <p>Policies of the plan explicitly endorse coordinated transportation planning at the regional scale, including alignment of local transportation plans and initiatives with regional initiatives and across municipal boundaries including those related to public transit, passenger and commuter rail, goods movement, emergency response, trip reduction and travel demand management, and travel mode connectivity.</p> <p>[SEE SECTIONS 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT; AND, 7 – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY]</p>

RGS Strategic Direction	Consistency Requirements	Plan Policy Response and Reference
<p><b>8. Strengthen the Regional Economy</b></p>	<p>Participate in the development of a Regional Economic Development Strategy with a focus on: finding ways to maintain and enhance the Metropolitan Core as the economic heart of the region, ensuring that Victoria achieves a minimum share of 20% of the region's employment growth to 2026; finding ways to include high value clean industry and business in the Metropolitan Core and Major Centres; and, finding ways to reduce poverty.</p>	<p>Victoria participated in the development of the draft Economic Development Opportunities Blueprint – A Strategy for Regional Economic Prosperity, completed in 2004 but not adopted by the CRD Board. The Board directed instead the development of a broader regional economic sustainability strategy as part of the five year review of the RGS, starting in 2008.</p> <p>While Victoria has continued to experience employment increases, it has been losing ground to other parts of the region with respect to its share of new employment growth, attracting only 13% of regional employment growth between 2001 and 2006, compared to 26% in the West Shore. The plan designates lands for employment on Map 1 and includes a number of policies to reverse this trend including: increasing the size and permitted development density of the Core Business district; identifying areas for intensive employment growth in expanding sectors along the Douglas Street rapid transit corridor (Core Employment district, Humber Green Village, Mayfair Town Centre); and, identifying areas for intensive employment growth along frequent transit corridors including the Hillside Town Centre, and the General Employment district at Royal Jubilee Hospital. Victoria's economic structure is summarized on Map 13. The plan also includes policy direction for the development of an economic strategy for Victoria with a focus on business incubation, growth and retention, and policy respecting poverty reduction and community economic development.</p> <p>[SEE SECTIONS 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT; 14 – ECONOMY; AND, 15 – COMMUNITY WELL BEING]</p>