Regional Board Report

Request for Decision

To: Regional Board
From: Director of Development and Engineering
Date: July 16, 2026

Subject: Regional Growth Strategy Consultation Plan

Voting Entitlement: *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority (LGA s.208)*

Purpose: To consider adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy Consultation Plan.

Executive Summary:

On November 20, 2025, the Regional Board directed staff to initiate the development of a new Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) for the Regional District of the Central Okanagan and report back to the Regional Board with a Consultation Plan for the new RGS. Subsequently, this purpose of this report is to present the RGS Consultation Plan to the Board for adoption consideration. Adoption of an RGS Consultation Plan by the Board is a requirement under Section 434 (2) of the *Local Government Act*. The RGS is a legislated process under the *Local Government Act* that requires adherence to defined consultation and approval steps. The current RGS, last updated in 2014, is now significantly outdated and requires a comprehensive update to reflect over a decade of growth and substantial changes in provincial legislation.

The purpose of a RGS Consultation Plan, (the "Plan"), is to establish how the RDCO will engage member municipalities, First Nation government partners, residents, community organizations and government agencies throughout development of updating the RGS. The Plan was developed collaboratively through discussions with each member municipality and First Nation partner government and refined through the RGS Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (comprised of Planning Directors and their staff around the region), and the RGS CAO Committee (comprised of CAOs around the region). Input and feedback has been incorporated in the proposed RGS Consultation Plan (Attachment 1).

The Plan outlines ongoing engagement with the Regional Board, municipal Councils and advisory committees throughout the project, and two rounds of targeted public engagement. The Plan has weaved in the clear expectations of our member governments to avoid duplicating their efforts and instead, leverage the work they have done to date. The first round will invite residents to help shape a shared vision for the future of the region and provide input on key issues, opportunities and draft regional mapping. The second round will provide an opportunity to review the draft Regional Growth Strategy and provide further feedback. Engagement will include a mix of online and in-person opportunities, including surveys, workshops, open houses and community road shows, designed to reach residents across both urban and rural communities. The Plan includes dedicated engagement with First Nation partner governments and Indigenous community members, alongside opportunities for youth, seniors, newcomers, businesses, the agricultural community, the development industry and other regional partners to ensure the new RGS is informed by a broad range of perspectives.

Input gathered through the engagement process will directly inform the development of the Regional Growth Strategy, ensuring it reflects regional priorities while building on the Official Community Plans and other land use and topic-based master plans completed by member governments. The RGS will focus on areas where regional coordination provides the greatest value, including growth patterns, infrastructure alignment and emerging policy issues, while leveraging existing municipal engagement and technical studies wherever possible to maximize efficiency and avoid duplication. The resulting RGS will provide updated regional population and employment projections, regional mapping, policy guidance and implementation indicators to support local decision-making, accountability and ongoing monitoring. Additionally, the RGS will inform the next round of provincially mandated 2030 Official Community Plan updates, creating efficiencies for member governments, strengthen coordination on complex regional issues, and support sustainable growth and investment across the Central Okanagan for the benefit of all residents.

Recommendation(s):

THAT the Regional Board adopt the Regional Growth Strategy Consultation Plan as outlined in the report from the Director of Development and Engineering Services, dated July 16, 2026.

Respectfully submitted by: Mariah VanZerr, Regional Planning Manager

Report approved by: Danielle Noble-Brandt, Director of Development and Engineering Services

Approved for agenda: Sally Ginter, Chief Administrative Officer

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Strategic Plan Alignment:

√ Emergency preparedness	√ Truth and reconciliation
√ Health and wellness	√ Environment and climate – Regional priority only
√ Regional transportation	√ Growth and development – Electoral Area priority only

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Background:

Since it's inception in 2000, the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) supports all governments in the Central Okanagan region in working together to address critical regional matters such as housing, transportation, environmental protection, and preparing for natural hazard events (e.g. extreme heat, wildfires, and floods). These regional matters cross jurisdictional boundaries and require a coordinated response to protect the health, safety and quality of life of Central Okanagan residents.

The current RGS (Bylaw No. 1336) was adopted in 2014. Since then, significant changes to population growth, housing legislation, and the frequency of natural hazard events have changed both how much and where development in the Central Okanagan region is occurring. For example, the regional population when the current RGS was developed was 179,839 (2011 census). Since then, the Central Okanagan region has grown by more than 40% (approx. 72,000 more residents). While we have seen growth moderate recently, the region is still projected to grow by another 30% by 2050, which means an additional 70,000 – 80,000 residents will be living in the Central Okanagan by 2050. Without a new Regional Growth Strategy, individual municipalities would increasingly need to grapple with regional

matters on an individual basis, risking duplication of effort, fragmented approaches, cost inefficiencies, and increased margins for error.

Accordingly, on November 20, 2025, the Regional Board resolved to initiate development of a new RGS and directed staff to bring forward a Consultation Plan as the first step in the process. Under the *Local Government Act*, an RGS must be developed through consultation with affected parties, and a Consultation Plan must be adopted early in the process.

Developing the RGS Consultation Plan

To develop the RGS Consultation Plan, RDCO staff scheduled meetings with staff at each member municipality and First Nation partner government to discuss the RGS, hear how each organization would like to be involved, and get input on how best to engage their communities. This information was used to develop a Draft RGS Consultation Plan, which was then presented to the RGS Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (comprised of Planning Directors and senior planning staff around the region), and the RGS CAO Committee (comprised of CAOs around the region). The input and feedback was incorporated into the final version of the RGS Consultation Plan, which is included as Attachment 1 to this report.

RGS Consultation Plan Overview

The RGS Consultation Plan has been developed in accordance with Section 434 of the *Local Government Act* and is informed by the RDCO Public Engagement Policy (which establishes a framework for formal public engagement undertaken for RDCO programs, policies, plans and projects). The RGS Consultation Plan is also grounded in the Core Values of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

The RGS Consultation Plan is designed to provide opportunities for early and ongoing consultation with the following key audiences:

- Central Okanagan Residents: All Central Okanagan residents, including the general public, youth, seniors, Indigenous peoples, newcomers, renters, homeowners, people with disabilities, and more will have an opportunity to provide input on the future of the region to ensure the new RGS reflects current community values.
- Westbank First Nation and Okanagan Indian Band*:* The RGS is being developed on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded land of the syilx / Okanagan people. Meaningful engagement with both our First Nation government partners and Indigenous community members in the Central Okanagan is included in the RGS Consultation Plan.
- Member Municipalities: Before it is adopted, the new RGS will need to be accepted by a resolution from each municipal council within the region. Municipal staff, CAOs, and elected officials will be involved to ensure the new RGS provides value to member municipalities and helps address regional challenges within their jurisdiction in a more efficient and productive way then if they were to tackle them alone.
- Regional Community Partner Organizations: Regional community partner organizations such as School District 23, improvement districts, environmental organizations, the business community, the agricultural community, the development industry, and other regional community partner organizations are included in the RGS Consultation Plan
- Provincial and Federal Government Agencies: Provincial and federal government agencies are being identified for participation on the RGS Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. Potential agencies include the

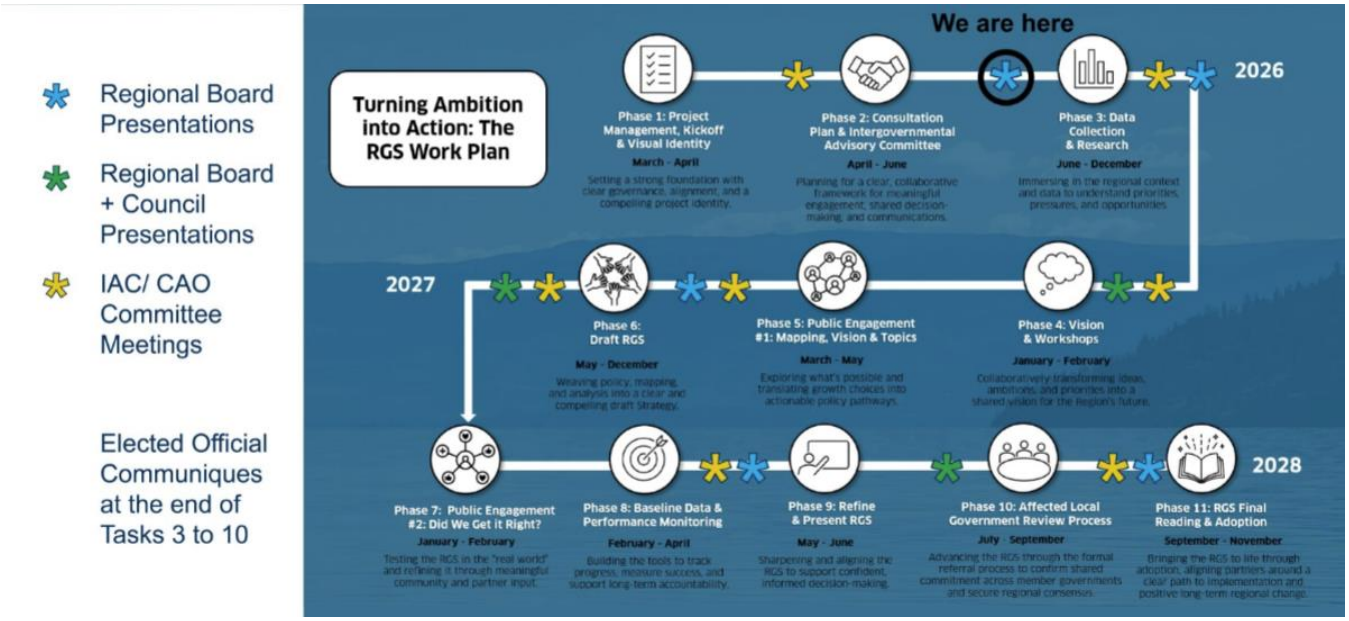
Ministry of Environment and Parks, Ministry of Transportation and Transit, BC Transit, Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship, Ministry of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture, the Agricultural Land Commission, and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, among others.

The RGS Consultation Plan includes the following engagement objectives:

RGS Engagement Objectives	What this means
1. Build awareness	Help residents understand what the RGS is and why it matters to everyday life in the region.
2. Listen to regional values	Understand community priorities, long-range aspirations, and what people want for the future. This process will use the existing municipal plans and strategies (where practical) that are already in place to serve as the foundation.
3. Surface key choices	Identify the issues, opportunities, and trade-offs residents want the RGS to address.
4. Capture local perspectives	Gather place-specific input from different parts of the Central Okanagan.
5. Engage inclusively	Support genuine, transparent engagement, including with First Nation government partners and Indigenous community members.
6. Build confidence	Strengthen trust, relationships, and confidence in the planning process.

Regional Board and Council Touch Points

Touch points with the Regional Board and Councils around the region are planned at key milestones throughout the project timeline. The following diagram depicts the key Regional Board and Council presentations throughout the RGS development timeline, as well as engagement with the RGS Intergovernmental Advisory Committee and CAO Committee.



Public Engagement Touchpoints, Methods and Tactics

The RGS Consultation Plan includes two rounds of public engagement, reflecting a phased approach that allows time for technical analysis, meaningful input, and refinement at key stages of the process. The first round, planned for spring/summer 2027, will be grounded in the findings of six thematic technical reports that assess current conditions across the region. Building on this evidence base, residents will be invited to review key findings, explore emerging growth considerations, and provide input on draft regional mapping and future growth directions. This input will directly inform development of the Draft Regional Growth Strategy. The second round, planned for early 2028, will provide an opportunity for residents to review the Draft RGS and confirm that it reflects what was heard, ensuring transparency and accountability before finalization.

Engagement methods will include both online and in-person opportunities tailored to urban and rural contexts. Surveys, workshops, open houses, and idea fair road shows with interactive activities, entertainment, and food will be held across the region to gather input from a broad cross-section of residents. Where possible, in-person events will be integrated with existing community events to meet people where they are and provide convenient opportunities to participate.

Next Steps

Following completion of Phase 2: RGS Consultation Plan, the next step is to launch Phase 3: Data Collection & Research. This Phase will provide updated population and employment projections and the following six RGS Technical Reports:

- Land Use, Housing and Mobility Report
- Regional Parks, Natural Spaces and Ecosystems Report
- Economic Development & Prosperity Report
- Public Health, Poverty and Wellness Report
- Agriculture & Food Report
- Climate Adaptation & GHG Reduction Report

A Summary Report of key findings will be developed and presented to the Regional Board in late 2026. This will be followed by a series of Visioning Workshops with Councils around the region and the Regional Board, grounded in existing OCP growth frameworks to get input on the future we are co-creating together in the Central Okanagan.

Considerations:

Organizational/External:

- The RGS Consultation Plan is informed by the RDCO Public Engagement Policy (which establishes a framework for formal public engagement undertaken for RDCO programs, policies, plans and projects).

Financial:

- The RDCO has applied to the UBCM Strategic Priorities Fund for $425,000 in grant funding. If the grant is not successful, funding of $367,500 from operating reserves is provided in the 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan.

Legal/Statutory Authority:

- Section 434 of the *Local Government Act*.

Considerations not applicable:

- Alternate Recommendation

Attachment(s): 1. RGS Consultation Plan
2. Presentation
