



STAFF REPORT

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee

Date: 2025-06-05

From: Theresa Alexander, Planner 1 and Riley Smith, Planner 1

Subject: 2025 Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Report

Reviewed by: Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning
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RECOMMENDATION

The 2025 Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Report is being brought forward for the Board's information. There is no recommendation associated with this report.

BACKGROUND

Under Section 452 of the *Local Government Act*, regional districts must establish a monitoring program for their respective Regional Growth Strategies (RGS) and prepare a report on progress towards implementation.

The FVRD's RGS monitoring program includes both an annual report and a companion website which simplifies report findings and enhances them with a selection of interactive maps. Since 2022, the annual monitoring report and website have provided valuable data and context on the implementation of RGS goals, policies, and directives.

The monitoring program is an important tool for communicating to senior levels of government, First Nations, residents, private enterprise, educational institutions, health authorities, and others. The monitoring of RGS indicators also helps to identify and advocate on issues of regional concern and opportunities for collaboration and partnerships. It helps to ensure that short-term and long-term decisions made by the FVRD, its members, the Province, and others reflect the region's vision of future growth.







The purpose of the monitoring program is to assess progress associated with the RGS by tracking indicators based on long-term trends using various datasets. The program utilizes a broad range of data sources, including Statistics Canada, BC Stats, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, BC Transit, and Insurance Corporation of BC.

Since the program tracks long-term trends (rather than short-term fluctuations), most indicators remain stable in their assessment. However, the analysis of updated indicator data, especially in comparison to Metro Vancouver and the province, and with municipal and electoral area breakdowns, provides valuable context and insight into how the region is doing in relation to shared goals and priorities.

DISCUSSION

The 2025 RGS Monitoring Report includes updated information for nineteen of the thirty-three indicators which make up the **FVRD’s** RGS monitoring program. Three out of the nineteen updated indicators resulted in an updated performance evaluation.

2025 Monitoring Indicators with Updated Performance Evaluations:

Indicator	2024	2025	Description
Unemployment Rates (pg. 11)	 On Track	 Observing	Unemployment rates in the FVRD have trended upwards since 2022, are above the provincial average.
Housing Starts (pg. 30)	 Making Progress	 On Track	Multi-family units have made up an increasing share of the annual number of housing starts in the FVRD.
Regional Park Visits (pg. 34)	 Making Progress	 On Track	Following a peak in 2021 and a subsequent decline, regional park usage in the FVRD has been increasing steadily in recent years, returning to a more stable trend.

Three spotlight pages were updated, and a new spotlight page was developed to highlight municipal collaboration with First Nations and municipal efforts to meaningfully advance Reconciliation (pg. 7).

The **existing indicator used to measure the FVRD’s relationship**-building efforts with First Nations was also broadened to better capture the spectrum of activities which enable staff and the Board to improve Indigenous relations and further Reconciliation (pg. 8).

In addition to the above performance evaluation changes, the program notes the following keys takeaways:

- Average incomes and education levels have increased in the FVRD but continue to remain below Metro Vancouver and the provincial average, while unemployment remains slightly higher. Employment participation rates are generally stronger in urban areas compared to rural parts of the region.
- The FVRD's economy is reliant on goods-producing sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. These sectors are more susceptible to disruption from political and climate-related events, such as increased tariffs in 2025.
- Housing affordability continues to decline, particularly for renters; however, the Fraser Valley is still considered more affordable than Metro Vancouver. This translates to increased demand on housing from outside the region, which ultimately impacts housing costs and housing insecurity for existing residents.
- The FVRD remains highly dependent on travel by personal vehicle in comparison to Metro Vancouver. **Due to a less developed public transit systems and less density even in the region's** most urban areas. However, increased densification and investment in transit will help grow sustainable transportation mode share, such as transit or walking.
- The adoption of electric vehicles (EV) has continued to increase at considerable rates in the FVRD; however, EVs account for a small percent of all vehicles.
- The FVRD faces challenges in relation to air quality, largely due to geographic factors associated with the FVRD being within a mountainous valley and an increasing number and severity of nearby wildfires. Anticipated population growth within the Lower Mainland, without reductions to GHG emissions could further deteriorate air quality in the region.

In addition to the FVRD's annual RGS Monitoring report, a web version of the program provides the same data included in the report, with several interactive maps that allow the mapped data to be viewed at more local levels. The website utilizes Esri's ArcGIS StoryMaps, a tool included in the FVRD's current suite of GIS tools available to staff.

On April 9, 2025, Esri Canada published a blog post about the FVRD's RGS Monitoring website, highlighting how the website and the selection of interactive maps improved the program's overall reach and accessibility.¹

COST

The costs of the 2025 RGS Monitoring Report and RGS Monitoring website update are incorporated in the Regional Strategic Planning and Initiatives (601) budget.

¹ "Building trust via digital storytelling: Fraser Valley Regional District," Esri Canada, 2025: <https://bit.ly/4mgxTLo>

CONCLUSION

The 2025 RGS Monitoring Report and companion website provide a snapshot of key indicators aligned with the overarching goals and policies of Fraser Valley Future 2050 RGS. The report incorporates updated indicator data released over the past year, as well as previously reported on indicators. The monitoring program supports the evaluation and implementation of the RGS, enhances regional communications, and meets the legislative requirements under the *Local Government Act*. The report will be distributed to member municipalities and will be **available on the FVRD's website** (www.fvrd.ca/rgsmonitoring).