

Without sustainable development planning, urbanization can have negative impacts on our farmland, water quality, rural areas, transportation routes and environmentally sensitive areas. As developable land near the core becomes scarce, neighbourhoods are built farther away from the city.

Our region has experienced steady growth in the past and this is expected to continue into the future. Well managed, this growth can support economic vitality, strengthen community well-being and maintain natural assets. The challenge will be to accommodate growth in a manner that is sustainable, respecting the social, cultural and environmental values of our residents.

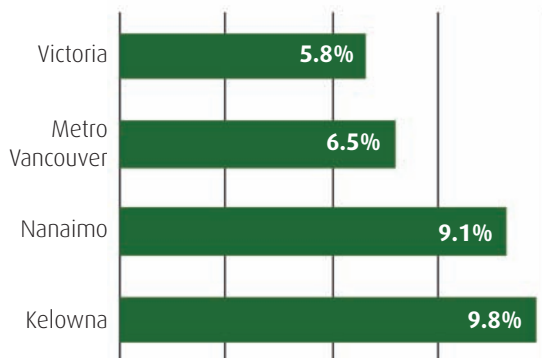
This is one of nine papers that aims to challenge our thinking about being a sustainable region. It focuses on sustainable urban development and land use planning, and presents policy options relating to compact settlement, building complete communities, climate change and maintaining the integrity of rural communities.

Your feedback is welcome.

A Regional Context

Population. Between 2001 and 2006, the Capital Regional District (CRD) saw a 6% increase in its population to about 345,000. Comparatively, as shown in Figure 1, Metro Vancouver grew less rapidly than other regional hubs in BC including Metro Vancouver, Nanaimo and Kelowna. The region's population is projected to increase to 390,000 by 2016 and to 460,000 residents by 2036.

Figure 1: Change in Total Population by Region (Census Metropolitan Area), 2001-2006



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2006 Census



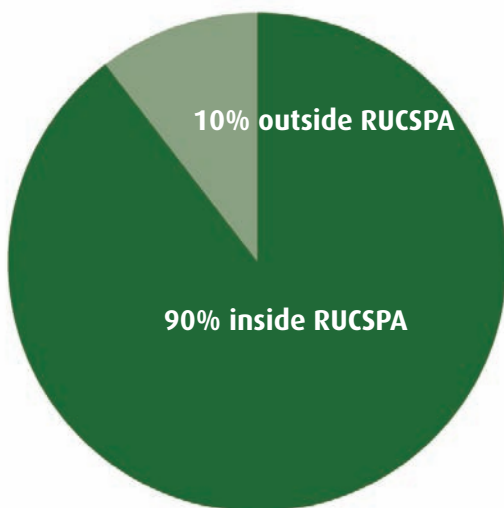
Increasingly, issues of change will become more important than those of growth. By 2038, the population aged 65 and older is projected to increase by 75,600 people. For every person added to the working aged population over the next three decades, 2.8 seniors will be added to the regional population. This will have profound implications for future labour supply and housing demand.

- Since 2001, 23% of net new dwelling units were built within the City of Victoria.
- 90% of new dwelling units were built within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Area (RUCSPA).

Dwellings. The number of dwelling units grew at an average annual rate of 2% between 2001 and 2006. Alongside the increase in dwellings, the number of vehicles commuting to the core also increased, resulting in congestion and high commuter times.

Nearly one quarter of the 14,000 new dwelling units built between 2001 and 2009 were constructed within the City of Victoria, well above the 15% target established in the Regional Growth Strategy in 2003. Comparatively, the share of new dwelling units in the other Urban Core municipalities of Saanich, Esquimalt, View Royal and Oak Bay has been declining, while the proportion in the West Shore has been increasing.

Figure 2: Dwellings in the RUCSPA (2001-2009)

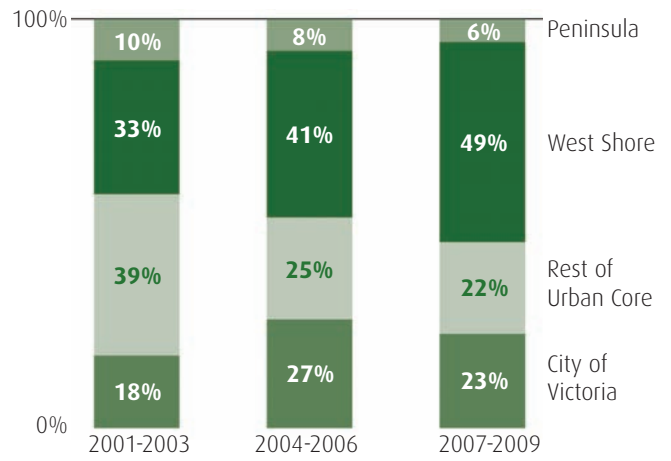


Sources: Statistics Canada, CRD Regional Planning and CMHC

Almost 12,000 new dwelling units were constructed within the RUCSPA between 2001 and 2009 — 90% of the total dwelling units constructed in the region.

In 2006, approximately 283,000 people or 87% of the total population in the Growth Management Area resided within the RUCSPA. This concentration of people and houses is in line with the regional goal to encourage growth close to existing infrastructure. However, there are proportionally fewer people choosing to live within the RUCSPA boundary compared to 2001 when 90% of the population lived inside the RUCSPA.

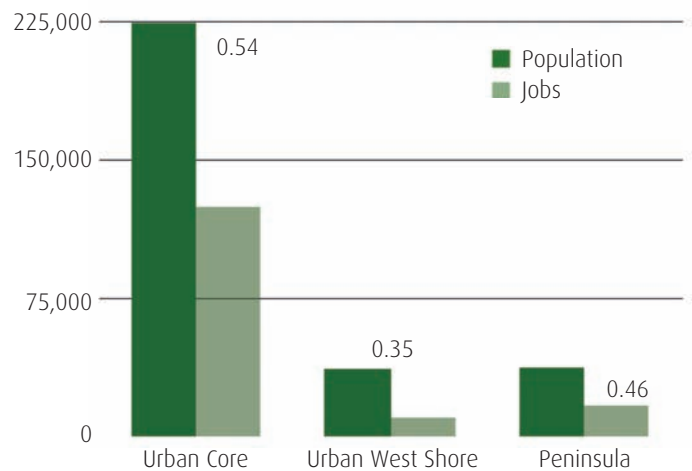
Figure 3: Share of New Dwelling Units (2001-2009)



Sources: Statistics Canada, CRD Regional Planning and CMHC

The closer a person lives to their work, the more likely they are to use forms of transportation other than the automobile. In 2006, the CRD had a jobs-to-population ratio of 0.48, with the highest ratio in the Urban Core area at 0.54. Job growth is holding in the core, but expanding in the West Shore. The target ratio is 0.60 for metropolitan and urban areas.

Figure 4: Jobs-to-Population Ratio (2006)



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

Regional Growth Strategy Objectives “Keep Urban Settlement Compact”

1. Establish a strong, mixed-use metropolitan core.
2. Accommodate 15% of the region’s cumulative new dwelling units to 2026 within the City of Victoria to reinforce the metropolitan core.
3. Focus new growth primarily in major centres to revitalize as walkable, transit-oriented, complete communities, with a dense mix of businesses, housing, services and open spaces.
4. Increase detached and ground access housing within the urban containment and servicing area in the core municipalities of Victoria, Esquimalt, Saanich and Oak Bay by 5% over the designated capacities in their OCPs by 2011.
5. Locate a minimum of 90% of the region’s cumulative new dwelling units to 2026 within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Area (RUCSPA).
6. Demonstrate municipal leadership.

Source: CRD Regional Growth Strategy, 2003

Regional Growth Strategy Objectives “Build Complete Communities”

Urban development projects contribute to community completeness when, to the greatest extent possible:

1. Projects are located within a 10-minute walk (500 metres) of the metropolitan core or a major centre.
2. Projects co-locate a mix of housing, employment, services and recreation.
3. Housing is located within a 10-minute walk of an existing commercial/employment centre, neighbourhood store, recreation facility, school, park or community allotment garden.
4. Projects either avoid locations with high seismic hazard or incorporate appropriate engineering and planning measures to mitigate risk.
5. Businesses, services and housing located within a 7-minute walk (400m) of a public transit route.

Source: CRD Regional Growth Strategy, 2003

What’s Been Driving Sustainable Development Policy and Planning?

The primary driver for the CRD is the 2003 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), which promotes sustainable development through its strong goals and policy statements. Provincial legislation has provided a mandate and a framework for regional government to facilitate sustainable development:

1995 | Growth Strategies Legislation

The growth strategies section of the *Local Government Act* provides a framework for coordinated action towards managing urban growth in BC. A regional vision, in the form of a regional growth strategy, commits municipalities, regional districts and provincial agencies 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.” This includes avoiding urban sprawl and developing settlement patterns that minimize the use of automobiles.

2004 | Private Managed Forest Land Act

replaced the *Forest Land Reserve Act*.

2008 | Green Communities Legislation

The *Local Government Act* was amended to require regional districts to set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) within the region, and to develop policies and actions towards achieving those targets by May 31, 2011. Municipalities were required to amend their Official Community Plans (OCPs) by May 31, 2010.

2010 | Community Feedback

There has been strong stakeholder feedback at public engagement sessions held in association with the development of the Regional Sustainability Strategy. This input has shown widespread support for urban containment; effective multi-use and transit connectivity between centres and minimizing suburban growth. Responses received via MetroQuest’s online tool (<http://crd.metroquest.com>) identified the Region’s top five priorities to be:

1. Walkable neighbourhoods.
2. Clean air.
3. Smaller eco-footprint.
4. Easy access to transit.
5. More greenspace.

Taking Steps Regionally

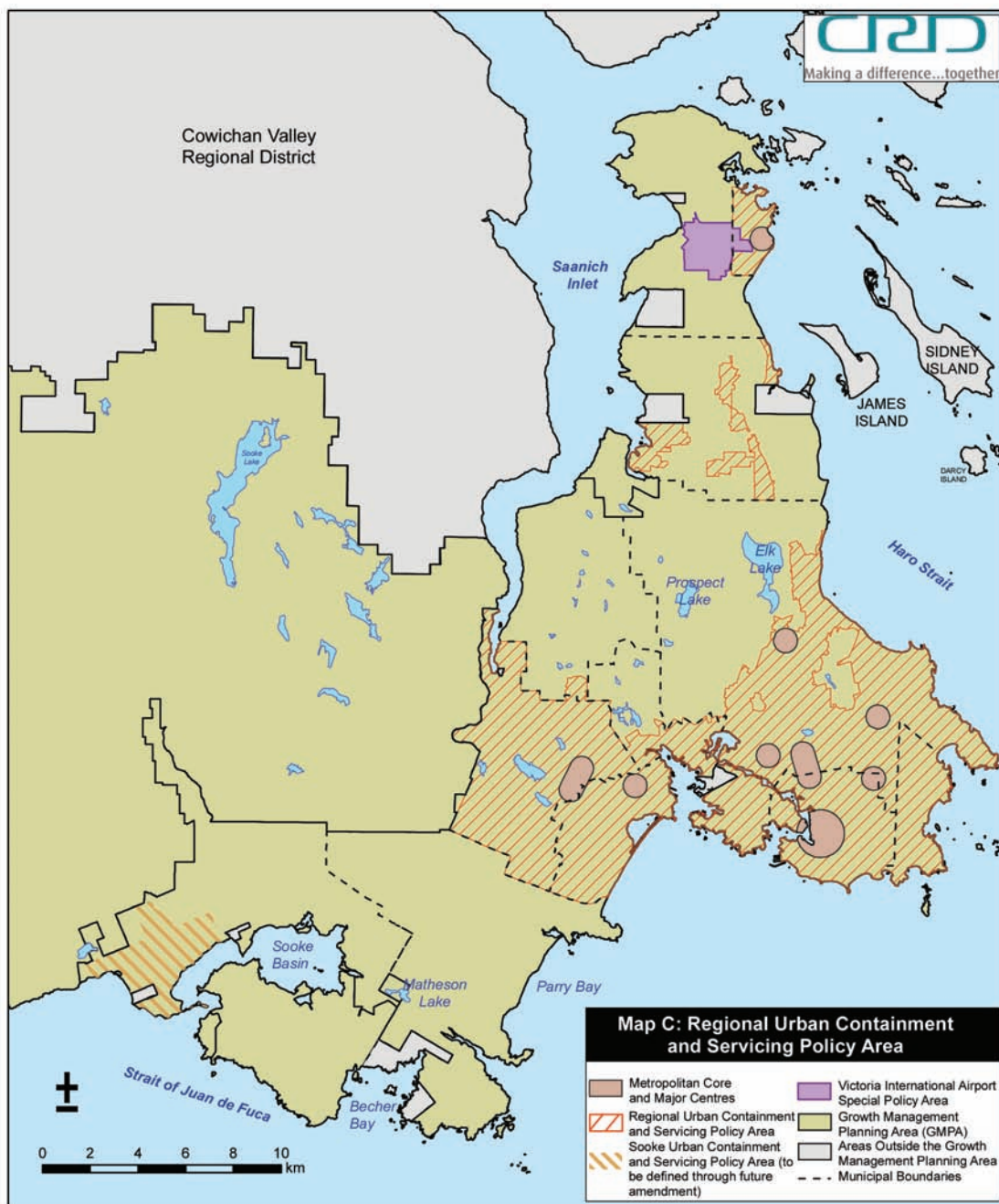
2003 onwards | Since the RGS was adopted, urban growth has generally been contained in the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area (RUCSPA). However, development pressures continue to result in losses to agricultural, forest and resource lands. In some areas, low density housing outside the RUCSPA has occurred, encroaching on unprotected green spaces.

2003 onwards | 13 member municipalities adopt Regional Context Statements and eight amend their OCPs to keep development compact.

2009 | Corporate Strategic Plan supports protection of the Agricultural Land Reserve, and coordinated efforts to protect the region’s urban forest.

2010 | Proposed Integrated Watershed Management Plan drafted to coordinate the management of land and water resources within the region’s watersheds.

2010 | CRD adopts OCP, Land Use and Subdivision bylaws for Juan de Fuca Electoral Area rural resource lands (132,000 ha) – 98% designated for future resource use and restricted to 120 ha minimum parcel size.



What's Happening Elsewhere?

The following examples of policy and practice illustrate the benefits and pitfalls of regional urban planning. What can we learn from these different approaches?

Urban Containment | Portland, OR, USA

A containment boundary for Metro Portland has been maintained with no more than minor changes since 1979. Permit reviews were streamlined as an incentive for developers to build in desirable areas. Expansion discussions in 1998 led to 4,000 acres of land being released as urban reserve – ensuring a supply of buildable land for the next 20 years, while maintaining both urban and rural communities.

Urban Containment | Florida, USA

Rapid growth and traditional low density development have consumed a great deal of land in Florida. Despite the development of an urban growth boundary (UGB) in 1975, single-family communities continued to spring up outside of the existing service areas, forcing an expansion of the UGB. This has led to transportation issues and sizable commuting times in an area so large that transit services have been next to impossible to manage.

OCP Policy Directions in Support of the Regional Growth Strategy — A Selection

- Langford recognizes its role as a growth area within the region, and supports the development of Downtown Langford into a major centre.
- North Saanich is located entirely outside the RUCSPA and anticipates slow and modest growth in rural/residential areas.
- Colwood supports substantial growth in identified *Intended Growth Areas*.
- Two-tiered approach in Sooke, with smaller lots in containment areas and larger lots directed outside the settlement area.
- Metchosin recognizes and reinforces its rural and agricultural character by maintaining rural-level densities.

Nodal Development | Nanaimo, BC

The Regional District of Nanaimo adopted urban containment boundaries (UCBs) in 1997. Multiple nodes were identified to accommodate new development while maintaining rural integrity, protecting resource areas and retaining efficient servicing patterns. Municipalities are expected to increase densities and support mixed use developments within the nodes. An implementation agreement allows municipalities to make adjustments, a provision that has increased the acceptance of the UCBs.

Transit-Oriented Development | King County, WA, USA

Since 1998, King County has been working on bus-related Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) projects. Multiple projects are underway, including transit centres, park-and-ride lots, off-street bus-layover facilities, and residential, institutional, retail, office, hotel and entertainment uses. Project concepts range from 300 apartments above a park-and-ride lot in Redmond to four skyscrapers above an underground bus-layover facility in downtown Seattle.

Energy Efficiency | Burnaby, BC

Burnaby has recently approved new zoning for Phase 3 of the UniverCity development that includes enforceable requirements for energy efficiency. All new developments are to be at least 30% more energy efficient than a conventional building, manage all stormwater on site and utilize interior finishings that are free of chemicals that impact air quality. For buildings that go the extra step – e.g. reaching 45% more energy efficiency – 10% additional development density will be granted.

Greening Commercial Property | AUSTRALIA

In 2007, the Australian government launched www.YourBuilding.org – a web portal to give advice on how to green the performance of commercial property. The site includes instructive videos and case studies that show how to design high environmental performance strategies.

Policy Options: Where Are We Now?

The intent of the 2003 Regional Growth Strategy is to see compact, complete nodal development with a strong jobs-to-population ratio, high percentages of attached housing, mixed use developments and easy access to parks and open space within the metropolitan core and major centres. This lays the ground work for many other initiatives to be successful. For example, such a development pattern would provide opportunities for cycling and pedestrian modes to become more easily adoptable, while providing strong opportunities for district heating and smart grid technologies.

Goals	Targets	Status Quo
Keep urban settlement compact.	Accommodate 15% of the region's cumulative new dwelling units within the City of Victoria to 2026 from the baseline year.	Establish a strong, mixed-use metropolitan core.
	Accommodate a minimum of 90% of the region's cumulative new dwelling units within the RUCSPA.	Focus new growth primarily in major centres to be revitalized as walkable, transit-focused complete communities, with a dense mix of businesses, housing, services and open space. Member municipalities will confirm their urban growth area as their RUCSPA boundary.
Build complete communities.	By 2026, achieve a minimum jobs-to-population ratio in metropolitan and urban areas of 0.60. Accommodate 20% of cumulative employment growth in Victoria. Achieve minimum 0.35 jobs-to-population ratio in West Shore (0.27 in 1996 and 0.35 in 2006).	Businesses, services and housing located within a 7-minute walk (400m) of a public transit route. Continue to accommodate employment growth in urban centres.
Respond to climate change through sustainable development.	Reduce GHGs from 2007 levels by 80% by 2050.	Respond to provincial policy and corporate climate action commitments with the intent to reduce GHGs through growth management principles, as set out in the original RGS.
Protect the integrity of rural communities.	Do not exceed OCP development capacity limits in rural and rural residential areas.	Establish the RUCSPA in OCPs and do not extend urban-standard sewage and water services beyond the boundary.

Policy Options: Where Could We Go?

The moderate and significant policy options are in line with the provincial objectives to adapt our cities and communities to minimize climate change impacts and ensure our human settlements are socially, economically and environmentally healthy. These options propose alternatives that concentrate urban development with the goal of reducing our total carbon footprint.*

Moderate Change	Significant Change
<p>Adopt policies that accommodate a minimum of 90% of the region's cumulative new dwelling units within the metropolitan core, major centres and newly defined rapid and frequent transit corridors.</p> <p>Encourage designation of village centres, clustering, and alternatives aimed at restricting expansion of urban-standard servicing capacity in municipalities without a RUCSPA or in areas outside the RUCSPA where services exist.</p>	<p>Adopt policies that limit increases in growth capacity beyond existing OCP limits outside the metropolitan core, major centres and newly defined rapid and frequent transit corridors.</p>
<p>Define concentrated growth areas within the RUCSPA and implement policies to direct future mixed use development within defined areas.</p> <p>Establish a joint review process for land use decisions outside boundary areas to ensure development does not exceed pre-existing OCP capacity limits.</p> <p>Develop policies to limit development outside the RUCSPA for reasons other than servicing, such as preserving agricultural land, minimizing land use conflict with resource uses, minimizing residential development that is not transit supportive, etc.</p>	<p>Establish defined urban containment boundaries or growth areas that limit increases in development capacity outside defined boundaries.</p> <p>Evaluate service extensions based on fiscal and technical analysis of the implications of supporting growth within the defined boundary.</p> <p>Limit servicing subsidies and capacity increases outside the defined boundary. Align the cost of infrastructure to favour infill development within the metropolitan core, major centres and transit corridors.</p>
<p>Introduce inclusionary zoning policies within urban centres to support mixed use developments and to achieve a minimum jobs-to-population ratio of 0.6.</p> <p>Increase dwelling unit density to urban levels (medium and high density) within 400m of rapid & frequent transit stations & corridors by 2020, in urban centres and settlements where adequate servicing capacity exists.</p>	<p>Implement incentive or variable amenity policies in OCPs that make development in the metropolitan core and major urban centres more appealing or cost effective than in suburban areas by improving access to transit, existing servicing capacity and urban amenities.</p> <p>Define a hierarchy of metropolitan cores, urban centres and nodes on priority transit corridors where growth and intensification/re-development should be focused.</p>
<p>Promote low impact environmental site design for new and retrofitted developments.</p> <p>Measure carbon footprint for current and future urban growth plans. Link development policy and planning decisions to a quantified increase or decrease in carbon footprint.</p>	<p>Municipalities to adopt policies in OCPs that would direct mandatory assessments of building performance and energy consumption to achieve best practice standards as endorsed by the Intergovernmental Committee on Climate Action in the metropolitan core, major centres and defined transit corridors.</p> <p>Evaluate vacant and under-utilized lands (parking lots, suburban areas) and create opportunities to redirect growth to areas of existing infrastructure through infill development, land use conversion and intensification.</p> <p>Require regeneration and recovery to achieve a net environmental gain in greenspace of re-development areas and sites.</p>
<p>Member municipalities confirm their urban growth area as their RUCSPA boundary. Recognize existing capacity 'limits' outside RUCSPA or urban containment/growth area boundary.</p> <p>Where a RUCSPA is not designated in an OCP, commit to restricting development capacity limits (to 2003 OCP equivalent) in rural and rural residential areas.</p>	<p>Include policies that define limits to resource, rural and rural residential uses in keeping with the commitment to restricting development capacity limits (to 2003 OCP equivalent).</p>

*The Significant Change approach builds upon and enhances the options presented under Moderate Change. The effect is often cumulative, with policies under Moderate Change generally assumed to be included under Significant Change.

What Do You Think?

The Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area remains highly effective as an urban containment tool. Yet, it could be strengthened by aligning regional servicing policies with municipal growth areas, allowing municipalities to define growth areas without concern regarding their ability to service them.

- Do you think the CRD and member municipalities should strengthen the existing containment policy? Should there be a moderate or significant shift in policy?
- How can we build the capacity of the CRD and all municipalities to adapt in response to climate change? What incentives are needed to introduce developments that have a lower carbon footprint?
- Should the CRD and municipalities be working to align the urban containment boundaries with the regional servicing policies?
- What policies would further promote mixed use and higher density development in major centres and along transit corridors?

Notes:

Feedback

The CRD values your input in developing the Regional Sustainability Strategy. Please submit your comments on this policy paper via sustainability@crd.bc.ca.

For in-depth information, **visit www.crd.bc.ca/sustainability** to view notices on upcoming consultations, discussion papers, and the overall progress of the Regional Sustainability Strategy.

Regional Planning Division
625 Fisgard Street | PO Box 1000
Victoria, BC | V8W 2S6 | **250.360.3160**

www.crd.bc.ca/regionalplanning



Making a difference...together

Regional Sustainability Strategy

The CRD, together with member municipalities, stakeholder groups and residents, is working to developing a vision and a planning framework to promote sustainability and create a lasting legacy for future generations. This will lead to the CRD's first Regional Sustainability Strategy, a broadly ranging document that charts a course to a complete and inclusive community, committed to sustainable practices socially, environmentally, economically and financially.

The Strategy has its foundations in earlier commitments by the CRD Board and member municipalities through the Regional Growth Strategy, adopted in 2003.