District of North Saanich

STAFF REPORT - AMENDED

To: Rob Buchan
Chief Administrative Officer

Date: August 16, 2016

From: Coralie Breen
Senior Planner

File: 6440-20; 6430

Re: Bylaw 4017 "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2016" – Food and Agriculture Section
Capital Regional District - Draft Food and Agriculture Strategy

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RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council write to the Capital Regional District on Bylaw 4017 "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2016" Food and Agriculture Section and the draft Food and Agriculture Strategy per the information outlined in this staff report (August 16, 2016).

DISTRICT OF NORTH SAANICH POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

This matter relates to the following Council strategic priorities and policies:

Protect and Enhance Rural, Agricultural, Heritage, Marine and Environmental Resources

The Official Community Plan (OCP) states that the vision statement should be considered as the foundation or cornerstone of the principles for OCP direction on land use. The DNS OCP vision is to:

Retain the present rural, agricultural and marine character of the community.

Strategic Plan Goals that relate to the OCP vision and provide an overarching framework to consider Bylaw 4017 Regional Growth Strategy - Food and Agriculture Section (the Section) and the draft Food and Agriculture Strategy (the Strategy) are:

The Agricultural Community Preserved and Strengthened
A Vibrant and Sustainable Agriculture Economy

DNS Strategic Plan item #5 is considered in the review of the Section and Strategy:

Advocate for protection of regional rural and agricultural municipalities and enhancing public agricultural holdings in the region with a farm land acquisition program.

District of North Saanich Agriculture Economic Development Plan Selected Strategic Priority Actions

2.2 Support development of a business plan for 'food hub' on Sandown or other municipal lands
2.5 Promote development of a plan to increase use of private, community and local government facilities for food production and processing, recovery and distribution.
3.2 Promote to the CRD and Province an agriculture investment fund for the region.

4.3 Advocate with agricultural stakeholders across the Peninsula with post-secondary institutions and Province to create extension services for the region.
5.4 Support 'food security' and agriculture components of the RGS
5.6 Identify bylaws elsewhere that may be considered and adapted to DNS to support agri-tourism and agri-food

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2015 – 2018

Priority Area 4 Agricultural Land & Food Security
4a. Establish educational programming to promote local food and its benefits.
4b. Enable others and advocate for supportive agricultural programs and policies by provincial and federal governments.
4c. Work with partners to find a solution to lack of abattoir, and other related farming infrastructure, in the region or on the island.
4d. Develop a regional agricultural land banking solution.
4e. Establish additional incentives and new policies to promote and encourage farming in the region.
4f. Develop policies to support Agri-Tourism.

INFORMATION/BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this staff report is to provide Council with information updates and review comments on the:

1. Bylaw 4017 "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2016" Food and Agriculture Section; and the
2. Capital Regional District Draft Food and Agriculture Strategy.

Regional Growth Strategy Referral Process Update

The following chronology outlines the CRD Board RGS referral process and the District of North Saanich review considerations:

March 9, 2016
Capital Regional District (CRD) Board referred the draft Regional Growth Strategy to Municipal Councils and the JDF Land Use Committee for informal referral to identify any issues that may prevent municipal acceptance of the RGS document. The Food Systems Section was prepared by CRD staff concurrent to the informal referral period.

March 23 and April 27, 2016
DNS Commissions met twice and reviewed the draft Regional Growth Strategy (RGS).

April 1, 2016
CRD provided a formal response to the Commission questions arising from the March 23, 2016 Commission meetings.

April 18, 2016
CRD planning staff presented the draft RGS to Council. The CRD provided responses to the Commission questions and comments.

May 18, 2016
(235) That Council refer the CRD Food Systems Policy when it becomes available to the Community Planning Commission and Community Stewardship Commission for comment and report back to Council.

May 25, 2016
CRD Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee
Recommended to the Capital Regional District Board that the draft Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy be used by staff to inform content for the Regional Growth Strategy Food Systems Section.

July 13, 2016
Bylaw No. 4017 "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No.1, 2016" was given first and second reading. The Food and Agriculture Strategy was received for information by the CRD and will be advanced for further discussion at a Forum of Councils proposed for October 15, 2016. The Forum of Councils is one meeting which invites all councilors in the region (including First Nations councilors).

July 20 and 27, 2016
DNS Commissions reviewed the Food and Agriculture Section (the Section) and draft Food and Agriculture Strategy (the Strategy). The Section and Strategy are attached in *Appendices A* and *B* attached to this report (August 16, 2016). Bylaw 4017 Regional Growth Strategy is attached in *Appendix C*. An overview follows in the Discussion section.

CRD Next Steps for Bylaw No. 4017:
Public Consultation and Report to CRD Board on public feedback and receive direction to, if required, update Bylaw 4017 (Fall 2016)
Municipal formal referral (January – March 2017)

DISCUSSION:

The Discussion section begins by providing an overview of the District of North Saanich and Capital Regional District agriculture lands (the context) and follows with discussion on the Section and Strategy.

1. District of North Saanich Agriculture Lands

The District of North Saanich has approximately 14 km² or 35 % of the District lands in the Agriculture Land Reserve (the ALR). The total land with OCP Agriculture designation is a total of 1,323 hectares or 3,269 acres and 410 lots, of which 366 have been developed in some capacity (2016 DNS stats) and an additional 267 acres of ALR land unavailable (e.g. 124 hectares of ALR is the Victoria Airport Authority). The District of North Saanich primary agriculture activity includes berry farms, field vegetable and flower farms, vineyards, pasture land, nurseries, greenhouses, stables/riding facility, horse and poultry farms, dairy, beef cattle and sheep/goat farms. More than 600 hectares are forage and pasture crops (2009 data).[1]

2. Capital Regional District Agriculture Lands

The CRD Strategy reports (p. 43) that the "area of farmland [in the CRD] in some form of production has stayed relatively steady at 13, 606 ha (43 ha more than 2006) out of the total 16, 382 ha of land in the ALR. Other farming lands are not quantified. Since the inception of the ALR in 1973, approximately 1500 ha of the ALR have been removed within the CRD, representing an approximate decrease of 8% between 1973 and 2009…over the past three decades, nearly 1,500 hectares of productive agricultural land have been removed from the region's ALR.[2] In 2013,

[1] See Province of BC: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/strengthening-farming/land-use-inventories/northsaanich2009_aluireport.pdf (Retrieved July 21, 2016)
[2] Capital Regional District (2016): According to ALC exclusions, the largest ALR land exclusions occurred in Colwood and Sooke, which lost 107 ha and 265 ha respectively. Otherwise, Saanich and Langford each experienced exclusions of around 50 ha, Sidney lost 35 ha and View Royal excluded around 20 ha. The remaining municipalities have minimal losses ranging from 0.6-10 ha. North Saanich lost approximately 10.5 ha.

there were 1,093 farms reporting farm-related income in the CRD (Ministry of Agriculture, 2013).The CRD does not have any information disseminated below the regional aggregate level as the CRD does not have a service to justify the cost of the data set.

a. Bylaw 4017 RGS Food and Agriculture Section

The Food and Agriculture Section, is the sixth priority area and the most recently included in Bylaw No. 4017 Regional Growth Strategy. The Section is a one page high level policy document which outlines seven principles, three policies, and one target to increase the land in crop production by 5,000 ha by 2038.

The CRD reports that the 5,000 ha target is relative to available farmland and, more generally, the desire to have a locally-based, vibrant food and agriculture economy that is based on a local food system. The CRD reports that the target is intended to be an indicator on food security and represents a more holistic way to look at the food system than a solely land based target into crop production; however, food self-sufficiency is not an objective either in the RGS or the Food and Agriculture Strategy.

The CRD also reports that land in crop production is an indicator for how much land is dedicated to food and commodity crop production as opposed to pasture or unmanaged pasture lands. Land in crop production was chosen over other possible indicators such as no net loss of ALR land or number of farms because it is a better reflection of how agricultural land is being used. It is a better indicator because not all land currently farmed is in the ALR, and not all farmland is in production. Moreover, a no net loss target may not have been supported by some municipalities and consensus by all municipalities is required for adoption of Bylaw 4017.

In terms of the number itself, background research on food and agriculture undertaken for Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) policy directions (circa 2013) by CRD planning showed that 4,752 ha were in crop production as of 2011. This number represented a 20% increase in land in crop production since 2006. The area of farmland in some form of production is at 13,606 ha. The CRD extrapolated the 5,000 ha based on a roughly 20% increase from 4,752 ha every 5 years for the next 20 years. The CRD reports that quantifying the crop production between animal and food production is dependent on what classifies as animal food production and human food production.[3]

Comments:

The Section's principles and policies are broadly consistent with the District's strategic plan goals:

The Agricultural Community Preserved and Strengthened
A Vibrant and Sustainable Agriculture Economy

[3] Ministry of Agriculture (2011 Census of Agriculture) summarizes the amount of land dedicated to each crop area see: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/statistics/census/agricensus_2011_bchighlights.pdf (Retrieved July 26, 2016).
Ministry of Agriculture Capital Regional District (2011 Census of Agriculture) http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/statistics/census/aginbrief_capital.pdf (Retrieved July 26, 2016)
It outlines crop areas dedicated to hay which would likely include animal food production (but would not account for local organic pet food companies who source human grade food from local farms for pet animal food), the remaining crop areas would need to be selected based on what constitutes human food production and the areas converted into the same unit of measurement.

The District encourages a strong and robust food systems policy in keeping with the key interest and significance of food security to the region. However, food security, or food-self-sufficiency is not an objective of the Section.

Bylaw 4017 RGS is a regional growth strategy which sets out targets in the different sections. The agriculture section has a target to increase crop production by 5,000 ha by 2038, current crop production is 4,752 ha. Bylaw 4017 RGS projects a net population increase of 94,900 by 2038. The target to increase crop production is not linked to food self-sufficiency as it is not an objective of the RGS nor linked to population projections though it is *intended* to be an aspirational goal on food security on a high level. The crop production target is also not differentiated between animal and human food production.

The commissions commented that the target of 5,000 ha could benefit from the following refinements:

- differentiated between animal and food production;
- linked to population projections and self-sufficiency goals;
- may not be realistic given that there is only 16,382 ha of land in the ALR and other farming land (not fully quantified) in the CRD; and
- reviewed in the context of a funded study to fully understand production capacity.

b. *draft* Food and Agriculture Strategy

The Food and Agriculture Strategy is a subsidiary document to Bylaw 4017 and supports the Section, making ten recommendations which respond to identified issues and opportunities to create a viable, healthy and resilience food system and works in tandem with the Section to guide future decisions.

The guiding vision for the Strategy recognizes the importance and centrality of food and agriculture to individuals, families and communities:

The Capital Region has a vibrant, valued and evolving local food and agricultural economy that is rooted in the principles of interdependence, reciprocity and respect; it recalls and re-establishes the intimate and important relationships between our land and waters, our food, and our community.

The Strategy provides ten recommendations each with associated actions and desired outcomes. These are provided in Table 1.0 with comments from the commissions and staff.

Table 1.0 Strategy Recommendations and Comments

Recommendation	Comments
Support regional, cross-sector relationships, including a food and agriculture task force.	Support establishment of Regional Food and Agriculture (RFA) Task Force and Agricultural Area Regional Plan. Support CRD staff with consultant.
Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues.	Support the CRD to build upon in-house expertise and provide a regional agrologist to support local governments. Support the CRD Board priorities 4c state that over the course of 2016/2017 the CRD will "work with partners to find a solution to the lack of abattoir, and other related farming infrastructure in the region or on the island". Support data updates Ministry of Agriculture 2011 Census on Agriculture and provide information to regions and municipalities.
Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture.	Plan for organic matter.[4]
Address chronic drainage issues across the region.	Research on development impacts on agriculture and soil quality i.e. imperviousness increase impacts drainage issues as well as over development and roof runoffs.
Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues.	Ongoing public education program and deer management oversight committee. Revisit the deer bag limits and review requirements for the benefit of utilization of harvested deer under the crop protection program and attempt to interest first nations in participating in harvesting.
Maintain affordability and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.	Reducing agriculture water rates, lobbying for small farm subsidies, preventing owning of farm land from non-farmers is a significant and useful beginning for regional growth strategy input. Water costs are not comparable – they are too high. The CRD hasn't maintained costs of bulk water rate Research on bulk water rates on Lower mainland and other provinces is needed as well as efforts to improve rates to encourage farming.
Encourage a place-based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.	Support for healthy indigenous foods – field to table.
Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.	Enhance marketing for healthy indigenous foods - field to table Focus on how to better coordinate FN and local governments.
Increase access to agricultural and food lands.	Continual attention to level of conditions that improve food security and effective strategies to improve crop production.

[4] CRD advises that "the current model for organic matter is distributed. Organic matter was banned from Hartland Landfill last year. The individual homeowners must choose how they wish to dispose of household organic matter, homeowners have a number of options for disposal including private companies or can choose to drop it off at Hartland landfill's transfer station where it is separated then shipped to a digester in Delta, where the material is used on a sod farm. Private companies also have access to the Hartland organics disposal transfer station. The CRD does not control how private companies handle organic matter, or how they manage the digestion. There is a digester located in Cobble Hill, however it does have limited capacity.

The recommendation for organic matter recycling is not a specific long term solution under consideration, but rather high level support to continue to have a conversation regarding organic matter recycling that considers food, farmers and agriculture in the CRD. Currently, farmers do not benefit from organic matter recycling on the South Island and would like to have access to clean digested organic matter to use as soil betterments."

Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture.	More help on marketing strategies for food and agriculture needed and leave the farmer with more money to invest in technologies. Ensure that population growth and need for transportation are aligned, that growth is directed to centres and limited and support increased crop production and continued viability of agriculture land. Ongoing collaboration with the Province to strengthen agriculture and assistance with marketing particularly focus on food hub that is burgeoning.

Comments:

The Strategy is consistent with the District's strategic plan goals:

Advocate for protection of regional rural and agricultural municipalities and enhancing public agricultural holdings in the region with a farm land acquisition program.

The Strategy is consistent with the District's Agriculture Economic Development Plan. However, the commissions identified several issues to enhance protection of regional rural and agricultural municipalities and public agricultural holdings in the region including the need for stronger language (e.g. replace *consider* with *maximize* food and agriculture interests) to ensure protection of rural communities, assistance with rural communities on drainage and wildlife issues, a regional agrologist, need for support of an abattoir for cattle,[5] and aid to farmer's and local governments with agriculture communications and marketing. All of these could be supported within an Agriculture Area Regional Plan which maximizes food and agriculture interests and highlights partnership and collaboration opportunities with the Province. Practical solutions which are measurable would be at the core of the plan.

Synthesis:

Bylaw 4017 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) (July 2016) shifts to policies that encourage investments and development in designated urban centres to support the regional vision. Municipalities must align to policies through Regional Context Statements rather than actions.

In general, the commissions support the Section policies and the Strategy actions but recommend that the Strategy include more specific actions and outcome measurables to assess progress particularly to ensure more ALR land is included in food production, particularly human food production and that the measurable are aligned with population projections and food security.

Further, that progress could be made if the CRD focused on what is working and also looked at new strategies that advance the food culture that's burgeoning in the region and achieve a vision of a vibrant and evolving food industry rooted in reciprocity and respect with the current system. The commissions support an organized effort with a regional agriculture plan supported by a consultant. A study to fully understand crop production capacity would be a component of the regional agriculture plan and help to refine the 5,000 ha target in the Section. Any CRD activities that alienate or work at cross purposes to a regional agriculture plan with clear measurable outcomes was identified as a concern.

In order to achieve the Section target and the Strategy outcomes then the following recommendations are suggested for the District response to the CRD:

[5] See s. 2(2)(c) of the ALR Regulation http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/171_2002#section2 (Retrieved July 27, 2016).

Recommendations for letter to CRD:

Bylaw 4017 Food and Agriculture Section

The District comments that the target should be:

- Crop Production - differentiated between animal and food production;
- Food Security - linked to population projections and self-sufficiency goals;
- Refine the Target – additional research to refine the target as the current target may not realistic given that there is only a total of 16, 382 ha of land in the ALR in the CRD such as a crop production capacity study.

Draft Food and Agriculture Strategy

The District encourages the CRD to strengthen the actions needed to achieve the following:

- Food Security & Production - encourage the development of a regional agriculture plan which improves food security and production and discourage non-farm use of agriculture land, including federally owned crown land; and make regional food trust a high priority;
- Economic support – encourage the CRD to support farmers and local governments with marketing, drainage and wildlife control and water rates; and
- Partnerships –improve the CRD capacity to address regional issues such as supporting a regional agrologist specific to the region; and support the CRD to find a solution to lack of cattle abattoir and other related farming infrastructure, in the region or on the island.

REFERRALS:

26-CPC The Community Planning Commission endorses the CRD Food and Agriculture Strategy with the following additions:

- support of a regional agrologist;
- CRD fund a capacity study;
- when addressing chronic drainage issues that North Saanich be included;
- the establishment of regional food land trust be made a high priority;
- CRD look at ways to address non-farm use of federally owned agriculture land especially if in the ALR;
- encourage the CRD to investigate methods to improve economic viability; and
- mechanisms to discourage non-farm use of agriculture lands.

23-CSC The Community Stewardship Commission recommend that Council investigate the following questions/issues that were raised relevant to the CRD Food and Agriculture Strategy and RGS Food and Agriculture Section:

- water issues
- governance
- how do you align the use of the land with the current and future community needs
- more relevant data required
- determine land use efficiency
- what should the measures of success be
- clear targets and goals

OPTIONS:

Council can:

1. Direct staff to write to the CRD with comments on the Bylaw 4017 Food and Agriculture Section and CRD draft Food and Agriculture Strategy.
2. Take no action.
3. Other.

SUMMARY:

Bylaw 4017 "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2016" will proceed to public consultation in the fall, 2016. The subsidiary draft Food and Agriculture Strategy will be considered at the Forum of Councils for Food and Agriculture in October, 2016. The CRD has advised the District that the District's comments on the Section and Strategy may be considered as part of the public consultation processes in the fall, 2016. Formal comments on the Section and Strategy may be sent as correspondence to the CRD Board. Formal and informal comments on the Strategy may be presented at the Forum of Councils. The CRD Board next meets September 14, 2016 and October 12, 2016. Additional opportunities to comment on Bylaw 4017 will be provided in the CRD formal referral process in early 2017.

Staff recommends that Council write to the CRD Board on the Section and the Strategy as part of the public consultation process specifically as outlined in this staff report (August 16, 2016) to ensure District comments are considered early in the process.

Respectfully submitted,

Coralie Breen
Planner

Concurrence,

Rob Buchan
Chief Administrative Officer

Concurrence:

Anne Berry, Director of Planning and Community Services

Eymond Toupin, Director of Infrastructure Services

Curt Kingsley, Director of Corporate Services

John Trelford, Director of Emergency Services

Stephanie Munro, A/Director of Financial Services

Appendix A: CRD Food and Agriculture Strategy
Appendix B: CRD Food and Agriculture Section in "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2016"
Appendix C: Bylaw 4017 "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2016"

Setting Our Table

Capital Regional District Food & Agriculture Strategy

2016

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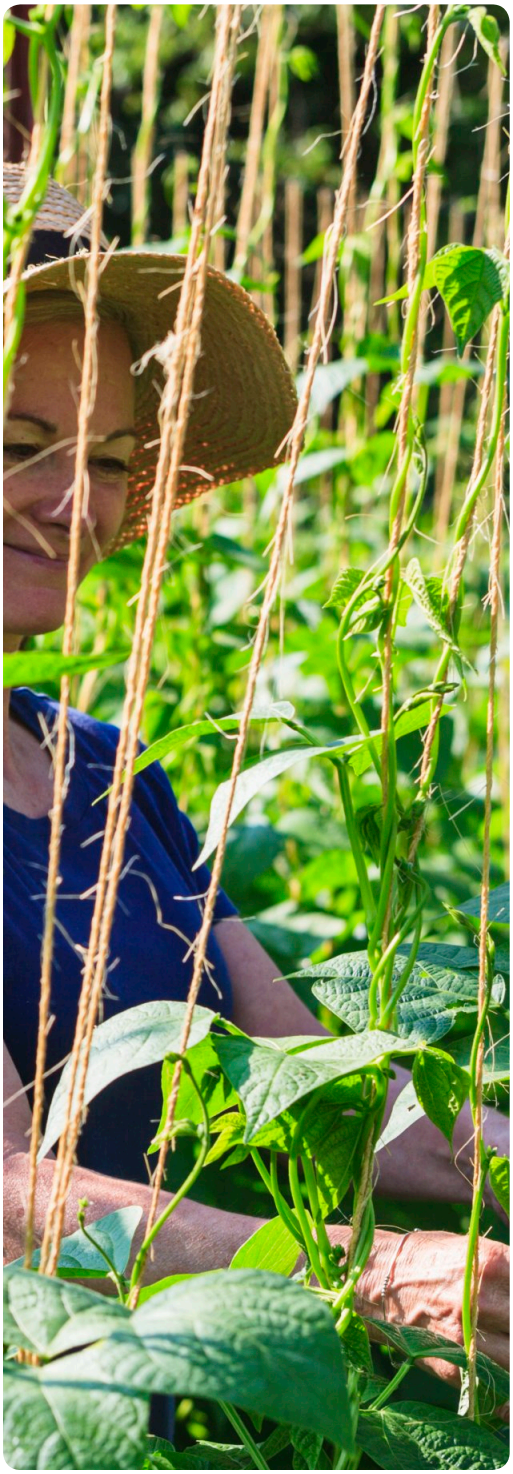

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Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the extensive time and efforts provided by agencies and stakeholders in the development of the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy over the past three years. In particular we would like to thank and acknowledge the involvement of the following individuals:

Alistair Bryson, Farmer, Chair of CRD Board (2013-2014)

Bob Maxwell, Farmer, Steering Committee Member

Earl Claxton Jr, Elder, W̱SÁNEĆ

Fiona Deveraux, Dietitian, Island Health, Steering Committee Member

Gabe Epstein, Community Organizer, Urban Farmer, Steering Committee Member

Gwen Underwood, Lands Manager Tsawout Nation

JB Williams, Knowledge Keeper, W̱SÁNEĆ

Linda Geggie, Steering Committee Member, CR-FAIR

Rob Buchan, CAO, North Saanich, Steering Committee Member, North Saanich

Rob Kline, Regional Agrologist, Ministry of Agriculture, Steering Committee Member

Selilye Claxton, Elder, W̱SÁNEĆ

Skye Augustine, Consultant, Aboriginal Initiatives, Steering Committee Member

Terry Michell, Farmer, Peninsula Agriculture Commission Member, Steering Committee Member

Tracy Cullen, Victoria Foundation, Steering Committee Member

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Photo: Sophie Wood

1 | GUIDING VISION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Guiding Vision for food and agriculture recognizes the importance and centrality of food and agriculture to us as individuals, to our families and our communities.

The Capital Region has a vibrant, valued and evolving local food and agricultural economy that is rooted in the principles of interdependence, reciprocity and respect; it recalls and re-establishes the intimate and important relationships between our land and waters, our food, and our community.

Food and agriculture are important aspects of the Capital Regional District's (CRD) history, visual identity and ongoing sustainability. Public appreciation and concern for the health and well-being of the region's food and agriculture systems is rising. Predicted changes in climate, energy costs, water availability and agricultural production have drawn attention to resilience of the region's food system.

The principal purpose of the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy (RFAS) is to guide action and foster leadership. The RFAS identifies a continued role for the CRD in food and agriculture. The RFAS recommendations are intended to support the development and future success of food and agriculture in a way that is collaborative, strategic, systemic, and economically viable.

The RFAS can inform CRD initiatives such as the Regional Growth Strategy now under development, as well as the Integrated Water Services Master Plan, Environmental Resource Management Planning process, CRD Corporate Strategic Plan, and Aboriginal Initiatives planning. Consistent regional direction will strengthen the food and agricultural sector.

The document sets out a strategic approach with clearly articulated recommendations, associated actions, and resourcing requirements. The following infographic summarizes the ten RFAS recommendations, and their anticipated outcomes.

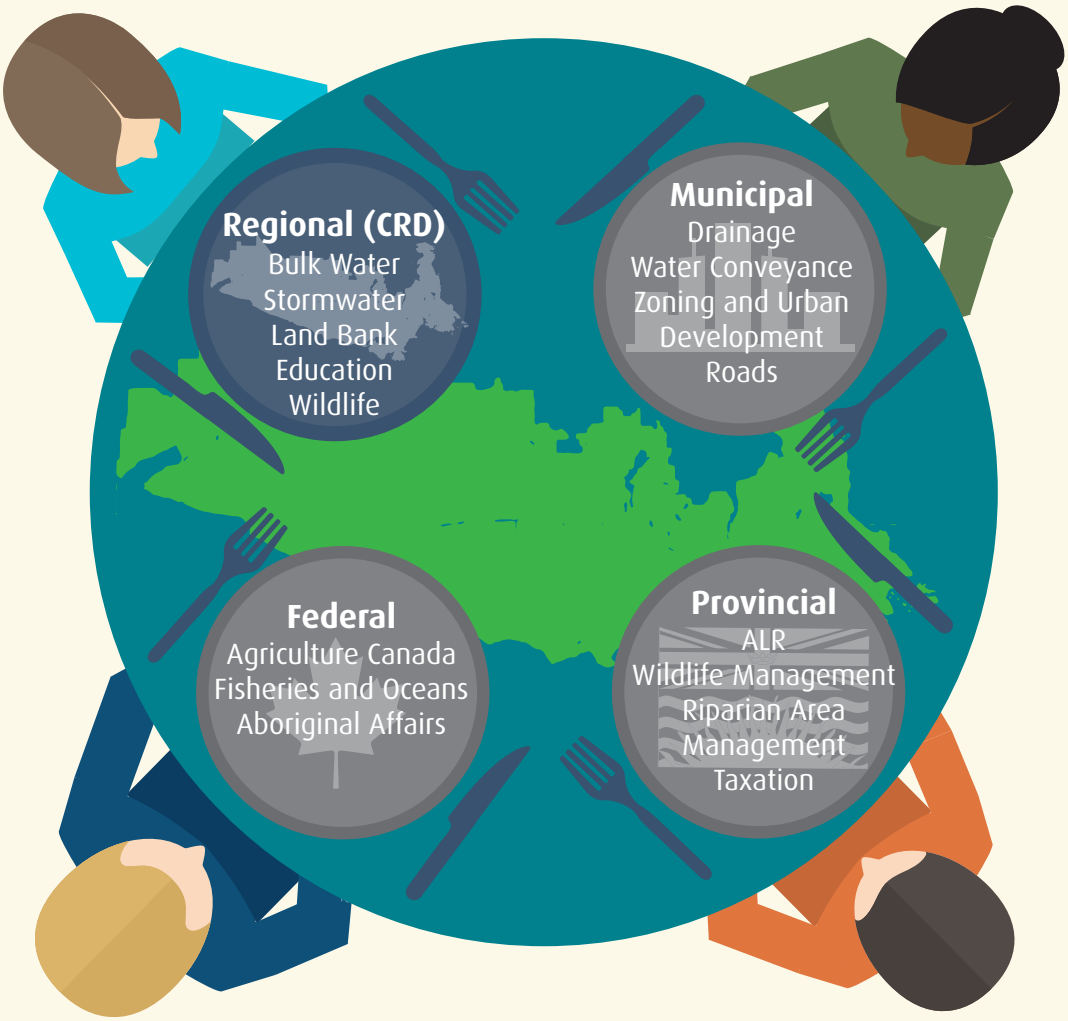
Setting Our Table

Capital Regional District Food & Agriculture Strategy

VISION

The Capital Region has a vibrant, valued and evolving local food and agricultural economy that is rooted in the principles of interdependence, reciprocity and respect; it recalls and re-establishes the intimate and important relationships between our land and waters, our food, and our community.

ROLES



OUTCOMES

- Cleaner environment
- Reintroduction of traditional plants

- Improved population health
- Strengthened relationships and partnerships
- Broad participation
- Engaged citizens
- Increased knowledge of and access to traditional foods

- Economic viability
- Sector revitalization
- Reduced crop loss
- Increased sustainable harvest of traditional foods

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support regional, cross-sector relationships, including a food and agriculture task force.
2. Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues
3. Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture
4. Address chronic drainage issues across the region
5. Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues
6. Maintain affordability and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations
7. Encourage a place–based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.
8. Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.
9. Increase access to agricultural and food lands.
10. Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture

2 | CONTEXT

The Capital Regional District (the CRD or 'Region') is updating its 2003 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). As a 'parent' document, the RGS-Update articulates a broad vision and provides a high-level strategic direction on regional matters.

During the engagement phase of the RGS-Update, food and agriculture was of high and growing public interest and concern. Food and food systems received the greatest amount of interest of the nine sustainability policy brief topics from participating stakeholder groups and members of the public. Initially treated as two separate topics, food and agriculture were brought together as inextricably connected elements for the on-going planning process.

As a sub-strategy of the RGS - Update, the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy (RFAS) provides a more in-depth exploration of regional food and agricultural objectives, issues and opportunities than is possible in the high-level RGS. The principal purpose of the RFAS is to guide action and foster leadership. The RFAS identifies a continued role for the CRD in food and agriculture. The document sets out a strategic approach with clearly articulated recommendations, associated actions, and resourcing requirements. The RFAS is intended to be a living document, to be regularly monitored, reviewed and updated.

The RFAS acknowledges that food and agriculture are part of a food 'system'. The Strategy therefore needs to consider all aspects of that system, including planting, irrigation, harvesting, processing, distributing, preparing and marketing, as well as consumption. Food waste management and soil nutrient management are part of the cycle.

Why are Food and Agriculture Important to the CRD?

Food and agriculture are important aspects of the Capital Regional District's (CRD) history, visual identity and ongoing sustainability. Public appreciation and concern for the health and well-being of the region's food and agriculture systems is rising.

Predicted changes in climate, energy costs, water availability and agricultural production have drawn attention to the ongoing resilience of the region's food system.

The CRD is engaged in activities connected to food agriculture, including:

- Management of problem wildlife and invasive species (on CRD lands)
- Support of local government work on watershed management and drainage
- Provision of water services across the region and maintaining agricultural water rates to rural producers
- Collection and maintenance of agriculture information[1]
- Collection and distribution of climate related indicator data
- Provision of organic matter collection and recycling services
- Support for and administration of agriculture-related planning processes and policies for a number of Electoral Areas

Applicability

The RFAS applies to those areas of the CRD that fall within the Growth Management Plan Area of the RGS (the 13 municipalities and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area). The RFAS does not apply to the Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Areas. The RFAS framework anticipates and allows for potential future expanded coverage and collaboration.

The RFAS builds on and supports the approaches and recommendations articulated in existing and proposed municipal Agricultural Area plans,[2] as well as the work of the many agencies and organizations focused on building a vibrant and vital regional food and agriculture sector.[3]

The region spans the traditional territories of 22 First Nations of which 10 have Reserves within the CRD's defined growth management planning area (GMPA), which represents the scope of the catchment area for this strategy. Although First Nations governments are not signatories to the RGS bylaw, the RFAS as a separate planning document provides a vehicle for practical collaboration and relationship building. First Nations participation in the RFAS process is not contingent on being participants in the RGS process.

1 The CRD current collects and maintains Statistics Canada Agricultural Census data, and associated with agricultural land use inventories (ALUI).

2 The District of North Saanich Ag Plan (2008) the District of Central Saanich Ag Plan (2007); Districts of Metchosin and Saanich, and Juan de Fuca Electoral Area (in progress).

3 A comprehensive list of agencies and organizations involved in regional food and agriculture issues and activities is available in the Appendix.

Map 1: Agricultural Land Reserve

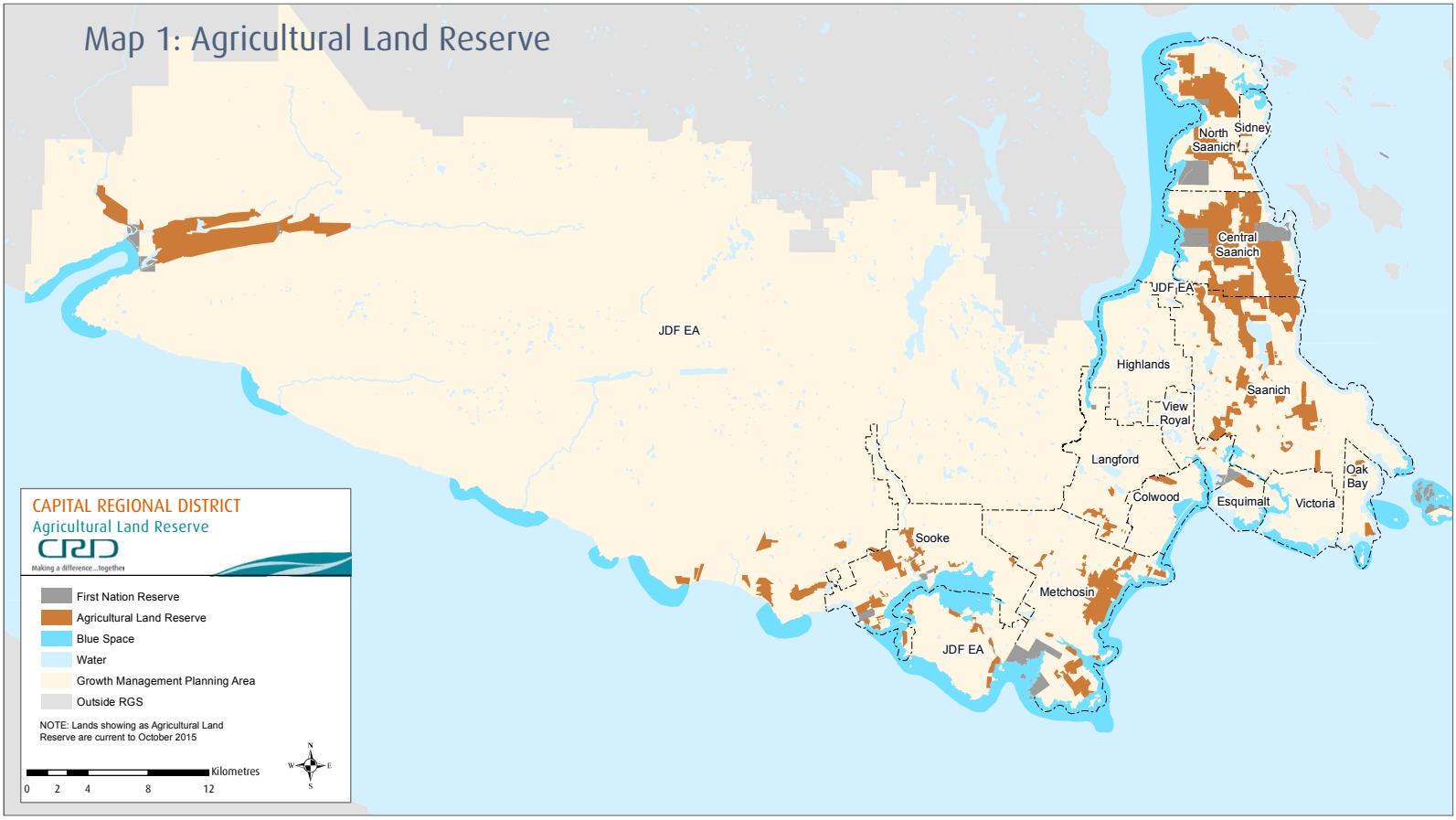


Photo: Sophie Wood

Process

The RFAS was informed by early RGS consultation undertaken in 2010. A policy brief was developed in response to interest in food security. The brief provided a snapshot of information gathered from various perspectives in the local food and farming sector and identified potential policy interventions.[4] A Food Policy Options Paper was presented to the CRD Board, in parallel with briefs on other sustainability topics. The Board directed staff to further explore the regional interest in food security by way of a sub-strategy.

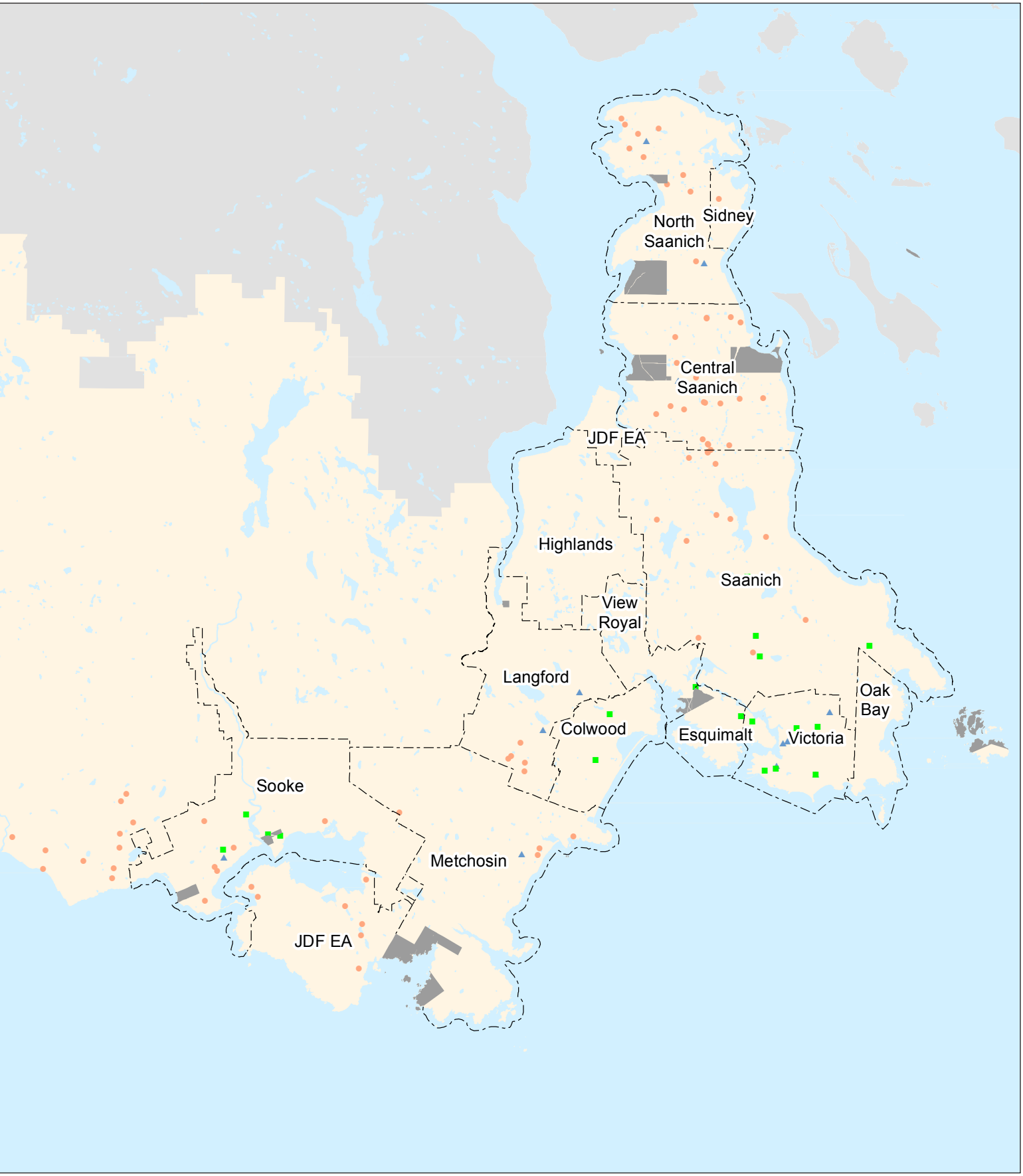
The capital region's agricultural community includes numerous organizations, agencies and individuals who, while focusing on different aspects of food and agriculture, share a common appreciation for the role food and agriculture plays in achieving social, environmental and economic health and resiliency. The RFAS process launched conversations and workshops with community leaders to establish a collaborative approach reflecting diverse interests.[5]

An informal Advisory Group embraced a flexible solution -focused process to identify and generate practical actions promising sustained and long-term success. The Advisory Group refined recommendations and the action plan based on relative and systemic impact of alternatives.

4 Workshops, surveys and research.

5 See the Appendix for list of participants.

JDF EA
CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
Community Gardens, Farms, Markets
CRD
Making a difference...together
Community Garden
Farm
Market
Growth Management Planning Area
First Nation Reserve
NOTE: Lands showing as Agricultural Land Reserve are current to October 2015
Kilometres
0 2 4 8 12
N
W E
S


North Saanich
Sidney
Central Saanich
JDF EA
Highlands
Saanich
View Royal
Langford
Colwood
Esquimalt
Victoria
Oak Bay
Sooke
Metchosin
JDF EA

3 | CURRENT REALITIES

Regional food and agriculture is impacted by realities that influence the current situation and/or recommended actions. These realities include:

- Food and agriculture is fundamental to the long-term sustainability, resilience and health of the region and its human communities.
- Food and agriculture require a supportive system from production to transformation and distribution to waste recovery.
- The global food system preferences cheap food over local and healthy food.
- Many food and agricultural enterprises, and the lands and families that create and support them are economically tenuous.
- The current provincial agricultural policy framework is unable to preference food production over other forms of agriculture.
- The Province and local governments have only limited ability to undertake regional approaches benefiting food and agriculture such as the acquisition and management of agricultural land, economic development, management of problem wildlife and invasive species, watershed management, provision of affordable water services and local economic development approaches.
- First Nations continue to assert their Douglas Treaty rights "to hunt and fish as formerly" on unoccupied lands throughout the region. [6]
- Predicted changes in climate, energy costs, water availability, and agricultural production have drawn attention to the ongoing resilience of the region's food system.

6 http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/assets/FortVictoriaTreaties.pdf

Aboriginal Interests

The First Peoples of this region have a 14,000-year relationship with food, land and sea. For hundreds of generations, local Indigenous communities have looked after the lands and waters of this territory, and in return, food was and continues to be a vital and inseparable part of Nuu-cha-nulth and Coast and Strait Salish health,[7] culture and spirituality.

The last 150 years have seen the systematic disruption of a powerful and healthy connection to the area's food, lands and waters. Colonial and government policies limited access and ownership of land and waters and disrupted traditional harvesting practices, resulting in dramatic dietary changes and negative impacts on the health of Aboriginal communities. Settlement patterns, associated infrastructure and pollution rendered many local foods unharvestable. Many traditional land management practices were made illegal, gathering areas were converted to modern uses, and wetlands were drained.[8] Establishment of reserves changed harvesting and access to foods. Communities were supplied with non-traditional foods that created dependence. Residential schools disrupted and undermined the relationship to place, limited access to indigenous foods and medicines, reduced food literacy, and brought about shame regarding culture, language, and traditional foods. Whereas food was once plentiful, healthful, free and commonly traded, it is now commercialized, processed and shipped from far away.

First Nations have growing interests in and concerns regarding access to healthy and safe food sources. The W̱SÁNEĆ people (Saanich) have a teaching that, "when the tide is out, the table is set." For the Strait Salish and Coast Salish people, whose territory the CRD sits within, "lands and food are at the center of what it is to be indigenous."[8] From cultivation, through to harvesting, processing, preparation and consumption, Indigenous communities recognize the important role

7 The majority of the region falls within the traditional territory of the Salish people, with the exception of the north-west part of the region in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, from Jordon River to Port Renfrew, which is the Territory of the Nuu-cha-nulth people.

8 Krohn 2007 8 PFPP, 2011a, p. 1

of traditional foods in fostering a strong connection between the land and the people.[9] The majority of Indigenous communities regard the health and quality of food as inseparable from the environment in which it is located.[10] Traditional foods are a central part of Aboriginal communities' culture and ceremony. First Nations have Douglas Treaty rights "to hunt and fish as formerly" over much of the region and have important traditional knowledge to share.

"If you lose your food, you lose part of your culture and it has a devastating effect on your psyche."[11] The current food system challenges principles of interrelatedness and reciprocity. Today, for Aboriginals and non-aboriginals alike, food comes to the region from elsewhere. We have broken our relationship to this place. Throughout the region, Aboriginals and non-aboriginals are beginning to re-establish their connection to food and culture, re-connecting people with the environment that supports life. The principles of interdependence, reciprocity and respect derived from thousands of years of living sustainably on this land, suggest a way forward that will allow all to live together sustainably.

The intent of this strategy is to help connect food, culture, people and the land and to create opportunities for inter agency partnerships to address barriers to increasing food production. This strategy focuses on how regional scale action can help achieve a productive, healthy food system in the context of global scale influences.

Role of the CRD

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is a federation of 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The CRD is a local government for three electoral areas and a service provider for its local municipalities, delivering over 200 local, regional and sub-regional services for the 375,000+ residents of the region. A 24 member Board of Directors, made up of municipal and local area politicians, governs the CRD. The geographical area of the CRD (the 'region')

Photo: Sophie Wood

9 NWIC, 2014, para 1

10 Rudolph & McLachlan, 2013

11 Yakama Tribal Nurse

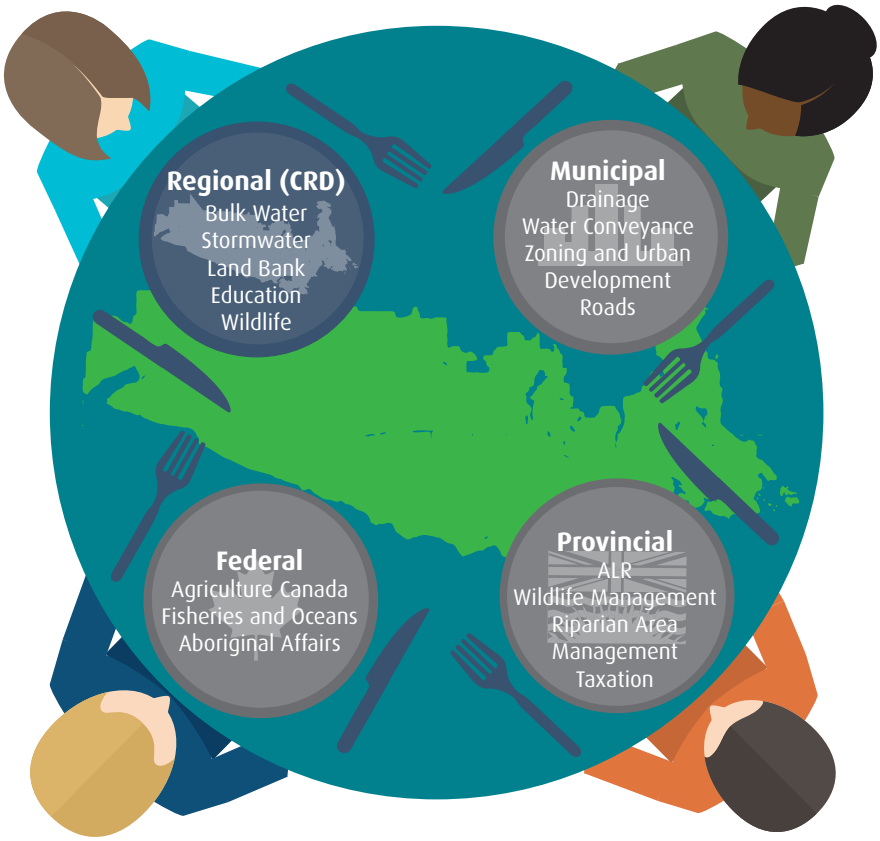
encompasses 237,000 hectares, including 70 Gulf Islands – a vibrant, large and diverse area renowned for its mild Mediterranean-like climate, beautiful and productive coastlines and natural ecosystems.

While regional districts, municipalities and electoral areas do not have a specific mandate over food and agriculture, many aspects of local government operations have an impact on the sector. Food and agriculture are impacted by CRD services such as water delivery, environmental protection and conservation, watershed education and drinking watershed protection and management, liquid and solid waste management (including rural septic programs), invasive species eradication / native plant restoration, and more recently, wildlife (deer, geese, beaver, bullfrog) management.

Food and agriculture are generally considered to be the sole responsibility of the Province and the Federal government. However, the Province and the Federal government have been unable to provide the level of attention and support required to see the integration and growth of a healthy, place-based local food and agricultural economy within a developing region like the CRD. There also appear to be gaps in the current responsibility framework in areas such as the management of wildlife within developed areas, locally focused economic development, and long-term agricultural land protection.

A healthy, place-based local food and agricultural economy is a matter of regional interest. Food and agriculture, as a fundamental human endeavour, is critical for the future health and wellbeing of our community. The cultivation and provision of healthy food and the long-term development and care of local farms and farmland - regardless of whether farmland is currently used to grow food - contributes to the development of a healthy culture and a liveable, resilient, secure and sustainable community.

There is growing expectation and interest for more CRD involvement. Issues involving or affecting food and agriculture are predicted to increase and will continue to demand a regional approach.



4 | ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Achievement of the food and agriculture vision will require addressing issues and seizing opportunities.

Support and Leadership Gap

While a number of informal and formalized networks and associations exist, there is currently no overarching organization or structure that has the mandate or resources to convene and work across the diverse and expanding food and agriculture sector. Following a provincial trend, issues and opportunities connected to the food and agriculture sector are increasing - and the Region's municipalities and electoral areas are currently ill equipped to tackle them effectively[12] due in part to a lack of capacity but also because of their regional and cross-jurisdictional nature. The provincial government has not filled the gaps. There is a need and a desire for a regional approach – appropriately resourced and managed – designed to achieve outcomes that demonstrate value and build capacity for food and agriculture in the region.

Environmental Restoration and Repair

The deep cultural connection to local food and to the waters and lands that support its production offer a remarkable opportunity to come together to address the harms and health impacts that have been committed in the name of progress. Some foods are increasingly unsafe to eat – particularly those foods harvested along the Region's shores. Access to food lands is limited.

12 Three out of five municipal agriculture plans completed in the capital region recommended the establishment of some kind of support or extension service for food and agriculture.

Photo: Sophie Wood

This has greatly impacted the economic, social and environmental health of residents. There needs to be improved food access, affordability and adequacy so people can be nourished by food grown, harvested and produced in the CRD. There is an opportunity for healing at a variety of levels, including restoring access to culturally important food, supporting residents' food literacy, as well as encouraging the development of agriculture-related activities that build collaborative and constructive relationships among Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

The lands and waters that produce the Region's diverse and growing array of food and agricultural crops are increasingly impacted by factors including: the direct and indirect (pollution, flooding, etc.) effects of development; changing regulatory environments; increasing rural-urban and farmer-neighbour conflicts; rising cost of farmland and farm activities; increasing age of farmers and agricultural land owners; and the limited economic viability of farming and lack of food literacy in the region. Together these are contributing to the gradual loss of productive farmlands, foodlands, shorelines and waters within the CRD, and greatly impacting the physical, mental and spiritual health of residents. Also impacted are the communities, groups and individuals responsible for resource stewardship and productivity.

Land Protection

While the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) (Map 1) has significantly reduced the rate at which farmland is converted to non-farm uses within the CRD, it is a type of land use zone and has a mandate to protect agricultural land, but not necessarily to enhance food and farmlands.[13] There is an absence of organizations or agencies dedicated to the effective protection and management of operating farmland. There is strong interest and rationale for the establishment of a regional

13 The ALR is a provincial land use zone in which land cannot be used for non-farm uses without provincial permission as a result its utility is limited. The powers of its governing body the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) are also limited. The ALC is not a trust and cannot directly hold or own land. It does not provide economic development or management support to ALR property owners.

While ALR has significantly reduced the rate at which farmland is converted to non-farm or urban uses in BC (since its inception in 1973 over 3000 ha of ALR land have been lost from the CRD), its ability to proactively protect and enhance food and farmlands is limited.

farmland trust and supporting trust fund.[14] The regional farmland trust could begin to address current barriers to farmers entering the sector such as agricultural land availability, high land costs, high startup costs and the long term preservation of agricultural land.

Secure Agricultural Land Base

The protection and enhancement of productive areas is important to the future sustainability and resilience of the region, as are the cultivation and harvesting opportunities that they afford the farmers, fishers and Indigenous peoples responsible for their ongoing stewardship. The deliberate protection, integration and valuing of these areas is seen as an act of leadership that can bring much needed attention to and appreciation of the region's working landscape.

Economic Opportunities

As the region's food and agriculture sector grows and matures it is becoming an increasingly important part of the local economy. Consequently, food and agriculture would benefit from being more deliberately considered by local economic development initiatives and programs. In particular, new and emerging food and agriculture initiatives and ideas would benefit from such support. Economic development support could also help create the conditions necessary for innovation—encouraging regional partnerships and synergistic relationship opportunities while ensuring the effective and equitable distribution of limited resources.

The need for economic development in food and agriculture through regional support has been identified by a number of food and agriculture organizations. There are only a handful of organizations doing economic development work, and only one currently that is exploring economic development specifically pertaining to food and agriculture.

Acting on the issues and opportunities that promise positive and sustained systematic impact will connect and unite the region's food and agriculture community. The RFAS provides a regional framework and approach to reinforce current efforts and connect the region's expanding food and agriculture network.

14 In 2014, the Districts of Saanich and North Saanich passed resolutions supporting a regional consideration of this issue. A 2015 study by CR-FAIR recommended that a regional farmland trust and trust fund be established.

Photo: Sophie Wood

5 | RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below respond to identified issues and opportunities. The recommended actions are regional in nature and scope, broadly supported, have the potential to have a significant and systematic impact on the region's food and agriculture, and build on or support existing CRD activities or initiatives.

1. Support regional, cross-sector relationships, including a food and agriculture task force.
2. Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues.
3. Develop regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture.
4. Address chronic drainage issues across the region.
5. Consider establishing programs to address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues.
6. Maintain and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.
7. Encourage a place–based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.
8. Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.
9. Increase access to agricultural and food lands.
10. Support regional economic development.

1 Support regional, cross-sector relationships, including a food and agriculture task force.

As a regional agency, the CRD is arguably in the best position to help convene a network of key stakeholders to realize the guiding vision and help with the delivery and outcome of the CRD's services and activities connected to food and agriculture.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

Establish a Regional Food and Agriculture (RFA) Task Force to develop an organizational structure that supports regional collaboration and strategic decision-making.

- Provide Board oversight/support mechanism and determine service support for RFA task force.
- Develop the interim governance structure, reporting procedures, responsibilities, and timeline, staffing and resource arrangements.
- Re-constitute and convene the RFAS Advisory Group as part of the RFA Task Force membership.

DESIRED OUTCOME

A cross-sectoral structure that can provide effective guidance for regional food and agriculture efforts and help with the implementation and development of the RFAS.

2 Improve the CRD's capacity to address regional food and agriculture issues

Incrementally improving capacity will help the CRD become a more effective and proactive participant in the emerging food and agriculture area. It will help the CRD be more strategic and prudent in its response to issues and opportunities, and to support the public awareness that is critical to a healthy, place based food system.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

i Develop food and agricultural education, experience and expertise.

- Identify divisions of the CRD that would benefit from the addition of food and agricultural expertise.
- Work to build an appreciation and understanding of food and agriculture and its links to public health with existing resources.
- Solicit support, partnership and input from the proposed RFA Task Force, local food, agriculture and health organizations and agencies, and interested local municipalities and electoral areas.

ii Embed food and agricultural experience and expertise within the CRD.

- Consider increasing in-house knowledge and expertise to deliver services that meet the needs of farmers and respond to growing interest and policy work associated with the food and agriculture sector, resources permitting.

- Support the proposed RFA Task Force and help the CRD more effectively address increasing food and agriculture-related issues and opportunities connected with existing service centres (Planning, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Services, Integrated Water, etc.).

iii

Maintain and improve regional food and agriculture data.

- Determine what information is required (with recommendations from the RFA Task Force), identify information gaps, and build a more complete and accurate food and agriculture-related database.
- Continue to work with and pursue partnerships with agencies and organizations such as the Victoria Foundation, Peninsula Agriculture Commission (PAC), Island Health, First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR), Ministry of Agriculture, First Nations, Greater Victoria Economic Development Authority, and others to realize efficiencies and improve the relevancy and application of the data.
- Establish and update agreements and protocols with relevant agencies and organizations to effectively and affordably acquire, maintain and share data.
- Identify measurable indicators to assess impact of implementing the RFAS recommendations.

- Improved ability and capacity to effectively respond to regional food and agriculture-related issues and opportunities within existing departmental mandates.
- Improved ability for municipalities to support the of the regional vision for food and agriculture.
- Engaged, food literate citizens.
- Improved population health.
- Revitalized agricultural sector.

Photo: Sophie Wood

3 Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture

Local urban and rural food and agricultural producers would benefit from access to clean, affordable organic matter. There is a desire to assist the CRD with its organic matter recycling responsibility to:

- Increase the fertility of the region's soils (increased security and sovereignty)
- Reduce imported soil inputs (increased sustainability)
- Sequester carbon (mitigate climate change)

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

Consider food and agriculture interests with a goal of improving the region's soils.

- Continue to work with the food and agriculture sector – via the proposed RFA Task Force – to develop an appropriate long-term solution for the recycling and integration of the region's organic waste stream.
- Develop an approach that meets the needs of the CRD and the interests of the region's food and agriculture sector.

4 Address chronic drainage issues across the region

Chronic drainage issues were identified through the RFAS process and continue to negatively impact the following eight high fertility agricultural areas in the CRD:

- Blenkinsop Valley
- Durrell Creek
- Maber Flats
- Martindale Flats
- O'Donnell Creek
- Panama Flats
- Quick's Bottom
- Wilkinson/Hastings area of Saanich
- Tod Creek

Farms are impacted by seasonal inundation and flooding, exacerbated in recent years by upland development. Increasing environmental regulations designed to protect riparian and wetland areas are also having an impact.

Drainage issues are negatively affecting the ability of local producers to farm. Producers who have experienced flooding are feeling discouraged by local governments' apparent inability to improve the situation. Addressing this issue would improve the productivity of affected areas, enhance the livelihoods of associated producers and help re-establish positive relationships between the farming community and local government.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS:

Where possible, support municipal efforts towards watershed management with a goal to address drainage issues impacting the region's most fertile soils.

- Work with municipalities and stakeholders to identify effective approaches to address drainage issues within areas prone to flooding.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Reduced planting and crop loss due to chronic drainage issues across the region.
- Stronger partnerships with municipalities, provincial and federal government agencies, First Nations, and community and environmental organizations regarding flooding on agricultural land.

5

Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues.

Problem wildlife is an increasing burden for municipalities, residents and farmers across the region. In response, the CRD, in collaboration with municipalities, electoral areas, provincial ministries, stakeholders and farmers has developed and piloted a number of management strategies.[15] This work is highly valued by local food and agricultural producers.

There is a desire to see wildlife management practices continued and expanded across the Region – including in the Electoral Areas and within urbanized communities. Opportunities exist to partner with members of the Aboriginal community, who have treaty rights and cultural connections to these animals for food and ceremonial purposes. There is also a need to expand existing programs to manage invasive plant and animal species and encourage endangered and beneficial wildlife (e.g. pollinators) which can have a positive impact on food and agricultural systems and their associated habitats.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS:

i

Continue to consider food and agriculture interests in regional wildlife management discussions and projects.

- Continue to provide information and tools to the food and agriculture sector.
- Facilitate First Nations access to wild game on private property through hunting and organized programs for humane wildlife management.
- Continue to consider establishing a wildlife management program as a service.
- Expand wildlife programs to adjacent Electoral Areas who are also dealing with these issues.

ii

Consider emerging wildlife and environmental issues e.g. beneficial species (pollinators), invasive and problematic species.

- If a wildlife program is established as a permanent service, consider also providing for the ability to respond to other important wildlife and environmental issues such as reducing the impact of invasive species on CRD lands (currently a CRD role) and providing educational support for residents dealing with invasive species on non-CRD lands.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A comprehensive consideration of wildlife issues that addresses the impact of wildlife on regional food and agriculture activities by the CRD Board.
- Increased access by First Nations to traditional food sources.

15 For example: deer (https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/regional-deer-management-strategy); geese (https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/goose-management); bullfrog; and beaver.

6 Maintain affordability and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.

Access to clean, affordable irrigation water is critical to the maintenance and expansion of food and agricultural activity. The exemplary management of the region's drinking water resource under the guidance of the Regional Water Supply Commission and the citizens' Water Advisory Committee, has maintained an agricultural water rate for agricultural uses.

Growing water demands from population growth, coupled with the effects of climate change on the current (Sooke Lake) water supply for greater Victoria over the next 30-50 years, are expected to stress the water supply. The food and agriculture community hopes that despite these pressures, the agricultural water rate now provided to rural produces (i.e. the Agricultural Water Rate) can be continued and potentially expanded to urban agricultural producers. The application of the Agricultural Water Rate to Urban Agriculture would require direction and approval from CRD water commissions and in some cases, municipalities. Agricultural producers recognize the importance of water conservation and are committed to investing in efficiency measures.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

Continue to provide affordable water rates for rural farm operations, and through direction from the water commissions, consider extending them to urban agriculture operations.

- Continue to provide access to irrigation water and affordable agricultural water rates.
- Continue to consult and involve the food and agriculture community.
- Encourage innovation in water-conservation techniques, facilitate access to funds for investment in infrastructure (retention ponds, drip irrigation), and encourage conservation activities.
- Explore the possibility of extending agricultural water rates to urban producers.
- Encourage increased investment and innovation by producers in water conservation technologies and techniques resulting in lower water use.
- Continue to promote workshops for farmers on low-impact drainage design to capture nutrients, runoff and recharge groundwater.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Stable cost and availability of adequate irrigation water supply to urban and rural agricultural producers.

7 Encourage a place-based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities.

The RFAS process has provided an opportunity to foster meaningful relationships with the First Nations, leading to a greater appreciation and understanding of indigenous perspectives on local foods and medicines. The Aboriginal community shares many concerns with non-aboriginals regarding food and agriculture. The phrase "we are all indigenous to planet earth" captures the concept of "indigeneity" – whereby every citizen in this region, regardless of whether they descend from settlers or the first people, has a responsibility to understand, respect and live in harmony with this place.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

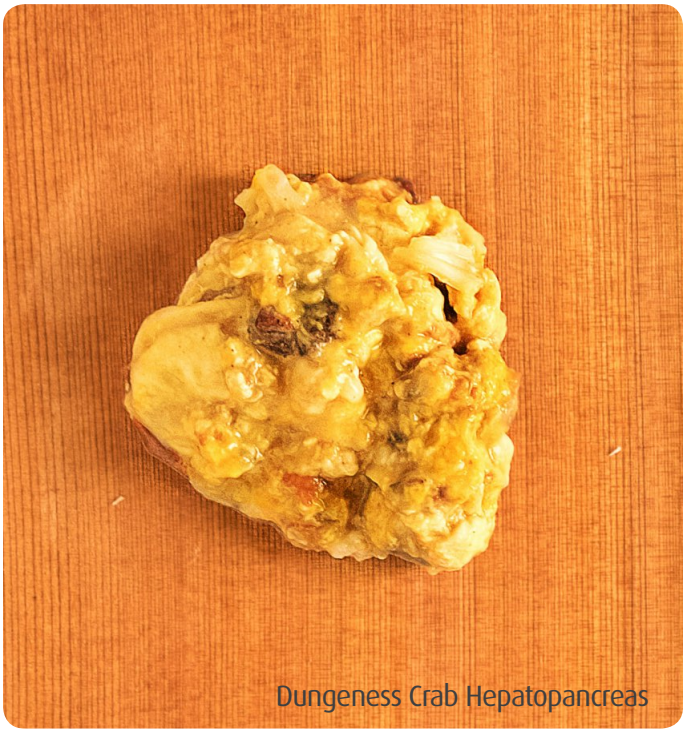
Continue to develop meaningful relationships with Aboriginal communities through regional food and agriculture discussions and activities.

- Continue to support and participate in Aboriginal food issues and agricultural activities.
- Work with local organizations, government agencies and First Nations groups to develop new initiatives.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Improved relations with Aboriginal communities.
- Improved understanding and appreciation of traditional food knowledge.
- Greater number of successful Indigenous food and agriculture initiatives and activities.

Sea Urchin Roe



Dungeness Crab Hepatopancreas

8 Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events.

Build on existing food-related collaborative partnerships and activities occurring between Aboriginal communities, government agencies and community groups in the region.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

Pursue regional food and agriculture-related partnerships and activities between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, agencies and groups.

- Participate in and support existing festivals, celebrations, feasts and ceremonies.
- Explore ways to support First Nations initiatives that aim to revive, reintroduce and restore access to traditional foods.
- Explore ways and means to accommodate access to Regional Parks for traditional and cultural uses.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased and consistent access to sustainably harvested traditional foods from the land and the sea.
- Cleaner environment e.g. reduced shellfish closures, improved monitoring results (marine and stormwater).
- Renewal of cultural practices around food harvesting and knowledge transfer to youth.
- Increased attendance by non-aboriginal community to First Nations feasts and celebrations.
- Re-introduction of rare or endangered traditional plants on public lands.

Dungeness Crab Muscle

9 Increase access to agricultural and food lands.

Building on the leadership work initiated by a number of local municipalities, a regional process to establish a food and farmland trust and associated trust fund could result in a mandate to protect and steward food and farmlands in a manner that:

- Reflects and responds to regional issues and interests, benefiting rural, urban, suburban and exurban communities
- Considers and manages a wide array of food and farm areas including those lands currently not covered by Provincial legislation and services
- Maintains and enhances farmland productivity
- Connects farmlands with appropriate stewards (food producers and harvesters)

Advancing the above would require additional study.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

Initiate a process to establish a regional food and farmland trust.

- Establish a regional process to establish a regional food and farmland trust. This could be considered by the proposed RFA Task Force or a dedicated sub-committee.
- Complete a feasibility strategy addressing the following and other items identified by the task force:
  - Determine and establish the appropriate legal structure to acquire, hold and administer food and farmland that would effectively protect and put more farmland into production.
  - Explore alternative finance models and partnerships to secure and sustainably manage lands within the trust framework.
- Establish a legal structure and supporting fund.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Farmland trust participation and support from local municipalities, community groups, financial institutions and investors, government agencies and First Nations.

Photo: Sophie Wood

10 Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture.

ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

i

Work with community and business groups to develop a regional food and agriculture economic development strategy.

- Consider involvement of the proposed RFA Task Force.
- Develop a regional agricultural economic development plan in partnership with external agencies.

ii

Support strategic business development initiatives for the region's food and agriculture sector including agri-tourism.

- Incorporate the results of the regional food and agriculture economic development strategy.
- Support the work of community and business groups and government agencies to find a solution to the lack of an abattoir, and other related farming infrastructure, in the region or on the Island.
- Review proposals with the pending RFA Task Force.
- Develop impactful economic development initiatives and regional food and agriculture infrastructure such as agri-tourism.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Increased economic viability for the food and agriculture sector.
- Increased cross-sectoral collaboration and cooperation resulting in better and more sustainable outcomes.

Photo: Sophie Wood

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6 | ACTION PLAN

In keeping with the action-oriented approach of the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy, Table 1 identifies the potential participants, general funding and resource requirements, relative timing and associated CRD service areas for each of the 10 recommendations and their associated actions.

The table categorizes each action according to whether the action can be completed using existing resources, requires additional funding or whether it requires external funding.

- **Utilize Existing Resources** requires a reallocation or can be completed by divisions under their existing mandate.
- **Requires Additional Funding** needs a moderate increase in CRD resources in order to be completed.
- **Requires External Funding** needs grant funding or program fundraising from external (non-CRD) sources in order to be completed.

The Strategy was developed in such a way as to build consensus on a shared path forward. Implementation can be facilitated with working relationships that honour and support participant interests and concerns and that foster innovation and trust. It will be important to target actions, given financial and human (stakeholder time and energy) resource limitations. The recommendations in the RFAS can be implemented within current CRD mandates and provide for a targeted, flexible and responsive approach that will allow for the testing and rapid assessment of identified actions prior to scaling up and investing more resources.

ACTION PLAN TABLE

RECOMMENDATIONS	ASSOCIATED ACTIONS	CRD ROLE
1 Support regional cross-sector relationships with regards to food and agriculture	Establish a Regional Food and Agriculture (RFA) Task Force to develop an organizational structure that supports regional collaboration and strategic decision-making.	CRD would host and provide staff and administration support. The RFAS Core Team, Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable and the Peninsula Agriculture Commission could be invited to participate on the Task Force.
2 Improve the CRD's ability to address regional food and agriculture issues	Develop food and agricultural education, experience and expertise within the CRD.	CRD would identify staff in applicable divisions and departments and create an internal departmental working group to share information on local food and agriculture activities. Local municipalities, BC Ministry of Agriculture and the proposed RFA Task Force would be invited to provide input and advice.
	Embed food and agricultural experience and expertise within the CRD.	CRD would provide information to staff in applicable divisions and departments and set up an internal departmental working group to discuss agriculture issues and concerns. The CRD would seek input and advice from local municipalities, BC Ministry of Agriculture and the proposed RFA Task Force.
	Maintain and improve regional food and agriculture data.	CRD would work with local municipalities, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy, Peninsula Agriculture Commission, Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable and other agencies with links or interests in the aggregation, improvement and sharing of food and agriculture data.

TIMING	UTILIZE EXISTING RESOURCES	REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING	REQUIRES EXTERNAL FUNDING	SERVICE AREAS
2016 / 2017	X	X		Legislative & Information Services Regional and Strategic Planning
2017 / 2018	X	X		Environmental Protection Regional and Strategic Planning Integrated Water Services Regional Parks
2017 / 2018	X			Regional and Strategic Planning
2017 / 2018	X			Legislative & Information Services database Regional and Strategic Planning

ACTION PLAN TABLE (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS	ASSOCIATED ACTIONS	CRD ROLE
3 Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture	Support regional organic-matter recycling approaches that benefit food and agriculture [16]	CRD would continue to consider organic matter recycling under the existing process and receive input from members of proposed RFA Task Force.
4 Address chronic drainage issues across the region	Consider food and agriculture interests in regional watershed management discussions with a goal to address drainage issues impacting the region's most fertile soils	CRD staff would continue to provide data and information to the Districts of Saanich and Central Saanich regarding flooding that affects low lying agricultural areas.
5 Continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues	Continue to consider food and agriculture interests in regional wildlife management discussions and projects.	CRD would continue to consider providing ongoing support and information gained through the Regional Deer Management Strategy process. CRD would further consider a wildlife service.
	Consider emerging wildlife and environmental issues e.g. beneficial species (pollinators), invasive and problematic species.	CRD would consider invasive species and species that affect environmental issues under the existing mandate of its current programs.

TIMING	UTILIZE EXISTING RESOURCES	REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING	REQUIRES EXTERNAL FUNDING	SERVICE AREAS
Now	X	X		Environmental Resource Management (through organics recycling)
Now	X			Environmental Protection (through drainage and watershed management)
Now	X			Regional and Strategic Planning
Now	X			Environmental Protection

16 This recommendation needs to be considered in the context of other Board deliberations currently underway.

RECOMMENDATIONS	ASSOCIATED ACTIONS	CRD ROLE
6 Maintain affordability and improve access to irrigation water for food and agricultural operations.	Continue to provide affordable water rates for rural farm operations and consider extending them to urban agriculture operations.	CRD will maintain the cost of agricultural water rate and consider extending or encouraging municipalities to extend an agricultural water rate to municipalities.
7 Encourage a place–based regional food culture by building relationships between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities	Continue to develop meaningful relationships with Aboriginal communities through regional food and agriculture discussions and activities.	CRD will continue to develop relationships with Aboriginal communities through food and agriculture discussions in partnership with Island Health and First Nations Health Authority.
8 Support Aboriginal food and agriculture-related activities, projects and events	Pursue regional food and agriculture-related partnerships and activities between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, agencies and groups.	CRD staff will continue to pursue partnerships with Aboriginal communities and non-aboriginal communities and agencies regarding food and agriculture.

TIMING	UTILIZE EXISTING RESOURCES $	REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING $	REQUIRES EXTERNAL FUNDING $	SERVICE AREAS
Now	X	X*		Integrated Water Services *for urban water provision and improved access
Now	X			Aboriginal Initiatives (through relationship building) Regional and Strategic Planning (though education)
Now	X			Aboriginal Initiatives (through partnerships) Legislative & Information Services (through RFA Task Force) Regional and Strategic Planning (through education)

ACTION PLAN TABLE (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATIONS	ASSOCIATED ACTIONS	CRD ROLE
9 Support the establishment of a regional food and farmland trust	Initiate process/conversation to establish a regional food and farmland trust and fund.	CRD would convene a process/conversation with RFA Task Force, municipalities, local land trusts, Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, Peninsula Agriculture Commission, financial institutions and Ministry of Agriculture to discuss a regional food and farmland trust, leading to the preparation of a feasibility study.
10 Support regional economic development strategies for food and agriculture	Work with community and business groups to develop a regional food and agriculture economic development strategy.	CRD staff would convene an ongoing conversation with the RFA Task Force and the Southern Vancouver Island Economic Development Association, with input from the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, Peninsula Agriculture Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss a regional food and agriculture economic development strategy.
	Support strategic business development initiatives for region's food and agriculture sector including agri-tourism.	CRD staff would convene an ongoing conversation with the RFA Task Force and the Greater Victoria Economic Development Agency (GVEDA), with input from the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable, Peninsula Agriculture Commission and the Ministry of Agriculture to support business development initiatives for food and agriculture including agri-tourism.

TIMING	UTILIZE EXISTING RESOURCES $	REQUIRES ADDITIONAL FUNDING $	REQUIRES EXTERNAL FUNDING $	SERVICE AREAS
2016 / 2017		X	X	Regional and Strategic Planning (feasibility study) Real Estate (land bank)
2018 / 2019	X		X**	Regional and Strategic Planning (through education) ** RSP would be support (using existing resources) – lead presumed to be external
2018 / 2019		X		Regional and Strategic Planning

7 | APPENDICES

Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal communities: Located in urban, rural and remote locations across Canada. They include: First Nations or Indian Bands, generally located on lands called reserves; Inuit communities located in Nunavut, NWT, Northern Quebec (Nunavik) and Labrador; Métis communities; and communities of Aboriginal people (including Métis, non-status Indians, Inuit and First Nation individuals) in cities or towns which are not part of reserves or traditional territories.

Aboriginal peoples: The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people — Indians, Métis and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

Agricultural land: agricultural land (farm land) is the area that supports the growing, producing, raising or keeping animals and plants allowed by British Columbia's various Acts and Regulations in BC this refers to land designated as agricultural land under the Agricultural Land Commission Act or by municipal or regional governments within the land use bylaws.

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and Agricultural Land Commission (ALC): In 1973, in response to development pressures that were seen as eroding the province's food and farmlands, the Province established the Agricultural Land Reserve along with an independent governing body, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). The ALR is a provincial land use zone in which land cannot be used for non-farm uses without provincial permission. Local government regulation of land in the ALR is circumscribed by the ALR regulations and right-to-farm legislation, which together provide significant protection for designated farm activities and the agricultural land base. The ALR regulations set out what activities and uses local governments may regulate from a land-use perspective on farmland. The right to farm legislation provides that a farmer is not liable in nuisance for any noise, odour, dust or other disturbance resulting from normal farm practices. It also exempts agricultural operations from local government nuisance bylaws.

Agricultural Extension: A general term meaning the application of scientific research and new knowledge to agricultural practices through farmer education. The field of 'extension' now encompasses a wider range of communication and learning activities organized for rural people by educators from different disciplines, including agriculture, agricultural marketing, health, and business studies.

Agriculture: The cultivation of animals, plants, fungi, and other life forms for food, fiber, biofuel, medicinal and other products used to sustain and enhance human life.[17]

Agri-tourism: As it is defined most broadly, involves any agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch. It is a form of niche tourism that is considered a growth industry in many parts of the world, including Canada. Agri-tourism has different definitions in different parts of the world. In general agri-tourism includes a wide variety of activities, including buying produce direct from a farm stand, navigating a corn maze, picking fruit, feeding animals, or staying at a B&B on a farm.

17 Safety and health in agriculture. International Labour Organization. 1999. pp. 77.

Capital Regional District (CRD): A local government established under provincial legislation, providing coordinated regional services to both urban and rural areas on southern Vancouver Island, comprised of a federation of municipalities and electoral areas managed by a board of directors appointed from the local municipalities and directly elected from electoral areas.

Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative Roundtable (CR-FAIR[18]): Formed in 1997, CR-FAIR is a coalition of organizations working to strengthen regional food security and our local food system, from farm gate to dinner plate. CR-FAIR's mission is to increase knowledge of and bring about positive change in the food and agriculture system within the Capital Region. CR-FAIR is the regional Island Health Food Hub, and supports the Connecting for Healthy Food in Schools Network, the Food Policy Working Group, the Food Literacy Project, Farmer2Farmer, the Flavour Trail, Incubator Farms, the Foodlands and Farmlands Trust initiative.

Community of Interest or Practice: A gathering of people assembled around a topic of common interest. Its members take part in the community to exchange information, to obtain answers to personal questions or problems, to improve their understanding of a subject, to share common passions or to play. In contrast to a spatial community, a 'community of interest' is defined not by space, but by some common bond (e.g. feeling of attachment) or entity (e.g. farming, church group). A Community of Practice is a group of people who are active practitioners.

Farmland: An alternative term for agricultural land.

Farmland Trust: A type of land trust that focuses specifically on preservation of agricultural land.

Feasting for Change[19]: Since May 2007, Aboriginal communities across southern Vancouver Island have sought to revive their traditional food practices through Feasting for Change activities, which have included a traditional salmon barbecue, pit cooking, berry picking, cleaning fish and crab, plant walks, making tea and so much more. One of the goals of the Feasting for Change movement is to model ancestral Aboriginal stewardship to ensure food resources that nourish bodies and revitalize spirits are sustainable.

Field to Freezer: This Tseycum First Nation program consists of two comprehensive community food security projects aimed at providing life-long skills to sow and harvest produce in the community box gardens and green house and to also train members to harvest and process wild game such as deer, elk, and moose.

First Nations: A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term "First Nation" to replace the word "band" in the name of their community.[20]

Foodlands: An alternative term for agricultural land that specifies the ability of producing food. During the establishment of the ALR, foodlands was used to highlight and connect the importance and value of these lands to BC residents. Today the term helps encompass those areas designated as agricultural lands as well as lands that support traditional and Indigenous harvest and gathering and therefore can include urban areas, as well as marine areas, shorelines, rivers and lakes.

Food Literacy: Food literacy is the ability to understand food and to develop positive relationships, food skills and practices across the lifespan in order to navigate, engage and participate within a complex food system, making decisions to support the achievement of personal health and to support a sustainable food system considering environmental, social, economic, cultural and political components" (Cullen et al., 2015).

Food literacy involves having the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make food decisions that support one's own health as well as the health of the community and the environment.

18 http://crfair.ca

19 https://www.vancity.com/AboutVancity/InvestingInCommunities/StoriesOfImpact/Food/FeastingforChange

20 Terminology, Indigenous and Northern Affairs. 2012-10-01 http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014642/1100100014643 Retrieved: 2016-01-06.

Food security: Having access to safe, culturally acceptable, and nutritional food. The principles of food security are sustainability, self-reliance and social justice. A sustainable community food system improves the health of the community, environment and individuals over time. Food insecurity may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution, or inadequate use of food at the household level.

Food System Infrastructure: Physical, social and economic elements necessary to support food production, processing, distribution and waste management in a given area , such as abattoirs, warehouses, vehicles, veterinarians, seed distributors and grazing pasture.

Foodshed: The geographical area between where food is produced and where that food is consumed. The concept is similar to a watershed—both encompass the flow of a substance from its origin to its ultimate destination. An alternative definition is a geographic area that supplies a population center with food. Both definitions emphasize the geographical context of food—where it comes from and where it ends up.[21]

Food sovereignty: The right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets; and to provide local fisheries- based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources. Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.

Indigeneity[22]**:** Is a way of being in the world: being indigenous to a place means having a depth of knowledge, understanding and connection to that place. Indigeneity also includes a sense of stewardship and responsibility for managing that place and working respectfully with its non-human inhabitants. Prior to that shift away from agrarian society that took place with the Industrial Revolution, most people on this planet retained some degree of Indigeneity under this definition.

Indigenous foods: Categorized as plant foods, animal foods, earth elements such as salts, and water.[23]

Island Chef Collaborative (ICC)[24]**:** A community of liked-minded chefs and food and beverage professionals with a common interest in regional food security, the preservation of farmland and the development of local food systems. Largely through fundraising activities, ICC has generated microloans that enable local farmers to grow more food and connect with local merchants. Funds go to growers, harvesters and processors to invest in equipment and materials that allows them to increase the supply of food in the region.

Land trust: A land trust is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, usually with charitable status, that focuses specifically on land preservation.

Peninsula and Area Agriculture Commission (PAC)[25]**:** An advisory committee with a mandate to advise the Municipalities of Central Saanich, Metchosin, North Saanich, Saanich, Sidney and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area on matters involving agriculture, and, to facilitate the development of programs for implementation of the Saanich Peninsula Agricultural Strategy objectives and keep the Municipalities advised of these programs. The commission operates under the guidelines of the Local Government Act. PAC is made up of 10 voting citizens appointed by the member councils plus up to 10 non-voting members. PAC's clearly defined role under the Local Government Act limits their ability to undertake and direct work. PAC is often the place where issues affecting local agricultural and food producers are identified and discussed.

Place-based foods: Foods with a distinctive social and geographical identity whose unique tastes can be traced to the growing conditions and cultural practices of production.

21 http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/what_is_a_food_shed

22 http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/new-way-stewardship-mother-earth-indigeneity-180952855/?no-ist

23 http://www.fao.org/wairdocs/other/ai215e/AI215E04.htm

24 http://www.iccbc.ca

25 http://www.saanich.ca/living/mayor/boards/pac.html

Region: The political, government entity that is the Capital Regional District (CRD).

region: The geographic area generally from Port Renfrew through to the Southern Gulf Islands including the Victoria Metropolitan Area, that comprises the jurisdiction of the Capital Regional District.

Southern Vancouver Island Direct Farm Marketing Association [26]**:** A non-profit association of more than 70 growers and producers on Southern Vancouver Island, British Columbia, who sell their farm and vineyard products directly to consumers. Many of our members also participate in agri-tourism, including farmers' markets, fall fairs, farm festivals, farm tours and bed & breakfasts. The major activities of the association include publication of the annual "Farm Fresh" consumers guide in April, management of the Farm Fresh website and participation in a special Farmers' Market at the historic Saanich Fair on the Labour Day weekend.

Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Food Network[27]**:** A collective with a shared vision of a healthy future based upon reconnecting with First Nations cultural teachings and practices. Members include culturally knowledgeable food harvesters and gatherers, health professionals, community development workers and members of the scientific community. VICCIFN is building collaborative approaches in addressing issues of traditional food access and security, and intends to research, document and share the ancestral strengths that are deeply rooted throughout Vancouver Island for the preservation for future generations.

Victoria Food Funders Network: There are many agencies that fund food systems, health, and agriculture initiatives in the Region. In an effort to better understand the issues, increase efficiency, decrease duplication, and support more strategic and coordinated investment in the Region many of these funders are coming together to develop a food funder network.

Victoria Foundation Vital Signs[28]**:** An annual community check-up that evaluates the Capital Region as a place to live, learn, work and grow. It measures the health of our city and assigns grades in a number of areas that are critical to Victoria's vitality. Information included on this site has been gathered in cooperation with numerous sources that are researching and collecting data on Victoria. Community Foundations of Canada retains the Centre for the Study of Living Standards to develop common indicators for Vital Signs communities and obtain data from Statistics Canada and other institutional sources. Greater Victoria is an umbrella term that applies to different geographical areas, depending on the indicator. It can refer to the Capital Regional District, Victoria Census Metropolitan Area or South Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area.

Urban agriculture: The range of activities involved in growing, raising, processing, marketing and distributing food and non-food products in an urban area. These activities include backyard gardens, community gardens, beehives, orchards, greenhouses, market gardens, livestock production (chickens and other animals) and even small-scale aquaculture, hydroponic greenhouses and closed-loop buildings.

26 http://www.islandfarmfresh.com

27 http://www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca

28 http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca/vital-signs/victoria

Regional Food & Agriculture Organizations

There are an increasing number of agriculture, food security and food system programs run by a host of organizations, businesses and individuals in the CRD. Many organizations do creative and effective work on increasing food access, supporting urban agriculture and strengthening communities. Regional food security work is implemented through informal partnerships between the CRD Roundtable on the Environment, BC Healthy Communities Subcommittee (BCHCSC), Island Health (IH) and Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR). Examples of this collaboration include pilot projects for local food procurement and urban agriculture initiatives at a number of municipalities.

The following organizations and agencies have played a critical role in the development of the RFAS. Their continued involvement is critical to the successful implementation of the RFAS and development of the sector.

CR-FAIR

Established in 1997, Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable is a coalition of organizations and individuals working to strengthen regional food security and our local food system, from farm gate to dinner plate. The Community Social Planning Council is the legal sponsor of CR-FAIR. CR-FAIR's mission is to increase knowledge of and bring about positive change in the food and agriculture system within the capital region. CR-FAIR three areas of focus include the food economy, food literacy and food access and health. They have been a driving force behind the establishment of a regional food and farmland trust.

PENINSULA AND AREA AGRICULTURE COMMISSION (PAC)

Established in 1998 as an advisory committee to the Municipalities of Central Saanich, Metchosin, North Saanich, Saanich, Sidney and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area on matters involving agriculture, and, to facilitate the development of programs for implementation of the Saanich Peninsula Agricultural Strategy objectives and keep the Municipalities advised of these programs. PAC is made up of 10 voting citizens appointed by the member councils plus up to 10 non-voting members including: one member of council from each of Central Saanich, Metchosin, North Saanich, Saanich and Sidney and one representative of the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area; and one member each from the Agricultural Land Commission, the Saanich Peninsula Water Commission, Agriculture Canada, and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food. PAC operates under the guidelines of the Local Government Act. As a commission, defined under the Act, they are limited in their ability to undertake and direct work related to agriculture and food. They are one of the few regional bodies with members from the farming community.

VICTORIA FOOD FUNDERS NETWORK

There are many agencies within the region that fund local food systems, health, and agriculture initiatives. In an effort to better understand the issues, increase efficiency, decrease duplication, and support more strategic and coordinated investment in the region many of these funders are coming together to under the umbrella of a local food funder network.

ISLAND HEALTH (IH)

Island Health provides health care to more than 765,000 people on Vancouver Island, the islands of the Georgia Strait, and in the mainland communities north of Powell River and south of Rivers Inlet. In addition to overseeing food safety regulations, Island Health is involved in many food-related activities and issues as they pertain to individual and community health, and community food security on Vancouver Island.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MA)

The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the production, marketing, processing and merchandising of agricultural products and food; the institution and carrying out of advisory, research, promotional or education extension programs, projects or undertakings relating to agriculture and food; and the collection of information and preparation and dissemination of statistics relating to agriculture and food.

FIRST NATIONS

The traditional territories of 22 First Nations span portions of the CRD. 11 of these Nations hold reserve lands throughout the region. Eight of these First Nations are signatories to th e Douglas Treaty. First Nations interest in traditional foods and associated cultivation and harvesting practices is increasing. They are an important and powerful interest with inherent rights and title to the landscape and many local food sources. Their perspective and deep understanding of the region will help expand the understanding and appreciation of local food and agriculture.

Photo: Sophie Wood

Food & Agriculture Interests

Of the 13 municipalities in the CRD, municipalities with substantial rural and agricultural areas include the Districts of Metchosin, Sooke, Saanich, Central Saanich, and North Saanich.[29] Colwood and Esquimalt have smaller ALR holdings. The District of Highlands, while not having any ALR land still has significant agricultural activities and land use bylaws that reference agriculture and agricultural uses. The Electoral Areas have significant ALR holdings, although only the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area is covered by this plan. And while Oak Bay, the City of Victoria and the Town of Sidney do not have any ALR holdings, all three support increasing urban agriculture and food production activities as do the other local municipalities and Juan de Fuca electoral area.

The 2011 Agriculture Census shows that the area of farmland in some form of production has stayed relatively steady at 13,606 ha (43 ha more than 2006) out of the total 16,382 ha of land in the ALR. Since the inception of the ALR in 1973, approximately 1500 ha of the ALR have been removed within the CRD, representing an approximate decrease of 8% between 1973 and 2009 (Capital Regional District, 2010).

Over the past three decades, nearly 1,500 hectares of productive agricultural land have been removed from the region's Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) areas. As of 2009, 10,600 hectares of ALR land remained in the Region's Growth Management Planning Area (excluding the Gulf Islands or Indian Reserve lands). In 2013, there were 1,093 farms reporting farm-related income in the CRD (excluding the Gulf Islands) (Ministry of Agriculture, 2013). In total, they produced over $50 million in gross farm receipts, up 10% from the 2006 Census. There are approximately 34 community gardens with approximately 1,000 plots throughout the CRD, some of which were established as far back as the 1970s.

29 >100 hectares of ALR.

Local Oversight

There are currently seven Agricultural Advisory Committees or Commissions in the CRD.[30] Agricultural Advisory Committees (AACs) can be an effective way for local governments to connect with their farming communities. An AAC is appointed and functions similarly to other advisory committees of municipal councils or regional boards. Their members are predominantly drawn from the farming community and the committee focuses on agricultural issues.[31]

Agricultural Area Plans (AAPs) allow communities to develop practical solutions to issues and identify opportunities to strengthen farming and ultimately to contribute to agriculture and the community's long-term sustainability. Five communities within the CRD have completed agriculture plans[32] and one has completed a food system plan.[33] Agriculture plans are currently being developed for the District of Saanich and the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area. Associated Agricultural Land Use Inventories (ALUIs) have been completed for all six of the CRD municipalities with rural lands and for each of the three Electoral Areas.[34]

The Local Government Act makes provisions for municipalities and regional districts to develop official plans for portions of their jurisdictions - often referred to as neighbourhood or local area plans. The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and Ministry of Agriculture actively support local government initiatives to develop Agricultural Area Plans.

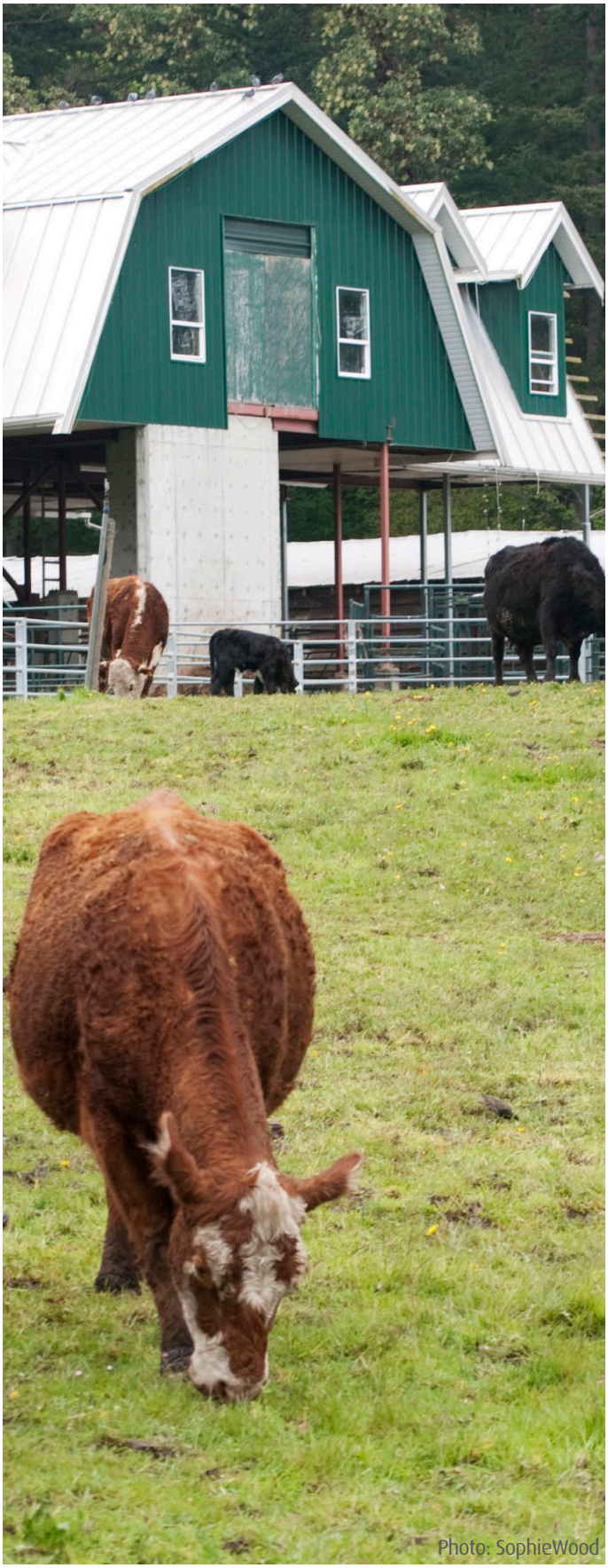

Photo: SophieWood

30 District of Central Saanich, District of Metchosin, District of North Saanich, Langford, Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, Salt Spring Electoral Area, and the Peninsula Agricultural Commission.

31 http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/strengthening-farming/agricultural-advisory-committees

32 Salt Spring Island Electoral Area (2008), District of North Saanich (2010), District of Central Saanich (2011), Sooke (2012), District of Metchosin (2013)

33 City of Victoria (2010).

34 Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area (2014); Districts of Central Saanich and North Saanich, and Juan De Fuca Electoral Area (2009); Salt Spring Island Electoral Area; and District of Saanich, Colwood and Langford (2005).

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Making a difference...together

Draft Food and Agriculture Section

6. Food Systems

6.1 Foster a resilient food and agriculture system

Food and agriculture are part of a food system which includes planting, irrigation, harvesting, processing, distribution, preparation and marketing and consumption, in addition to food waste management and soil betterments.

A viable and resilient local food and agriculture system is important to the Capital Regional District's health, sustainability, security and visual/cultural identity.

Changes in climate, energy costs and water availability will impact agricultural production and will draw greater attention to regional food system resiliency.

The widespread impact of food and agriculture and the nature of the challenges likely to be faced in coming years make food and agriculture a matter of regional interest. Challenges include loss of farmland, lack of farm profitability and financial sustainability, increasing average age of farmer, increasing food prices, limited (72 hour) supply of fresh food in an emergency, food wastage, need to revitalize indigenous food systems, lack of knowledge of how to grow and prepare healthy food, increasing rates of food insecure people and increasing rates of diet-related chronic disease. Regional alignment will strengthen the food and agricultural sector.

The Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy recommends actions to create a viable, healthy and resilient food system. Regional Growth Strategy policies are intended to work in tandem with the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy to guide future decisions.

Achieving a healthy, viable and resilient local food and agriculture system will require adherence to the following related principles:

Principles:

I. Support First Nations food interests and rights;
II. Protect and enhance the region's food and farmlands;
III. Avoid urban/agricultural land use conflict; mitigate where avoidance is not possible;
IV. Enhance access to nutritious, safe and culturally-appropriate food;
V. Expand food system economic opportunities;
VI. Encourage food system education and agri-tourism; and
VII. Foster resiliency in the face of an unpredictable climate, increased pest resistance, and declining, increasingly expensive water and energy supplies.

Policies:

1. Implement initiatives in accordance with the principles outlined in Objective 7.1.
2. Enable food production, processing and distribution that will foster a place-based food economy that increases access to local, nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate food.
3. Support food waste management that is environmentally sustainable, benefits the regional economy and improves residents' connections to rural and agricultural landscapes.

Target:

By 2038, increase the amount of land in crop production by 5000 ha.

APPENDIX C

Regional Growth Strategy

Capital Regional District

July 2016

Making a difference...together

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CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

BYLAW NO. 4017

A BYLAW TO ADOPT A REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY FOR THE CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

WHEREAS Part 13 of the *Local Government Act* provides for a regional district to undertake the development, adoption, implementation, monitoring and review of a regional growth strategy;

AND WHEREAS the Board of the Capital Regional District by resolution dated July 13, 2011 initiated the review of "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2002", pursuant to Section 433 of the *Local Government Act*;

NOW THEREFORE the Board of the Capital Regional District, in open meeting enacts as follows:

1. "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1, 2002" is hereby repealed.

2. Schedule "A" attached to and forming part of this Bylaw is hereby designated as the "Regional Growth Strategy for the Capital Regional District."

3. This Bylaw may be cited as the "Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No.1, 2016" and takes effect on the date adopted.

READ THE FIRST TIME this 13th day of July, 2016

READ THE SECOND TME this 13th day of July, 2016

PUBLIC HEARING CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO PART 13, SECTION 434 of the *LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT* this ___ day of _____, _____

READ THE THIRD TIME this ___ day of _____, _____

ADOPTED this ___ day of _____, _____

_____ Chair

_____ Secretary

Vision

In 2038, Capital Regional District residents enjoy a healthy and rewarding quality of life. We have a vital economy, livable communities and steward our environment and natural resources with care. Our choices reflect our commitment to collective action on climate change.

Fundamental to this vision is a commitment to work toward regional sustainability. Simply defined, sustainability means that actions taken to meet needs today do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs, ensure the ongoing health of the natural processes that sustain life, and support the social and economic arrangements that create prosperity and well–being. Further, sustainability is critical to addressing head-on the myriad effects of a changing global climate. Whether in the context of compact growth, multi-modal transportation, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, environmental conservation, protection of human and ecosystem health or safe and complete communities, decisions at the local and regional level play an important role in addressing climate change.

The purpose of the Regional Growth Strategy is to help realize the region's vision, through the commitment of the Capital Regional District, the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area and local municipalities to guide growth and change toward common objectives.

Objectives:

- Keep urban settlement compact;
- Protect the integrity of rural communities;
- Protect, conserve and manage ecosystem health;
- Deliver services consistent with RGS objectives;
- Create safe and complete communities;
- Improve housing affordability;
- Increase transportation choice;
- Strengthen the regional economy;
- Foster a resilient food and agriculture system; and
- Significantly reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions.

Context

A regional growth strategy is a framework, developed by municipalities and the regional district in partnership, for identifying social, economic and environmental objectives. Its purpose, under Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*, is to "... promote human settlement that is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources." A regional growth strategy expresses how communities will work together to enhance regional quality of life and social well-being. As of 2008, regional growth strategies must also include policies, actions and targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

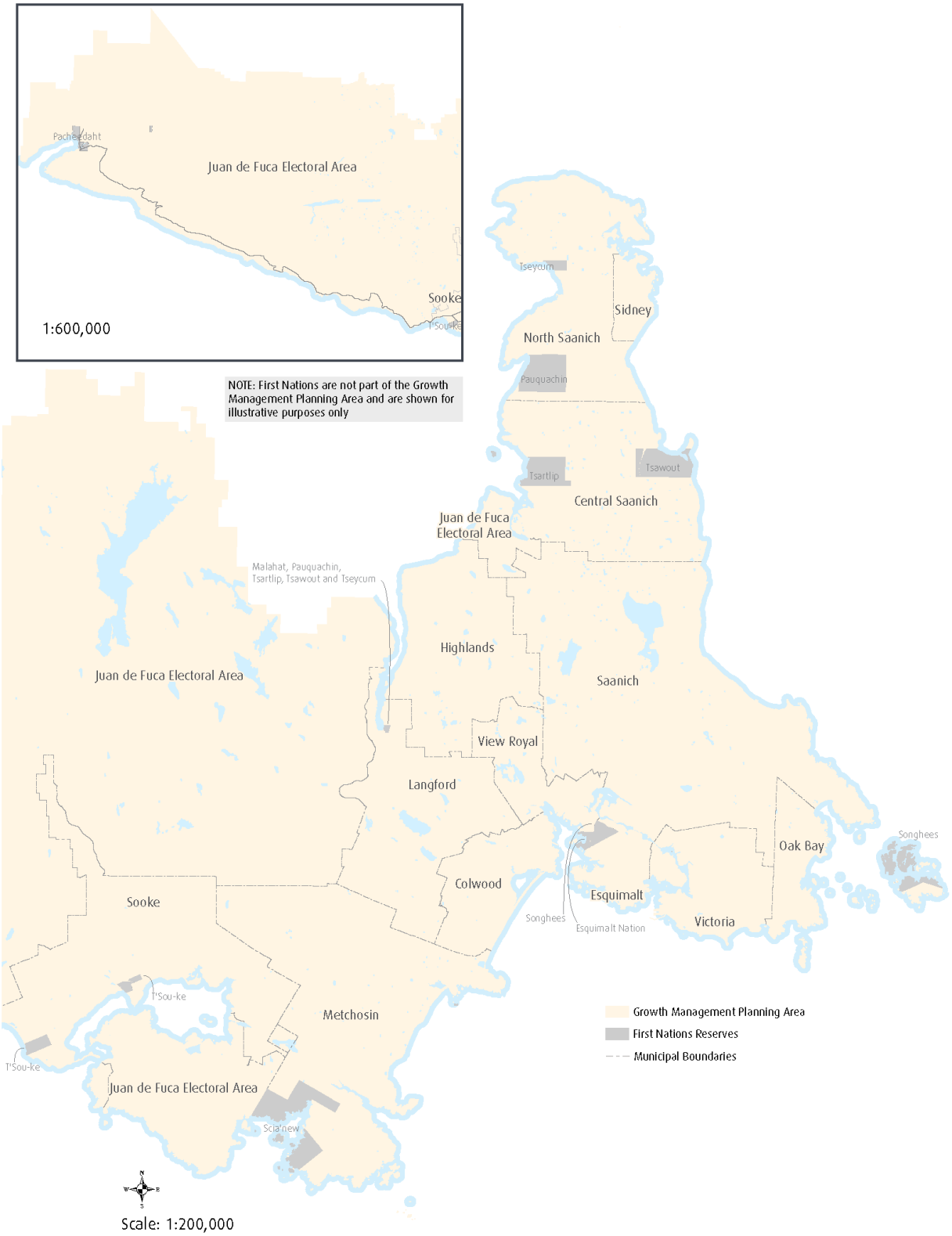
The Capital Regional District adopted a Regional Growth Strategy bylaw in 2003. In 2008, the Capital Regional District Board in partnership with local municipalities initiated the required five year review of the Regional Growth Strategy (2003). The 2016 update to the Regional Growth Strategy follows considerable public and intergovernmental discussion and consultation. Map 1 shows the Regional Growth Management Planning Area. At the present time, the Capital Region's ten First Nations are not partners in the regional growth strategy, nor does it apply to the Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Areas, which fall under the planning jurisdiction of the Islands Trust (see Map 1).

Citizens, local governments, First Nations, school district boards, stakeholders, and provincial and federal agencies have been involved in the Strategy's update through a regional sustainability planning process. This process determined that many of the policies of the Regional Growth Strategy (2003) are achieving desired objectives, notably, increasing compact and complete communities, acquiring green space, and substantially completing the regional trail network. Further, key complementary planning documents identified as actions to implement the Regional Growth Strategy (2003) are complete, including:

- 2007 Regional Housing Affordability Strategy; and
- Regional Transportation Strategy (completed as the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and the 2011 Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan).

Input and feedback have affirmed the desire for a strong growth management framework rooted in the 2003 Regional Growth Strategy objectives and emphasized the importance of mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. Updates integrate recommendations from completed planning documents and address the requirements for policies, actions and targets for greenhouse gas reductions.

MAP 1: REGIONAL GROWTH MANGAEMENT PLANNING AREA



The Capital Region is located at the southern-most end of Vancouver Island, in the Cascadia/Salish Sea bio-region (see Map 2). The bio-region runs north-south along a coastal corridor stretching from Campbell River south to Olympia, Washington and east to Hope. The Capital Region's present settlement pattern is characterized by a diverse mix of urban and rural communities, with a concentration of population in the Core Area located along key transportation corridors. The West Shore and Saanich Peninsula feature smaller urban centres, with forestry lands to the west throughout the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. Agricultural lands are concentrated on the Saanich Peninsula, with some slightly more dispersed lands on the West Shore.

In this context, modest population growth is forecast for the Capital Region. Table 1 highlights existing and forecasted population, dwelling units and employment.

TABLE 1. POPULATION, DWELLING UNIT AND EMPLOYMENT FORECAST

	2011			2038			Population Share	
	Population	Dwellings	Employment	Population	Dwellings	Employment	2011	2038
Core • Esquimalt • Oak Bay • Saanich • Victoria • View Royal	238,900	111,400	141,900	276,700	137,400	164,900	68.9%	62.6%
Saanich Peninsula • Central Saanich • North Saanich • Sidney	38,400	16,100	20,300	47,300	20,900	24,900	11.1%	10.7%
West Shore • Colwood • Highlands • Juan de Fuca Electoral Area • Langford • Metchosin • Sooke	69,600	26,700	21,500	117,800	46,600	42,700	20.0%	26.7%
Total	346,900	154,200	183,700	441,800	204,900	232,500	100%	100%

Source: Urban Futures, 2014

Please note that First Nations populations are not included in Table 1, as First Nations Reserves fall outside the GMPA.

MAP 2: SALISH SEA

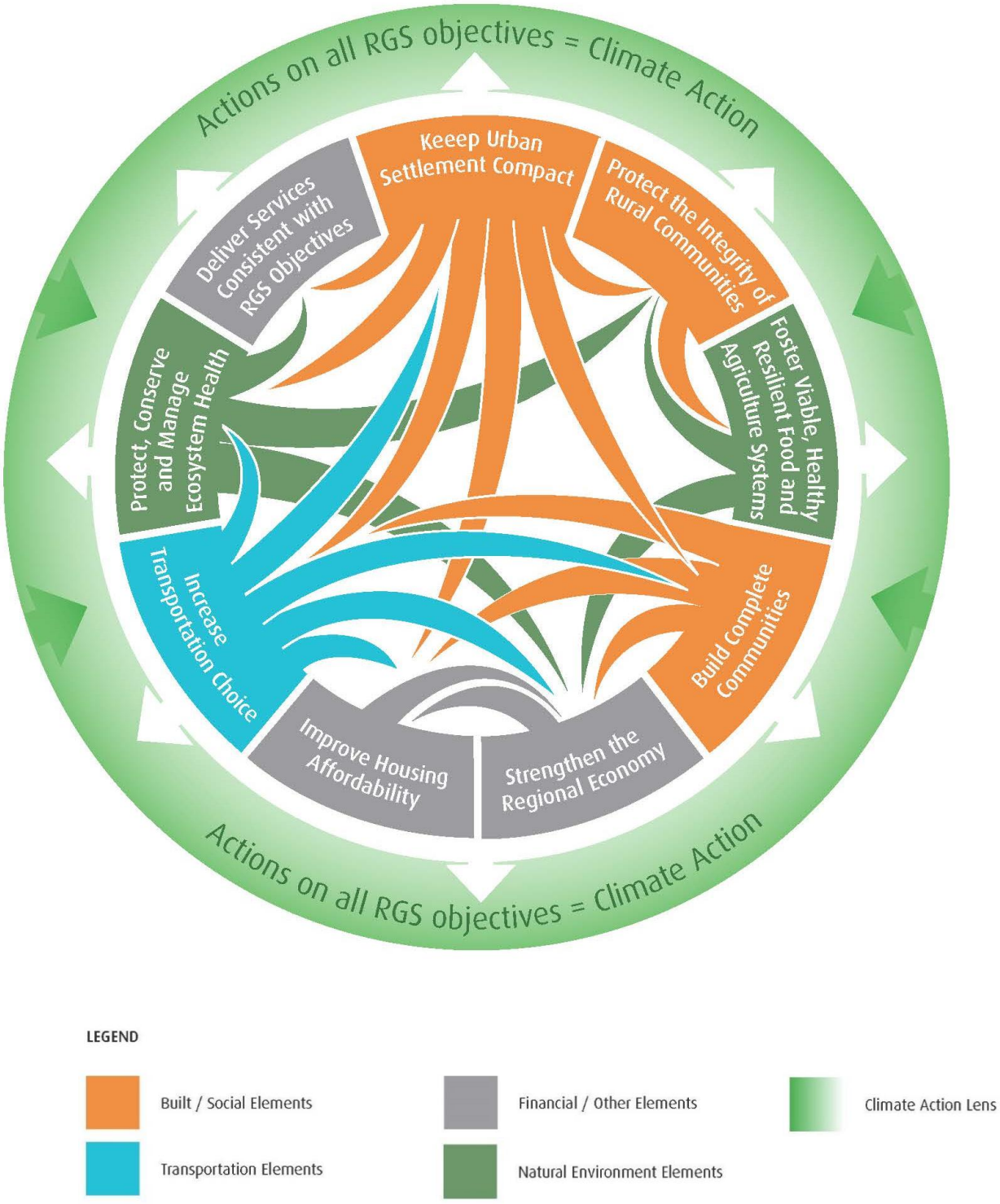
From a 2011 base of approximately 346,900, the region's population is forecast to increase by approximately 95,000 people to 441,800 in 2038, an approximate 1% average annual population increase. The slow aging of the region's population continues as a significant trend, with the proportion of residents 65 years and older expected to rise from 18% in 2011 to 26% by 2038. Further, although the workforce (ages 15 to 64) is projected to grow by 31,900, the proportion of workforce to total population is projected to decline from 69% to 61% by 2038. Serving the needs of an aging population in the context of a proportionately smaller workforce will affect all aspects of the region's social, economic and physical development.

It continues to be clear, however, that even modest population growth would undermine the regional vision if it were accommodated as it has been since the 1950s, through further urban expansion into farms, forests and countryside. Further, an expanded regional footprint would significantly contribute to increased greenhouse gas emissions. Achieving the regional vision requires a concerted effort to largely shift to policies that encourage investment and development in complete communities within the designated growth area. Paramount to success is coordinated and consistent decision-making that focuses on how people, land use, transportation, infrastructure and technology can mitigate and adapt to a changing climate.

The Regional Growth Strategy supports the regional vision by making this policy shift, through objectives that aim to: keep urban settlement compact; protect the integrity of rural communities; protect, conserve and manage ecosystem health; deliver services consistent with RGS objectives; build safe and complete communities; improve housing affordability; increase transportation choice; strengthen the regional economy; and, foster a resilient food and agriculture system. Realising these objectives is critically important for successfully reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Figure 1 illustrates the interconnections among the Regional Growth Strategy objectives and between these objectives and climate change. The objectives are colour-coded to reflect how different elements of sustainability are represented in the Regional Growth Strategy and how together, these elements provide for a climate action lens. *Keeping urban settlement compact* and *increasing transportation choice* have a high degree of interdependence with other objectives. These strong links illustrate that achieving these two objectives will be particularly important for the realization of the regional vision. Further, the graphic illustrates that the Regional Growth Strategy objectives will support climate action and that taking action on climate change will, in turn, impact each objective.

FIGURE 1. REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY INTERCONNECTIONS



Objectives

The Regional Growth Strategy includes integrated objectives, incorporating policies, targets, maps and guidelines that together express a program of joint action by the Capital Regional District and local municipalities to achieve the regional vision.

- Objectives define a desired future on matters of regional interest.
- Policies are provided under the "policy" heading for each objective. The Capital Regional District will implement policies and undertake actions for regionally-delivered services and programs. Local municipalities will identify how their Official Community Plan aligns to each policy in a Regional Context Statement.
- Maps showing the Growth Management Concept Plan (Map 3) and details of the Renewable Resource Lands (Map 4) provide spatial definition for policy.
- Targets for each objective are provided in Table 2 at the end of the document. Targets are aspirational in nature. It is unlikely that they will be achieved by the CRD and municipalities alone. Achieving the targets will require concerted effort on the part of the CRD and municipalities as well as senior governments, local residents and businesses, utilities, community groups and others.
- Actions for the Capital Regional District to implement the Regional Growth Strategy are provided in the Implementation Measures section.

Subject to the *Local Government Act* and the articulation of policies in the Regional Growth Strategy document, the CRD and local municipalities recognize that the Regional Growth Strategy is intended as a planning policy document to serve as a guide for future decision making.

1. Managing and Balancing Growth

1.1 Keep Urban Settlement Compact

A designated Growth Policy Area aims to keep urban areas compact and to keep growth largely contained within its boundaries. Fundamental to urban containment are four related approaches that aim to increase the capacity of urban areas, particularly in the Core Municipalities and the urban West Shore, to accommodate new growth.[1]

Approaches

I. Establish a strong mix of uses focused around Victoria's downtown core area as the primary regional employment, business and cultural centre;
II. Focus employment and population growth primarily in complete communities, located in areas that meet criteria described in Objective 3.1, that will encourage the development of walkable, bikeable and transit–focused areas with a dense mix of housing, employment, services and public open space;
III. Increase the proportion of apartments, row houses and other attached housing types within the Growth Policy Area, especially within Complete Communities; and,
IV. Locate a minimum of 95% of the region's new dwelling units to 2038 within the Growth Policy Area.

The aim of keeping urban settlement compact is to concentrate growth within a firm Growth Policy Area Boundary that will over time result in the creation of centres and connecting corridors that can be effectively served by express-bus transit. This lays the foundation to achieve a longer term objective of connecting the downtown Victoria–Douglas Street–Uptown corridor with Colwood and Langford by high– capacity public transit running in a dedicated right–of–way.

To support quality of life and community character in rural areas, urban containment directs growth into complete communities to reduce development pressures in the Saanich Peninsula, rural West Shore, Sooke and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area. Growth outside the growth boundary is to be kept to 5% or less of the regional total.

A Growth Management Concept Plan and four land use policy designations will help keep urban settlement compact. Map 3 sets out the Growth Management Concept Plan and Map 4 provides additional detail for the Renewable Resource Lands Policy Area.

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[1] Table 1 provides a general forecast, for information only, of population, dwelling units and employment in 2038 by sub-region that could be expected under the Regional Growth Strategy.

Land Use Designations

Capital Green Lands Policy Area: Includes Ecological Reserves, Capital Regional District Water lands, and Parks. The Regional Growth Strategy sets out in policy 2.1(1) the continued long–term use of these lands for these purposes.

Renewable Resource Lands Policy Area: Includes lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), the Private Managed Forest Lands and Crown Forest Lands. The Regional Growth Strategy sets out in policy 5.1(4) the continued long–term use of these lands as renewable resource working landscapes.

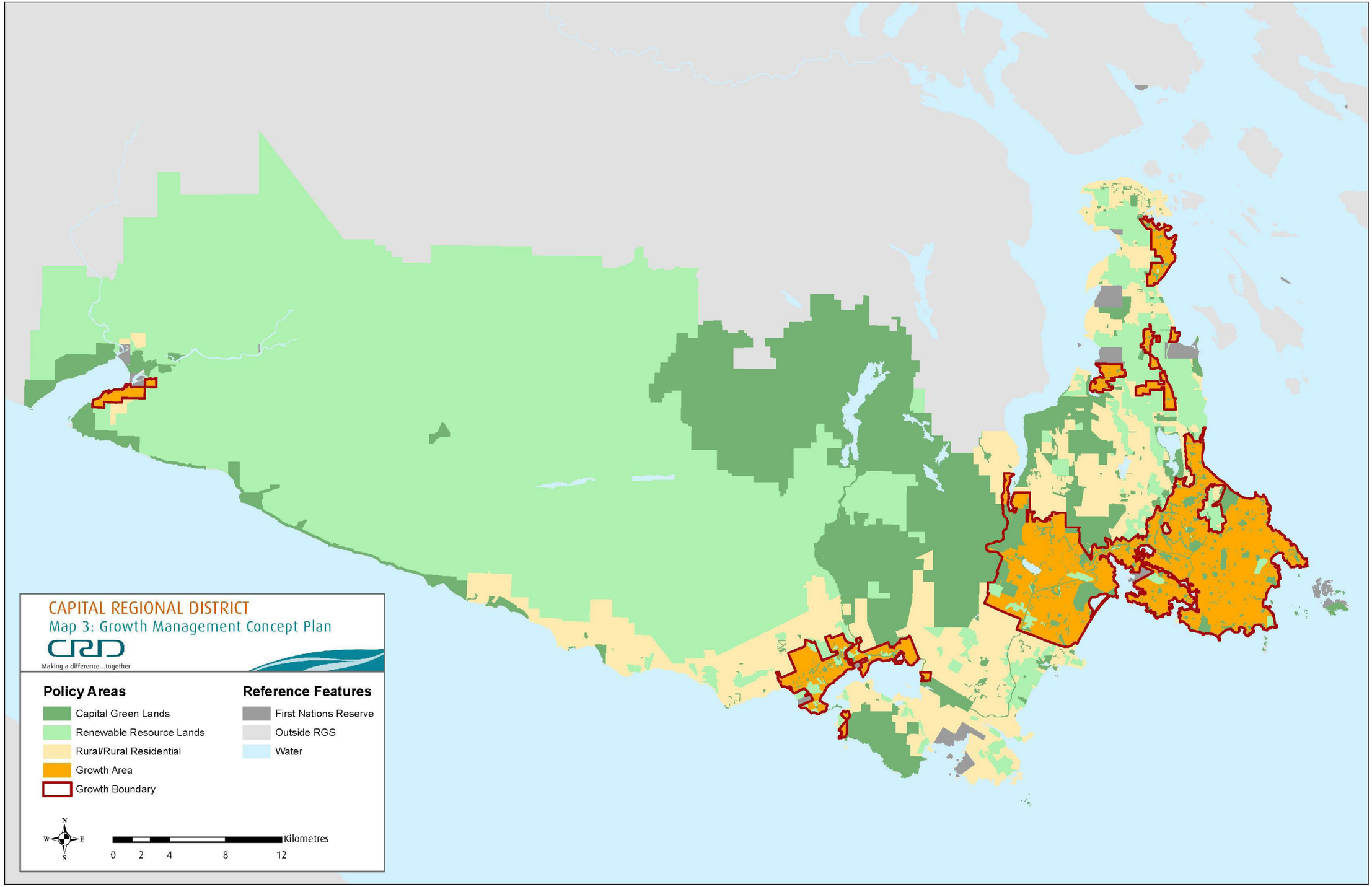
Growth Policy Area: Includes residential, general employment, commercial and industrial lands, as well as other associated land uses. The Growth Policy Area is intended to accommodate 95% of the region's new dwelling units, and is where major new transportation infrastructure investments will be directed. The Regional Growth Strategy restricts extension of urban–standard sanitary sewerage services beyond the Growth Policy Area Boundary as set out under policy 2.2(5).

Within the Growth Policy Area, employment and population growth is to be directed to areas that meet criteria set out in Objective 3.1, for complete communities. Complete communities are intended to accommodate housing, jobs and services at densities that will support transit. Focusing growth in complete communities is central to reducing community-based greenhouse gas emissions, reducing development pressure on rural and resource lands and keeping infrastructure affordable.

Where Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands Policy Areas overlap with the Growth Policy Area, the land use policy for the Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands Policy Areas shall take precedence. Liquid waste service may be provided to such lands within the Growth Policy Area provided it is for a purpose consistent with the land use designations for the Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands Policy Areas.

Rural/Rural Residential Policy Area: Includes lands to be used for rural and rural residential purposes and the Victoria International Airport (with development potential as established through approved Memorandum of Understanding). The Regional Growth Strategy sets out in policy 1.1(1) and 1.2(1) that Rural / Rural Residential lands are not intended to become future urban areas requiring extensive services. Residential uses are of a form, density and character that support rural working landscapes. Commercial uses are local serving and such uses and other employment opportunities result in minimal impact to the surrounding community and to the environment. Low-impact tourism uses complement rural character. The policy area also includes lands with ecosystem benefits to be identified and protected through means such as development permit areas, conservation covenants, or acquisition and designation as a park or ecological reserve.

MAP 3: GROWTH MANAGEMENT CONCEPT PLAN



MAP 4: RENEWABLE RESOURCE LANDS - DETAIL

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

Map 4: Renewable Resource Lands -- Detail

Making a difference...together

- First Nation Reserve
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Capital Green Lands
- Privately Managed Forest Land
- Crown & Other Forest Lands
- Water
- Non-Renewable Resource Lands
- Outside RGS

NOTE: Lands showing as Agricultural Land Reserve are current to October 2015 and Privately Mangaged Forest Lands are current to March 2016.

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Policies

1. Provide for land uses consistent with the Growth Management Concept Plan depicted on Map 3 and adopt policies to implement the Growth Management Concept Plan consistent with the land use policy designations described in Objective 1.1.
2. Adopt policies regarding the protection, buffering and long term maintenance of the Growth Policy Area Boundary.
3. Permit amendment to the Growth Policy Area designation generally, only as an outcome of a comprehensive 5–year review of the Regional Growth Strategy, recognizing that municipal councils and the Capital Regional District Board are free to initiate at any time amendments to official community plans and the regional growth strategy they deem necessary, through statutory processes established in the *Local Government Act*.
4. Maintain Victoria as the primary regional employment, business and cultural centre.
5. Enhance or develop major employment and population centres in areas that meet criteria, as set out in Objective 3.1, for complete communities.

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1.2 Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities

Keeping urban settlement compact will help protect the character and quality of rural communities, ensure that they remain strongly rooted in the agricultural and resource land base and allow the rural countryside and natural landscape to remain a durable fact of life in the Capital Region. The protection of rural communities starts with clearly defining and distinguishing between urban and rural areas. The Regional Growth Strategy does this by designating for long term protection as Capital Green Lands and Renewable Resource Lands those natural assets including parks, ecological reserves, forests, farmland and watersheds that make up the region's green infrastructure and contribute to the regional economy. The designation of a Growth Policy Area reinforces the protection of Capital Green Lands, Renewable Resource Lands and Rural / Rural Residential Policy Areas and has the further benefit of supporting the long–term effort to keep urban settlement compact.

Rural and rural–residential communities offer a choice of rural lifestyles and outdoor recreation opportunities that complement the surrounding working landscapes and preserve ecological diversity. New development in the Rural/Rural Residential Policy Area is not intended to exceed 5% of the region's new dwelling units. Policy 1.1 protects rural communities by requiring that local municipalities and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area provide for land uses consistent with the Growth Management Concept Plan and adopt policies that would prevent lands designated as Rural/Rural Residential from becoming future urban areas. Strengthening the character and quality of rural communities can be achieved by planning for development in accordance with the principles set out below.

Principles

I. Maintain working landscapes including agriculture, forestry and outdoor recreation activities that contribute to the region's economy;
II. Avoid the creation of future urban areas through development patterns that complement rural form, density and character;
III. Minimize impacts to the natural environment and surrounding working landscapes; and
IV. Accommodate a slow to moderate rate of growth, contributing to no more than 5% of the region's new residential units.

Policies

1. Plan for development in the Rural / Rural Residential Policy Area depicted on Map 3 in a manner that is consistent with the principles set out in Objective 1.2.

2. Environment and Infrastructure

2.1 Protect, Conserve and Manage Ecosystem Health

The Capital Region has a rich inheritance of natural lands and waters of great beauty and biophysical diversity. Residents of the Capital Region enjoy a healthy environment where environmental quality is improved and the inheritance of renewable and non-renewable natural resources is carefully stewarded. Many of the region's terrestrial, fresh water and marine environments – its green and blue spaces – are of provincial, national and international significance.[2] The system of green and blue spaces that make up the region's natural environment spans a diverse range of ecosystems and land uses and requires integrated, collaborative and co-operative management of land and water resources. The Regional Growth Strategy aims to protect the landscape character, ecological heritage and biodiversity of the Capital Region by protecting, conserving and managing lands according to the principles set out below.

Principles

I. Waste discharges of all types should not exceed the assimilative capacity of the natural environment (including land, air and water);
II. Depletion rates for natural resources should not exceed the regenerative capacity of the ecosystems that produce them;
III. Consumption of scarce renewable and non–renewable resources should be minimized through conservation, efficiency and application of technology and reduce, reuse and recycle practices;
IV. Benefits derived from healthy ecosystems should be recognized and integrated into land use management and service delivery decisions; and,
V. Decision–making should give first priority to options that maintain ecosystem and population health and support the ongoing ability of natural systems to sustain life.

Parkland acquisition protects lands for conservation and recreation by establishing a connected system of natural areas. Central to this system is the protection of a sea to sea green/blue belt running from Saanich Inlet south to Juan de Fuca Strait, and the development of an integrated system of parks and trails linking urban areas to rural green space areas. By applying these principles, it will be possible to improve human health,

[2] The Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy was a foundational document for the development of the 2003 Regional Growth Strategy. The Strategy has been superseded by subsequent planning initiatives such as the Regional Parks Strategic Plan, the Integrated Watershed Management Program Plan, the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy and park management plans for the Sooke Hills Wilderness and Sea to Sea Regional Parks.

reduce negative impacts on the natural environment and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Policies

1. Ensure the long–term protection of Capital Green Lands depicted on Map 3. This could include policies for buffering and land use transition between Capital Green Lands and adjacent settled areas (i.e., lands within the Rural / Rural Residential Land Use Policy Area as well as the Growth Policy Area), as well as policies aimed at enhancing, restoring or naturalizing Capital Green Lands.
2. Prioritize community and regional park land acquisition, public and private land stewardship programs and regional trail network construction that contributes to completion of the sea to sea green/blue belt running from Saanich Inlet south to Juan de Fuca Strait.
3. Identify, protect, enhance and restore healthy ecosystems using tools that may consist of policies, regulations, development permit area guidelines, incentives, initiatives and education and outreach delivered at the local level consistent with the principles set out in Objective 2.1.
4. Protect the ecological integrity of watersheds and marine areas through collaborative initiatives consistent with the principles set out in Objective 2.1.
5. Manage surface water, drainage and groundwater in non–catchment watersheds throughout the region using an integrated watershed planning approach consistent with the principles set out in Objective 2.1.
6. Plan for the long term strategic resource needs in the Capital Region – including food, (paying specific attention to local food production), energy, water, and aggregate materials consistent with the principles set out in Objectives 2.1 and 7.1. Plans will consider long term demand, security of supply and potential impacts of factors such as long term climate change, fossil fuel depletion and water reclamation where feasible, and make policy and program recommendations to ensure that future needs are successfully anticipated and met.

2.2 Manage Regional Infrastructure Services Sustainably

Regional servicing infrastructure includes drinking water, liquid and solid waste. These services must be efficiently and cost-effectively managed for the long-term in order to accommodate the anticipated population increase.

The Sooke reservoir, managed and operated by the CRD, is the drinking water supply for the Capital Region. The CRD provides treated bulk water to multiple distribution systems around the region. The distribution systems differ by municipality and require ongoing cooperation for the planning and management of the service. Private wells and community water systems supply water to many residents in rural areas.

The Hartland Landfill provides solid waste disposal services for the Capital Region. The CRD sees waste as a commodity and seeks the highest and best use for these resources by applying the 5R hierarchy of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Resource Recovery and Residual Management. This includes a focus towards zero waste in our landfill, recycling programs, organics diversion, landfill gas capture and emerging opportunities.

The Saanich Peninsula Wastewater Treatment Plant provides secondary wastewater treatment to residents in the Saanich Peninsula. At the time of writing the Regional Growth Strategy, a planning process is underway to identify wastewater management strategies for the Core Area. Private septic fields treat liquid waste for residents in rural areas.

Infrastructure services may be impacted not only by an increased demand for the service as the population grows, but also by the form, pattern and location of new development. Servicing new development with limited or low density, which adds fewer new users per unit length of water or sewer pipe than the system average, would generally be more expensive than in denser areas. The costs of operating and maintaining this infrastructure over its lifecycle require consideration beyond the one-time capital investment. Keeping urban settlement compact will help create the densities needed to create efficient servicing infrastructure. It is also necessary to acknowledge and plan for the effects of a changing climate on regional infrastructure.

Managing regional infrastructure services according to the principles below and as outlined in Objective 2.1 will help minimize social, environmental and financial costs of providing regional infrastructure.

Principles

I. Promote settlement patterns that are cost-effective and efficient to service;
II. Minimize negative financial impacts to those currently serviced (impacts to consider system life cycle costs); and
III. Avoid negatively impacting the long-term availability of the service for existing development and planned growth within the growth boundary, recognizing the impacts of climate change.

Policies

1. Manage infrastructure services, including water supply and distribution, in accordance with the principles set out in Objectives 2.1 (Protect, Conserve and Manage Ecosystem Health) and 2.2 (Manage Regional Infrastructure Services Sustainably).
2. Provide new water system services (public or private) only to areas where:
    a. For a municipality, the areas to be serviced are shown on RGS Map 3 as either Growth Policy Area or Rural/Rural Residential Policy Area and the area to be serviced is consistent with OCP servicing provisions and an accepted Regional Context Statement identifies the population to be serviced and how growth in water demand will be addressed.
    b. For the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, the areas to be serviced are shown on RGS Map 3 as either Growth Policy Area or Rural/Rural Residential Policy Area and the area to be serviced is consistent with OCP servicing provisions and the applicable OCP identifies the population to be serviced and how growth in water demand will be addressed.
3. Notwithstanding policy 2.2(2), the CRD may extend water service if required to address a pressing public health, public safety or environmental issue relating to *existing* units or to service agriculture.
4. Where water service is extended to service agriculture in Policy 2.2(3), water service may be provided to residential units along the serviced line on lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve as long as an OCP is in place that prevents further subdivision or an increase in permitted residential density.
5. Do not further extend urban sewer services outside the Growth Policy Area Boundary depicted on Map 3.
6. Notwithstanding policies 2.2(2) and 2.2(4), evaluate requests for services from jurisdictions outside of Capital Regional District membership with a view towards supporting mutually beneficial relationships and fostering development consistent with all RGS objectives and policies.

3. Housing and Community

3.1 Create Safe and Complete Communities

The Regional Growth Strategy supports the development of complete communities within the Growth Policy Area that enable residents to undertake a wider range of daily activities closer to home. It does this by supporting the development of communities that offer a variety of housing types and tenures in close proximity to places of work, schools, shopping, recreation, parks and green space. Complete communities provide a better balance and distribution of jobs and housing, a wider choice of affordable housing types, a better distribution of public services and more opportunity to walk, cycle, and use public transit conveniently. Complete communities, are safe, socially diverse, openly accessible, livable and attract economic investment, thereby enhancing social sustainability and health and well-being.

The characteristics of a complete community are highly dependent on context. In some locations, the addition of employment opportunities or commercial services may be required while in others it may be the provision of a greater mix of housing types. In still others, the development of a park, footpaths or cycling facilities may help create a complete community. The criteria for a complete community with the Growth Policy Area are listed below. Outside the Growth Policy Area, the notion of what makes a community complete may be yet different and the criteria set out for complete communities does not apply to the Rural / Rural Residential Policy Area.

Complete Communities Criteria

I. Multiple modes can be used to move to, from and within the community;
II. Places of work, shopping, learning, recreation and parks and green space can be easily accessed by a ten minute walk or a fifteen minute bike ride;
III. A range of housing types and tenures across the housing spectrum is available for people through all stages of their lives; and
IV. The community is demographically diverse, with a mix of people of all ages, incomes and abilities.

Lands vulnerable to natural hazards risks may be located throughout the Growth Management Planning Area. Risks may limit or eliminate development.

Policies

1. Identify locations within the Growth Policy Area that support the wellbeing of residents, consistent with the Complete Communities Criteria outlined in Objective 3.1, and adopt policies to direct growth to these locations.
2. Create complete communities consistent with the criteria in Objective 3.1 by adopting policies, developing regulations or pursuing strategies focusing on matters such as densification, mix of uses, diverse housing types and tenures and multi-modal transportation.
3. Avoid locating new development in the Growth Management Planning Area in areas with high seismic hazard associated with ground-motion amplification, liquification, slope instability or in areas prone to flooding, or incorporate appropriate engineering and planning measures to mitigate risk.
4. Design, manage and construct climate change-adaptive and risk-adaptive infrastructure and utilities in the Growth Management Planning Area.

3.2 Improve Housing Affordability

Maintaining a broad range of affordable housing types and forms is necessary for individual quality of life, community health, and economic competitiveness. Central to affordability is the provision of housing along a broad spectrum that acknowledges different market and non-market tenures, ranging from shelters to social housing, assisted and market rental to home ownership.

Urban containment may have mixed results for housing affordability. In urban areas, increased residential densities and an expanded stock of attached housing may enhance affordability by expanding choice and by reducing the need to rely on travel by car to reach services. In rural areas, mobile homes, secondary suites and detached accessory suites may provide more affordable housing.

Urban containment measures could have the effect of limiting the supply of new lands for the urban housing market, thereby putting upward pressure on housing prices, particularly for single detached homes. The provision of affordable housing to accommodate the anticipated population increase is the responsibility of many stakeholders including the Capital Regional District, local and senior levels of government, industry and the not-for-profit sector.

The Capital Region Housing Corporation will continue to provide affordable housing to meet the needs associated with anticipated population growth, recognizing that implementation relies on funding and partnerships with other stakeholders. In addition to the provision of affordable housing, the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy has been developed to support all residents of the Capital Region – especially low and moderate-income households, the elderly, youth, those with special health and other needs, and the homeless – to have reasonable choice of housing by type, tenure, price and location. Five approaches to housing affordability underlie the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy.

Approaches to Housing Affordability

I. Work across the housing spectrum when identifying the current and anticipated future issues concerning market and non-market housing affordability for no, low and middle income and special needs households;
II. Analyze the extent of present issues and forecast future problems;
III. Focus on developing practical policies, and gaining commitments to action to address identified needs and problems in the short, medium and long term across the Capital Region;
IV. Involve the broader community in the development of the strategy and its recommended solutions; and,
V. Act as a catalyst for activities to improve housing affordability in the Capital Region.

Policies

1. Provide for an adequate, accessible and diverse supply of affordable housing across the housing spectrum.

4. Transportation

4.1 Increase Transportation Choice

The Regional Growth Strategy supports the development of a balanced and sustainable transportation system providing residents with reasonable and affordable transportation choices that enhance overall regional quality of life.

To achieve this objective, the Regional Growth Strategy relies on two related initiatives. First, the coordination of land use and transportation so that the majority of regional residents do not have to rely solely on travel by automobile to meet their daily needs. The Regional Growth Strategy's aim to keep urban settlement compact and build complete communities (Objectives 1.1 and 3.1) will tend to increase average urban densities and put people and their activities (homes, jobs, services) closer together. Creating communities where housing is close to activities will enhance opportunities for using walking, cycling, and public transit to meet daily needs.

Secondly, transportation choice will be enhanced with the planning, development and implementation of a Regional Multi-Modal Network that provides travel choices and supports smart growth and livable, complete communities. Achieving the Regional Multi-Modal Network is the responsibility of many actors, including the Capital Regional District, local and senior levels of government and BC Transit. Seven principles guide the Regional Transportation Plan and support the multi-modal and integrated approach to transportation across the region.

Principles

I. Take a coordinated and engaged approach to planning;
II. Prioritize strategic investments that serve regional mobility needs;
III. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change;
IV. Integrate transportation and land use planning;
V. Capitalize on the potential for alternatives to driving alone;
VI. Enhance the role for public transit; and
VII. Maximize efficiency of existing transportation corridors for multiple modes.

Policies

1. Implement the Regional Transportation Plan in accordance with the principles outlined in Objective 4.1.
2. Locate growth and major trip-generating uses where such can be efficiently serviced by transit and active transportation.
3. Prioritize transit and active modes in community planning and in the design and implementation of infrastructure, facilities and programs.

5. Economic Development

5.1 Strengthen the Regional Economy

For residents of the Capital Region, economic prosperity is a foundation of high regional quality of life. Economic sustainability means the production and distribution of wealth to meet present and future generations' needs for goods and services in ways that ensure the long–term promotion of a satisfying and high quality of life for all residents. A sustainable economy is one that exhibits diverse and viable economic opportunities and is resilient and responsive to changing circumstances. Further characteristics of a sustainable economy are the involvement of a broad range of parties and interests in economic decision–making and contribution to the achievement of environmental and social sustainability.

The Capital Region already has a highly diversified economy. Current strengths include the internationally significant tourism industry, agri-tourism, colleges and universities, provincial capital services and functions, major national defense headquarters and facilities, a growing high technology sector, health services, small business, environmental consulting, retirement services, the film industry and a natural environment and livable communities that attract others to live here. These advantages notwithstanding, significant regional growth management and quality of life considerations remain un-addressed.

Economic Development Considerations

I. Finding ways to achieve a minimum jobs/population ratio of:
    i. 0.60 in the Core Area
    ii. 0.53 in the Saanich Peninsula
    iii. 0.36 in the West Shore;
II. Finding ways to work collaboratively on regional economic development considerations, including cooperation with First Nations;
III. Finding ways to expand and diversify the economy of formerly resource–dependent communities in Sooke and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, such as through low-impact recreation and tourism;
IV. Finding ways to ensure the long term, affordable supply of strategic economic resources such as water, aggregate and energy;
V. Finding ways to increase economic activity in forestry and agriculture including high–value and specialized agriculture and value-added forestry;
VI. Finding ways to address the shortage of designated space–extensive industrial/business land in the region in locations consistent with overall goals regarding community completeness, transportation balance, and a network of major centres within an urban containment boundary;

VII. Finding ways to enhance established employment centres;
VIII. Finding ways to integrate high–value, clean industry and business in complete communities;
IX. Finding ways to attract, develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce; and,
X. Finding ways to reduce poverty in the Capital Region.

Policies

1. Collaboratively build on the region's economic, environmental and quality of life advantages to position the region as a highly desirable location for investing in existing and new businesses, working to address the economic development considerations identified in Objective 5.1.
2. Provide for land development patterns that maintain an adequate supply of employment land, industrial land, transportation infrastructure and services to support a diverse regional economy.
3. Prioritize the attraction of new businesses and investment that will support climate action.
4. Ensure the long–term protection of Renewable Resource Lands depicted on Maps 3 and 4. This could include policies aimed for buffering and land use transition between Renewable Resource Lands and settled areas (i.e., lands within the Rural / Rural Residential Land Use Policy Area as well as the Growth Policy Area), and policies that support farming within the Agricultural Land Reserve, and forestry, silviculture, forestry-related industrial uses and low-impact tourism within the Private Managed Forest Land and Crown and other forest lands.

6. Food Systems

6.1 Foster a resilient food and agriculture system

Food and agriculture are part of a food system which includes planting, irrigation, harvesting, processing, distribution, preparation and marketing and consumption, in addition to food waste management and soil betterments.

A viable and resilient local food and agriculture system is important to the Capital Regional District's health, sustainability, security and visual/cultural identity.

Changes in climate, energy costs and water availability will impact agricultural production and will draw greater attention to regional food system resiliency.

The widespread impact of food and agriculture and the nature of the challenges likely to be faced in coming years make food and agriculture a matter of regional interest. Challenges include loss of farmland, lack of farm profitability and financial sustainability, increasing average age of farmers, increasing food prices, limited (72 hour) supply of fresh food in an emergency, food wastage, need to revitalize indigenous food systems, lack of knowledge of how to grow and prepare healthy food, increasing rates of food insecure people and increasing rates of diet-related chronic disease. Regional alignment will strengthen the food and agricultural sector.

The Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy recommends actions to create a viable, healthy and resilient food system. Regional Growth Strategy policies are intended to work in tandem with the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy to guide future decisions.

Achieving a healthy, viable and resilient local food and agriculture system will require adherence to the following related principles:

Principles

I. Support First Nations food interests and rights;
II. Protect and enhance the region's food and farmlands;
III. Avoid urban/agricultural land use conflict; mitigate where avoidance is not possible;
IV. Enhance access to nutritious, safe and culturally-appropriate food;
V. Expand food system economic opportunities;
VI. Encourage food system education and agri-tourism; and
VII. Foster resiliency in the face of an unpredictable climate, increased pest resistance, and declining, increasingly expensive water and energy supplies.

Policies

1. Implement initiatives in accordance with the principles outlined in Objective 6.1.
2. Enable food production, processing and distribution that will foster a place-based food economy that increases access to local, nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate food.
3. Support food waste management that is environmentally sustainable, benefits the regional economy and improves residents' connections to rural and agricultural landscapes.

7. Climate Action

7.1 Significantly Reduce Community-Based Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Regional Growth Strategy supports the reduction of community-based greenhouse gas emissions to address the effects of a changing climate. In the Capital Region, community greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation system, the heating, cooling and energizing of buildings, waste, energy production, the production of goods and agriculture.[3]

The Capital Regional District and local governments have long-standing commitments to make decisions, target investments and build capacity for reducing the use of fossil fuels and expanding the clean energy economy. Further, the Regional Growth Strategy's aim to keep urban settlement compact, protect, conserve and manage ecosystem health, build safe and complete communities, increase transportation choice, strengthen the regional economy and foster a resilient regional food and agriculture system will support the low-carbon built form that is the foundation for reducing energy demand.

Reducing community greenhouse gas emissions requires action on many fronts and is the responsibility of many actors including the Capital Regional District, local and senior levels of government, industry, institutions, businesses and residents. It requires coordinated, consistently applied action focusing on people, land use, transportation, infrastructure and technology. Achieving community greenhouse gas reduction targets means following four related principles.

Principles

I. Create a low-carbon built form to reduce energy demand;
II. Increase energy efficiency and recovery from retrofits and new development;
III. Promote energy efficiency and the use of renewable, clean energy to reduce reliance on fossil fuels; and
IV. Protect the carbon sequestration value of natural systems, including forested lands and wetlands.

[3] Source: Community Energy and Emissions Inventory (CEEI). Province of BC.

Policies

1. Prioritize investment that will provide for a low-carbon built form that supports efficient energy use, the provision of clean and renewable district energy, active transportation modes, transit service, and low/zero emissions vehicles.
2. Design, manage, fund and operate programs, services and infrastructure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in keeping with the principles outlined in Objective 7.1.
3. Strategically acquire protected areas that contribute to climate change mitigation.

Implementation Measures

The Capital Regional District Board, working in partnership with local municipalities, the Province, the Federal Government and others, will undertake the following implementation measures to realize the vision, objectives and policies of the Regional Growth Strategy:

I-1a. Maintain a collaborative regional strategic planning program directed to work towards achievement of the long term objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy.

I-1b. At least once every five years, consider whether the Regional Growth Strategy should be reviewed for possible revision and amendment.

I-2. Monitor, evaluate and annually report on trends and progress towards achievement of Regional Growth Strategy vision and objectives.

I-3(a) Prepare a Climate Action Strategy to support the implementation of community-based greenhouse gas reduction initiatives.

I-3(b) Support local governments and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area through regional capacity building, education and projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

I-4(a) Work to reach agreement with local municipalities on Regional Context Statements within two years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy. Regional Context Statements, adopted within the applicable Official Community Plan, set out how each municipality will address Regional Growth Strategy objectives and policies.

I-4(b) Adopt Official Community Plans in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area that are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. The Official Community Plans will identify how they are consistent with the objectives and policies of the RGS.

I-5. Establish a mechanism to ensure that the vision, goals and objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy cascade to Capital Regional District plans, bylaws, services, funding applications and spending.

I-6. Coordinate the review and update of regional planning documents to inform future updates to the Regional Growth Strategy and guide CRD action on housing, transportation, regional district services, parks and natural areas and economic development. Documents may include, but are not limited to:

- Housing Affordability Strategy
- Regional Transportation Plan
- Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan
- Liquid Waste Management Plan
- Integrated Watershed Management Plan
- Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan
- Regional Parks Strategic Plan
- Food and Agriculture Strategy*
- Climate Action Strategy*

I-7. Implement the Regional Growth Strategy without prejudice to any aboriginal rights or title that may currently exist, or be defined further through treaty or other processes. The Board will do this with the full recognition that Capital Region First Nations have asserted within their traditional territories, aboriginal rights and title and treaty rights currently undergoing formal definition through the modern treaty and other processes. The Board recognizes that First Nations Councils are neighbouring governments in the Capital Region, with a shared interest in managing long term development to enhance regional quality of life.

I-8. Coordinate with the Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Islands Trust to ensure that long term planning and development policies and initiatives in those jurisdictions are compatible with the vision and objectives of the Capital Region's Regional Growth Strategy.

I-9 The Capital Regional District will work with the Province, agencies such as the Vancouver Island Health Authority and BC Transit, and the federal government to coordinate implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy while respecting the authority of each jurisdiction.

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* At the time of writing, the Food and Agriculture Strategy and the Climate Action Strategy are under development.

TABLE 2: 2038 TARGETS BY PRIORITY AREA AND OBJECTIVE

PRIORITY AREA	OBJECTIVE	TARGETS BY 2038
1) Managing and Balancing Growth	1.1 Keep Urban Settlement Compact	• Accommodate a minimum of 95% of the region's new dwelling units within the Growth Policy Area.
	1.2 Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities	
2) Environment and Infrastructure	2.1 Protect, Conserve and Manage Ecosystem Health	• Acquire 100% of the sea-to-sea green/blue belt. • Complete 100% of the Regional Trail Network. • Reduce contaminants to fresh and marine water bodies.
	2.2 Deliver Services Consistent with RGS Objectives	• Prepare long-term capital plans for Capital Regional District utilities and major infrastructure improvements necessary to address the impacts of climate change and natural hazards.
3) Housing and Community	3.1 Create Safe and Complete Communities	• Municipal targets for the number of people living in complete communities to be identified by municipalities in Regional Context Statements.
	3.2 Improve Housing Affordability	• Increase the supply of more affordable housing. • Reduce the number of people in core housing need. • Reduce the number of people who are homeless.[4]
4) Transportation	4.1 Increase Transportation Choice	• Achieve a transportation system that sees 42% of all trips made by walking, cycling, transit.
5) Economic Development	5.1 Strengthen the Regional Economy	• Achieve a jobs/population ratio of: – 0.60 in Core Area – 0.53 in Saanich Peninsula – 0.36 in West Shore
6) Food Systems	6.1 Foster a Resilient Food and Agriculture System	• Increase the amount of land in crop production by 5000 ha.
7) Climate Action	7.1 Significantly reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions	• Reduce community greenhouse gas emissions by 33% (from 2007 levels) by 2020, and by 61% by 2038.

[4] Numeric targets will be identified in an updated Regional Housing Affordability Strategy. At the time of writing, the targets in the approved Regional Housing Affordability Strategy are inconsistent with the legislated timeline of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Appendix A: Community Profiles

Spanning coastal, forest and agricultural landscapes, communities in the capital region range from seaside towns to rural farms, to suburban and downtown neighbourhoods. This diversity is our strength. Residents can access a variety of lifestyles thanks to the commitments of municipalities and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area to protect and perpetuate our natural environments and to foster shared regional amenities and resources. This is made possible by our communities working together as a region, creating a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

The Regional Growth Strategy champions a collaborative approach to realizing our vision and objectives. It supports decision-making that takes a regional perspective while valuing the community characteristics of the 13 local municipalities and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area.

Community profiles/vision statements are described below.

Central Saanich

The community of Central Saanich, including the Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nations, spans the centre of the Peninsula. The municipality includes the greatest concentration of agricultural production in the region, along with light industrial land, residential areas with rural and suburban character, and compact village centres. In order to maintain rural character and protect the function of natural ecosystems, slow and managed growth is accepted within defined urban settlement areas and outside of rural and agricultural lands. The intensification of high quality knowledge-based and light industrial business and industrial growth is encouraged in the Keating Industrial area.

Colwood

Colwood will become a more urban community while retaining its exceptional heritage resources and natural areas. Colwood Corners is transformed into an attractive, welcoming town centre. Royal Bay, Olympic View and Colwood Corners have expanded as complete communities. Hatley Park Estate is the home of Royal Roads University and features extensive public open space.

Esquimalt

Esquimalt exhibits a more sustainable model of urban development where the quality of the natural and built environment passed on to the next generation is healthier than at present. The Wardroom/Hospital DND site has clusters of low and medium density multiple family housing surrounded by green space. Macaulay Point/Work Point is a complete community

that is pedestrian oriented, socially diverse, with a mix of uses and services and park space, treed areas, and continuous waterfront access. It is Esquimalt's intention to strengthen its commercial/retail sector to service the expanding needs of the community and to market our central location to businesses and high-tech industries. The Esquimalt graving dock is an important contributor to the regional economy.

Highlands

The Highlands will continue to preserve large areas of natural green space protecting elements of the regional ecosystem and providing outdoor recreational opportunities for CRD residents and visitors. Lands retained in a natural state preserve diversity of plant and animal life. Development remains primarily residential on rural acreages or large lots, with no role as an area for urban development.

Juan de Fuca Electoral Area

The Juan de Fuca Electoral Area comprises approximately 151,189 hectares or about 61% of the CRD land area. It contains significant provincial, regional and locally controlled parks and trail systems, ecological reserves and the CRD Water Supply area. The Rural Resource Lands comprise approximately 132,000 ha or 83% of land in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area and is primarily Crown Forest or Private Managed Forest Land. These lands are preserved for renewable resource working landscapes, and provide for natural green space and outdoor recreational and eco-tourism opportunities for residents and visitors to the Capital Region. Port Renfrew, a tourism and forestry based community provides for small-lot tourism-oriented urban development. Five small community areas, East Sooke, Otter Point, Malahat, Shirley/Jordan River and Willis Point maintain the rural character while providing rural residential choices.

Langford

The City of Langford has a cohesive town centre with pedestrian areas, commercial districts, and convenient vehicle access, providing a central community focus and an enhanced regional role. An open space system made up of treed areas, lakes and streams links and defines neighbourhoods.

Metchosin

Metchosin is a community of rural character with a choice of rural lifestyles. The vibrant and locally-supported agricultural industry continues to thrive and diversify with a range of products and organic crops. Our natural areas, shorelines, sensitive ecosystems and biodiversity are valued, preserved and protected. There is an expanded system of local and regional parks and natural open spaces linked with multi-use trails, along with improved

access to shoreline areas, allowing increased recreational opportunities and fostering active healthy lifestyles. Metchosin village continues to be the community hub and primary commercial centre for local businesses and retailers, with some limited room for expansion. Metchosin's rural character is an integral component of, and valued contributor to the broader complete regional community.

North Saanich

Situated in the northerly tip of the Saanich Peninsula approximately 27 kilometres north of downtown Victoria, the District of North Saanich is a collection of coastal focused neighbourhoods which surround agricultural lands. The community's long term development plans are based on the desire of residents to retain rural character and safeguard environmental qualities. The District's policies reflect a strong commitment to preserve the agricultural land base and agricultural activities in the municipality.

Oak Bay

Oak Bay continues to be a green, landscaped, quiet residential community with a mix of housing types and neighbourhood commercial centres with a special emphasis on heritage preservation. Oak Bay village is a strong shopping area and the historical, cultural, community and business core of the municipality. Public access to waterfront amenities including clean safe beaches is maximized.

Saanich

Environmental integrity is paramount to ensuring social wellbeing and economic vibrancy. Saanich remains a series of community focused neighbourhoods, within an urban containment boundary that clearly separates the urban area from the rural portion of the municipality. This growth framework is based on principles of sustainability and livability. Rural Saanich forms part of the peninsula farm lands. Population increases are managed within the context of the local area planning process, where land use, density and development policies direct growth to "Centres" and "Villages" to build complete communities that encourage diversity of lifestyle, housing, economic and cultural opportunities.

Sidney

Sidney remains the commercial centre for the north Peninsula and the economic competitiveness of Sidney is maintained and enhanced. Commercial/industrial lands are available and there are growing knowledge-based industries. Orientation between the town and the ocean is strong, including enhanced ocean–side amenities.

Sooke

Sooke, located on the Sooke Harbour and Basin, will become a complete, vibrant community with a mix of businesses, affordable housing, services and public open spaces. The highest population densities and commercial growth occur in the Town Centre, serving the growing population base and the surrounding coastal communities. Residential growth will continue within the designated Community Growth Area. Large parcel sizes will maintain the rural ambiance, and limit the development outside the town's core.

Victoria

Victoria is an urban sustainability leader inspiring innovation, pride and progress towards greater ecological integrity, livability, economic vitality, and community resiliency confronting the changes facing society and the planet today and for generations to come, while building on Victoria's strengths as a harbour-centred, historic, capital city that provides exceptional quality of life through a beautiful natural setting, walkable neighbourhoods of unique character, and a thriving Downtown that is the heart of the region.

View Royal

View Royal will have a series of economic centres providing expanded retail, professional financial and convenience services. Single family detached housing will remain the predominant housing form with some provision made for other types of housing. A network of foot and cycle paths will provide neighbourhoods with access to shopping, recreation and natural open space. Natural amenities associated with shorelines, streams, estuaries, hillsides and forested areas will be protected.

Appendix B Framework for Our Future Guiding Principles

On July 15, 1998 the Capital Regional District Board resolved to adopt the *Framework for Our Future Agreement* to guide the development of a regional growth strategy for the Capital Region. The Framework Agreement provided general guiding principles for the preparation of the Regional Growth Strategy. Over 15 years later, in 2016, this framework endures as the foundation of the Regional Growth Strategy.

1. The Capital Region's Growth Management Strategy is based on four fundamental principles:

Sustainability: actions to meet our needs today do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and ensure the ongoing healthy functioning of the natural systems that sustain life.

Appropriateness: actions are appropriate to the aspirations and local conditions of the Capital Region, and do not simply reflect the uncritical application of ideas developed for other places and situations.

Continuity: the strategy will build on work that has already been undertaken by the Capital Regional District and its member municipalities, and will consider the thoughts and ideas contributed by individual residents and community associations.

Cooperation, Collaboration and Coordination: the Capital Regional District, local municipalities, provincial ministries and agencies, and regional residents will work together to develop and implement the strategy. First Nations, the Islands Trust, and the Cowichan Valley Regional District are neighbouring governments and will be invited to participate.

2. In addition, the development and evaluation of alternative solutions will pay due regard to the following 14 provincial goals set out in the Local Government Act:
    1. Avoid urban sprawl;
    2. Minimize automobile use and encourage walking, cycling and efficient public transit;
    3. Move goods and people efficiently, making effective use of transportation and utility corridors;
    4. Protect environmentally sensitive areas;
    5. Maintain a secure and productive resource base, including the agricultural land and the forest land reserves;
    6. Encourage economic development that supports the unique character of communities;

7. Reduce and prevent air, land and water pollution;
8. Ensure adequate, affordable and appropriate housing;
9. Ensure adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement;
10. Protect the quality and quantity of ground and surface water;
11. Minimize the risks to settlement associated with natural hazards;
12. Preserve, create and link urban and rural open space including parks and recreation areas;
13. Plan for energy supply and promote efficient use, conservation and alternative sources of energy; and,
14. Ensure good stewardship of land, sites and structures with cultural heritage value.

Appendix C The Regional Green/Blue Spaces Vision

The Green/Blue Spaces Strategy set out a comprehensive, long–term strategy for maintaining, conserving, rehabilitating and restoring green/blue spaces on public and private lands in the region, including areas with ecological, aesthetic, renewable resource, outdoor recreation and greenways values. The Board adopted the Green/Blue Spaces vision on November 26, 1997 as a guide for the preparation of the 2003 Regional Growth Strategy. This vision – Our Essential Nature – formed part of the *Framework for Our Future Agreement* adopted by the Board on July 15, 1998 to guide the development of the Regional Growth Strategy. The Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy has been superseded by subsequent planning initiatives such as the Regional Parks Strategic Plan, the Integrated Watershed Management Program Plan, the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy and park management plans for the Sooke Hills Wilderness and Sea to Sea Regional Parks.

“There are times when we just want to roam the Gowlland Range and listen to the sound of air stirred up by eagles’ wings. Or stroll the Swan Lake boardwalk and watch a family of proud ducklings parade past our feet.

Then there are days when splashing about with our children in the cool, clean waters of Thetis Lake is the only thing worth doing. Or maybe it’s kicking up the warm, soft sand of Willows Beach.

Perhaps it’s walking along the Colquitz Creek that makes our world come alive. Or taking a second, reflective look at a rare old Douglas–fir on the grounds of Royal Roads.

Whether it is the pastoral splendour of the Saanich Peninsula Farmlands, or the stark and wild beauty of the Juan de Fuca coastline, our ability to appreciate nature begins with whatever captivates our senses. It then expands to values we feel deeply but rarely capture in words.

All of us who live in the Capital Regional District cherish the natural environment that is so essential to our quality of life, and we are determined that it never be compromised.

So although we already enjoy a diverse network of protected areas that stretches from the southern Gulf Islands to Port Renfrew, we cannot be complacent. As the region’s population continues to grow, we must ensure

that the stewardship of the natural environment remains integral to all forms of urban, suburban and rural development.

But we don't protect nature just so we can hike, relax and contemplate. We must also safeguard endangered species and sensitive ecosystems such as Garry Oak meadows and stands of old growth Douglas-fir. And we need to give Pacific salmon a fighting chance to return to urban streams.

To that end we envision the development of a regional green/blue space system that will protect and maintain the full range and diversity of the natural environment that surrounds us, including significant green spaces, the marine environment, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, and unique ecosystems.

We are also committed to protecting and maintaining the last remnants of ecosystems that flourished here before the time of Captain Cook, and to restore natural systems we have altered.

This is neither a park plan nor a policy document, but a vision of cooperative stewardship that integrates the contributions of citizens, landowners, businesses, communities, and all levels of government. It is a vision of sustaining the essential nature of our region, of continually creating and protecting a livable and healthy community – and passing on that legacy to future generations. ”

The objectives of the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy were to:

- Conserve rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems and species in the Capital Regional District;
- Maintain biological diversity by protecting and enhancing a variety of habitats;
- Conserve ecologically valuable areas in large, diverse, contiguous units and connect them with greenways;
- Maintain the character and diversity of green/blue spaces in the Capital Regional District;
- Enhance and restore areas that could have green/blue space values;
- Develop a comprehensive set of priorities for the conservation of green/blue spaces in the Capital Regional District;
- Educate people about the value of protecting green/blue spaces in the Capital Regional District; and,
- Foster partnerships for the conservation and stewardship of green/blue spaces.

Appendix D Glossary

Attached housing Any form of housing where more than two individual dwellings are structurally attached including townhouses, apartments regardless of tenure, stacked townhouses and the like.

Climate Change A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity.[5]

Complete Community Multiple–use urban community that contains within its boundaries the full range of facilities and activities necessary to meet typical household needs for employment, shopping, personal services, recreation, housing, education and other goods and services. Complete communities typically are defined by what they are not, that is, single-use residential areas that serve a largely dormitory function to a larger centre, with few local opportunities to meet the broad range of household needs described.

Core Municipalities The Capital Region sub–region that includes the municipalities of Victoria, Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Saanich and View Royal.

Density A measure of the intensity of occupancy and use of the land, generally described in terms of persons per hectare, or dwelling units per hectare, or a ratio of the built floor area of a structure to the area of the lot it occupies.

Framework For Our Future Agreement An agreement approved by the Capital Regional District Board on July 15, 1998 that set out the scope, overall vision, priority areas and guiding principles for the preparation of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Gases in the earth's atmosphere that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation. These gases occur through both natural and human-influenced processes. GHG emitted through human activities include carbon dioxide (CO2), nitrous oxide (N2O), methane (CH4), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulphur hexafluoride (SF6).

Growth management Implementation of government regulations that control the type, location, quality, scale, rate, sequence or timing of development. More generally, the whole range of policies designed to control, guide or mitigate the effects of growth. By attempting to guide growth rather than react to its effects, communities engaged in growth

[5] Based on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change definition.

management assume a proactive stance in ensuring that the very qualities that attract growth are not destroyed for existing residents and future generations.

Healthy ecosystems Terrestrial, riparian and shoreline areas with high ecological value that support habitat and biodiversity, support rare, threatened or endangered plant and animal species and contribute to the continued functioning of natural processes such as groundwater infiltration, water purification, air filtration, carbon sequestration and soil nutrient management. Healthy ecosystems could be on developed, partly developed or undeveloped public and private spaces.

Housing affordability Generally describes a condition in which housing costs consume no more than 30% of gross household income (unless by choice); including taxes and insurance (for owners) and utilities (for owners and renters). Applies to both market and non-market (subsidized) dwellings.

Infrastructure The physical capital and associated services considered basic and necessary to the functioning of the built environment. These include such things as: sanitary sewers, treatment plants, and water pipelines and distribution/collection systems; roads, signals, sidewalks and other components of the transportation system including transit vehicles, ferries and airports; solid waste management facilities including transfer stations and landfills; and, energy supply and distribution systems including hydroelectric and natural gas transmission and distribution systems. More generally, infrastructure can refer to other tangible public and private assets necessary to support the development of a modern urban settlement, such as hospitals, schools and recreation facilities. In some cases, preserved green space and natural areas including forests, wetlands, and stream corridors have been described as a "green infrastructure", essential to the vitality of healthy human communities.

Metropolitan Victoria or Victoria Metropolitan Area (VMA) That portion of the Capital Region from, Otter Point in the west to Swartz Bay in the north, defined by Statistics Canada as the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area.

Mixed–use Land use regulations that permit a variety of different uses and activities either on one legal parcel or within one defined land use zone. The classic example of a mixed use district is a historical downtown core that contains a wide range of residential, business, service, institutional, cultural, recreational and industrial uses within a relatively small area; in many cases, a wide range of different uses within individual buildings or on single sites.

Official Community Plan (OCP) Under Section 471 of the *Local Government Act*, a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan.

Peninsula The sub–region of the Capital Regional District including the municipalities of Central Saanich, Sidney, and North Saanich.

Regional Context Statement Under Section 446 of the *Local Government Act*, a statement, accepted by the regional district board, included in a municipal official community plan within two years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy, that explains the relationship between the official community plan and the Regional Growth Strategy.

Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Under Part 13 of the *Local Government Act*, a regional agreement (including a vision, goals, policies and actions) that commits affected municipalities and regional districts to a course of action to meet common social, economic and environmental objectives. It is initiated and adopted by a regional district and referred to all affected local governments for acceptance.

Regional Multi-Modal Network The interconnected transportation corridors defined in the Regional Transportation Plan. The multi-modal network provides for connectivity across modes (walking, cycling, transit and driving) and describes the backbone of the region's transportation system. The corridors that comprise the network are prioritized based on expected demand for two or more transportation modes.

Sea to Sea Green/Blue Belt A band of watersheds running between Saanich Inlet and Sooke Basin that is currently or proposed for protection by the Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy, including major parks and Capital Regional District Water lands, delineated on Map 4.

Target A desired level of performance set for a specific situation in a plan or program. The time horizon for all targets is 2038.

Growth Policy Area Boundary The area contained within a regulatory boundary (an urban containment boundary) marking the limit between a defined urban growth and servicing area and other areas such as rural and resource areas, where urban growth is discouraged.

Walkable In urban design, a community is walkable when it is scaled, dimensioned and provided with facilities and a mix of uses and activities that make walking an easy, convenient way to get around. A general rule of thumb is that most people will not walk much more than 10 to 15 minutes to shop or reach services such as libraries and schools. To meet this standard, a walkable community would have a shopping and service centre no more than 400–600 metres from most residences, with a sidewalk and street environment scaled to be interesting and inviting to people on foot.

West Shore The sub–region of the Capital Regional District that includes the municipalities of Colwood, Langford, Metchosin, Highlands, Sooke, and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area.