

Regional Context Statements Amendment Process

A Guide for FVRD Member Jurisdiction Staff

BACKGROUND

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is a strategic plan that directs long-term planning for regional district and municipal Official Community Plans. It also provides the basis for decisions about implementation of provincial programs in a regional district.

Upon a regional district's adoption and implementation of a regional growth strategy, the Official Community Plan (OCP) for each member jurisdiction subject to the RGS must include or update its Regional Context Statement (RCS) to demonstrate its alignment with the new RGS. Where not in alignment, it must indicate how an OCP it will be brought in to alignment.

As per section 446 of the *Local Government Act* (LGA), the inclusion or update of a RCS must take place within two years following the adoption or major amendment of an RGS. Regional Context Statements must be approved by the Regional District Board based on their consistency with the RGS.

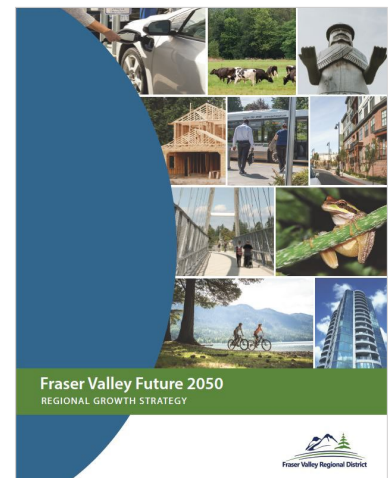
Local governments are responsible for ensuring all legal requirements associated with the adoption or amendment to the RGS for the regional district of which they are a member jurisdiction of, are understood and fully met, as per the LGA. Member jurisdictions must also review the RCS every five years to ensure its continued alignment with the RGS.

PURPOSE

The following guide is intended to support FVRD's member municipality staff complete the legislatively required OCP updates related to the implementation of [*Fraser Valley Future 2050 RGS*](#), adopted by the FVRD Board on April 25, 2024.

This guide and template (Appendix C) is intended to reduce the amount of guesswork related to the RCS update process (especially in light of additional work and pressures associated with provincial housing initiatives), while also ensuring a consistent approach across member jurisdictions. It does not replace or supersede the requirements set out in the LGA.

For more information, please consult the [*Local Government Act*](#).



Fraser Valley Future 2050 RGS

RCS AMENDMENT PROCESS

Member jurisdictions subject to [Fraser Valley Future 2050 RGS](#) must submit a proposed RCS to the FVRD Board by **April 25, 2026**, as required per section 446 of the *Local Government Act*.

Upon receipt, the FVRD has 120 days to either accept or refuse by Board resolution. If the Board does not respond, the RCS is deemed accepted. If refused, the Board's resolution must include each provision in which it objects, and the basis of each objection.

Municipalities can undergo a stand-alone OCP amendment or include the RCS update at the same time as other OCP amendments, such the OCP updates related to the new provincial housing legislation required by December 31, 2025.

FVRD staff are available to support municipal staff at any time during the RCS update process. However, municipal staff are encouraged to contact the FVRD early on to discuss the best approach for the municipality, based on its unique needs, capacity, existing work plans, timelines, etc.

The Regional Context Statement template (Appendix C) outlines the content and formatting requirements acceptable for submission to the Board as part of ensuring consistency with the updated RGS. Member jurisdictions are strongly encouraged to use the template provided; however, are not required to do so.

The RCS should describe how the OCP, including goals, policies, maps, and other content, is in alignment with each applicable RGS policy. It is important to review and considered the policy directives associated with each RGS policy; however, alignment with each policy directive is not required, nor does each aligned policy directive need to be referenced in the RCS. In the case that an OCP does not currently align with an RGS policy, the member jurisdiction should provide a description of how future alignment will be achieved.

There is no expectation to duplicate OCP maps, tables or figures within the RCS; however, summaries may refer to specific OCP policies, maps, figures, and tables (See Appendix B). The RCS can include page numbers for ease of reference but this is not required.

RGS policies not applicable to a member jurisdiction can be excluded from the RCS; however, verification of the policy's non-application by FVRD staff is recommended prior to submitting the RCS for Board approval. For example, RGS policies 4.2 and 4.3 can be excluded, as they are only applicable to the FVRD's electoral areas.

SUGGESTED STEPS

Member jurisdictions subject to *Fraser Valley Future 2050 RGS* must submit a proposed RCS to the FVRD Board by **April 25, 2026**.

The following suggested steps are for planning and implementing the RCS amendment and approval process. Municipal staff must also take into account their municipality's specific OCP Bylaw amendment process when interpreting these steps.

1. Review all sections of the [Local Government Act](#) applicable to *Regional Context Statements*.
2. Become familiar with relevant dates and timelines associated with your municipality's OCP bylaw amendment process, existing work plans, and the FVRD's Board [meeting schedule](#).
3. Contact FVRD staff prior to starting the RCS development process to ensure acceptance procedures, timelines, and contents are clearly understood. FVRD staff can also provide advice on populating the template if requested.
4. Review FVRD's Regional Context Statement Template (Appendix C)
5. Determine best approach and timeline for completing RCS update.
6. Develop updated RCS using the FVRD template (Appendix C) based on a fulsome review of [Fraser Valley Future 2050 RGS](#) and the municipal OCP. Be sure to review the RGS policy directives under each RGS policy to determine alignment.
7. Submit early RCS draft to FVRD Strategic Planning and Initiatives staff for initial review and feedback (optional but recommended).
8. Submit proposed RCS with resolution to the FVRD Board for consideration of acceptance. This step must occur prior to the adoption of the OCP Bylaw. Submission is recommended after an OCP Bylaw's third reading; however, can occur earlier if no material changes to the OCP are anticipated. The FVRD Board has 120 days to respond; however, every effort will be made to respond in a timely manner.
9. Following notification of RCS acceptance, proceed with OCP Bylaw adoption process.

FVRD staff are available to answer questions or to provide additional support if needed at any point during the RCS update process. The Strategic Planning Department can be reached by email at stratplan@fvrd.ca or phone at 604-702-5000.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following documents should be included in the proposed RCS submission to the FVRD Board:

- **Cover Letter** addressed to the FVRD's Corporate Officer, which describes the member jurisdiction's intent to update the RCS with reference to relevant council resolutions, bylaw readings, and public hearing dates. (See Appendix D for sample letter)
- **Relevant Staff Report(s)** to Council, which pertain to the process or resolution to update the RCS and OCP for the purposes of meeting legislative requirements, associated with the adoption of the update RGS.
- **Proposed Regional Context Statement** based on the template (see Appendix C) which outlines the relationship and consistency between the OCP and RGS goals, strategies, policies, directives, maps, and projections.

LINKS & RESOURCES

- [Fraser Valley Future 2050 RGS](#)
- [FVRD website: Regional Growth Strategy](#)
- [Local Government Act](#)
- [Government of BC website: Regional Growth Strategies](#)
- [FVRD website: Board Meeting Schedule](#)

APPENDIX A: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

The following sections of the Local Government Act (LGA) pertain to Regional Context Statement requirements, content, and approval process. See the [Local Government Act](#) for more information including additional sections referred to in the legislation below.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

Part 13 — Regional Growth Strategies

Division 5 – Regional Context Statements

Requirement for regional context statements in municipal official community plans

- 446 (1) If a regional growth strategy applies to all or part of the same area of a municipality as an official community plan, the official community plan must include a regional context statement that is accepted in accordance with this Division by the board of the regional district for which the regional growth strategy is adopted.
- (2) After a regional growth strategy is adopted, the requirement under subsection (1) must be fulfilled by the applicable council submitting a proposed regional context statement to the board within 2 years after the regional growth strategy is adopted.
- (3) If a regional growth strategy is binding on a new municipality under section 436 (10) [*municipal corporation within regional district area*] and the regional growth strategy applies to all or part of the same area of the municipality as an official community plan, the requirement under subsection (1) of this section must be fulfilled by the council submitting a proposed regional context statement to the board within the earlier of the following:
- (a) the period established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council by letters patent;
 - (b) 2 years after the municipality was incorporated.

Content of regional context statement

- 447 (1) A regional context statement must specifically identify
- (a) the relationship between the official community plan and the matters referred to in section 429 (2) [required content for regional growth strategy] and any other regional matters included under section 429 (3) [additional content], and
 - (b) if applicable, how the official community plan is to be made consistent with the regional growth strategy over time.

- (2) A regional context statement and the rest of the official community plan must be consistent.

Board acceptance of proposed regional context statement

448 (1) The council must

- (a) submit a proposed regional context statement required under this Division for acceptance by the board,
- (b) submit any amendments to the regional context statement for acceptance by the board, and
- (c) review the regional context statement at least once every 5 years after its latest acceptance by the board and, if no amendment is proposed, submit the statement to the board for its continued acceptance.

(2) For the purpose of subsection (1), the board must respond by resolution within 120 days after receipt indicating whether or not it accepts the regional context statement or amendment and, if the board refuses to accept the regional context statement or amendment, indicating

- (a) each provision to which it objects, and
- (b) the reasons for its objection.

(3) If the board fails to act under subsection (2) within the period for acceptance or refusal under that subsection, the board is deemed to have accepted the regional context statement or amendment.”

APPENDIX B: REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT EXAMPLES

Example: RGS Policy 1.1

RGS Policy

The Regional Context Statement should demonstrate alignment between the OCP and each RGS Policy.

1.1 Build and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and governments

- a. Recognize that working with Indigenous communities will best serve all residents and facilitate cooperation by fostering a mutual understanding of governing structures, cultures, roles, and responsibilities.
- b. Develop sustaining relationships with Indigenous communities and governments which embody the principles of UNDRIP, by working together to develop a common vision for the future of the region, by remaining open, without prejudice to ongoing treaty and other negotiations, by using innovative opportunities for information sharing, and by coordination of planning and services in areas of mutual interest.
- c. Recognize and support work led by Indigenous governments, both established and developing self-governance structures, and advancing self-determination, as expressed in the principles of UNDRIP.
- d. Support establishing MOUs and service agreements between Indigenous and local governments that address issues of mutual concern, such as transit, transportation, and water and sewer systems that protect public health and the environment.

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
<p>1.0 Collaboration</p> <p>Goal: To achieve our common goals for the future of the region by encouraging collaboration between jurisdictions, cultures, and neighbours.</p>	
<p>Policy 1.1 Build and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and governments</p>	<p><i>The City's OCP objectives and policies aim to build relationships with First Nations by actively partnering to protect and showcase their cultural heritage (Policy X.x.x), integrating educational opportunities into public spaces (Policy X.x.x), and promoting their art and language through community events (Policy X.x.x).</i></p> <p><i>The OCP outlines the City's commitment to collaborating with local First Nations on initiatives and projects of shared interest such as community, economic development, the environment, and health (Policy X.x.x).</i></p> <p><i>The City currently has four MOUs signed with [list First Nations Communities]. These protocol agreements reflect the City's commitment to seeking opportunities to engage with First Nations in a collaborative and respectful way.</i></p>

Example: RGS Policy 1.2

1.2 Work together to ensure success

- a. Collaborate with local governments, Indigenous governments, the provincial government, and stakeholders to develop services which provide mutual benefit and support to communities throughout the region.
- b. Collaborate to promote regional objectives, educate residents, pool resources, secure funding and investments, and to have a stronger voice.
- c. Recognize the importance of private and nonprofit sectors in regional development, and foster partnerships with organizations and the business community that support the objectives of the RGS.
- d. Advocate for provincial support in realizing the stated objectives of the RGS and petition for more flexibility in terms of funding eligibility and requirements.
- e. Determine a mechanism for ongoing liaison, engagement, and adaptation between different levels of government.

RGS Policy Directives

Be sure to review policy directives when determining alignment between the RGS and OCP.

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
<p>1.0 Collaboration Goal: To achieve our common goals for the future of the region by encouraging collaboration between jurisdictions, cultures, and neighbours.</p>	
<p>Policy 1.2 Work together to ensure success</p>	<p><i>Many OCP policies encourage collaboration with partners including First Nations, neighbouring local governments, the FVRD, and the Province in areas such as agriculture, environmental protections, recreation, transit, and health care.</i></p> <p><i>The following OCP goals demonstrate commitment to regional collaboration regarding issues and opportunities mutually beneficial to communities throughout the region:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Goal X: Collaborate with FVRD, Fraser Valley municipalities, and major employers on issues and initiatives related to air quality, water conservation, and eco-system health (page 49-52)</i> ○ <i>Goal X: Work with BC Transit, FVRD, and other local governments to meet the public transit needs of Fraser Valley residents by improving connections between communities (pg. 66).</i> ○ <i>Goal X: Work with community and government partners including RCMP and Fraser Health to improve safety, comfort, and well-being of community members (page 88-89).</i>

APPENDIX C: REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT TEMPLATE

RCS Introduction
<p><i>[Provide a summary of RCS contents and a description of how the RGS and OCP work together.]</i></p>

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
<p>1.0 Collaboration Goal: To achieve our common goals for the future of the region by encouraging collaboration between jurisdictions, cultures, and neighbours.</p>	
<p>Policy 1.1 Build and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities and governments</p>	
<p>Policy 1.2 Work together to ensure success</p>	

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
<p>2.0 Economic Strength & Resiliency Goal: To realize the region’s economic potential by providing opportunities in employment and education that will grow the economy by building on the region’s strengths.</p>	
<p>Policy 2.1 Protect and support employment lands</p>	
<p>Policy 2.2 Promote growth and development in agriculture</p>	
<p>Policy 2.3 Create opportunities for employment and education</p>	
<p>Policy 2.4 Work to attain the region’s full tourism potential</p>	

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
3.0 Living Well Goal: To ensure the region is an inclusive place where everyone is able to maintain a high quality of life, regardless of age, income, or ability.	
Policy 3.1 Promote healthy and inclusive living	
Policy 3.2 Support arts and culture initiatives	
Policy 3.3 Protect and enhance parks and recreation lands	

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
4.0 Community Building Goal: To create compact, complete communities that strengthen urban centres, maintain rural character, and offer choice and affordability in housing.	
Policy 4.1 Concentrate growth in urban centres	
Policy 4.2 Maintain the character of rural communities in electoral areas	N/A
Policy 4.3 Promote sustainable regionally-scaled resort development	N/A
Policy 4.4 Ensure housing choice and affordability	

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
5.0 Ecosystem Health Goal: To protect the air, water, and biodiversity on which we depend.	
Policy 5.1 Monitor, study, protect, and improve air quality	
Policy 5.2 Protect watershed health	
Policy 5.3 Protect biodiversity	

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
<p>6.0 Transportation & Mobility Goal: To develop an integrated, safe, and efficient transportation system for people and goods that promotes transit, walking, and cycling, and minimizes the transportation system’s impact on air quality.</p>	
<p>Policy 6.1 Create a region-wide network of affordable and convenient transportation options that safely and efficiently facilitates the movement of people and goods</p>	
<p>Policy 6.2 Promote active and alternative forms of transportation that prioritize pedestrians and cyclists</p>	

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
<p>7.0 Infrastructure & Services Goal: To provide efficient, sustainable, and cost effective services that contribute to compact and sustainable growth.</p>	
<p>Policy 7.1 Provide safe and efficient access to basic utilities</p>	
<p>Policy 7.2 Ensure responsible management of solid waste</p>	

RGS Policies	OCP Policies/Supplemental Information
<p>8.0 Climate Change Goal: To mitigate the region’s impact on global climate change and adapt to the impacts of climate change on the region.</p>	
<p>Policy 8.1 Mitigate the region’s impact on global climate change</p>	
<p>Policy 8.2 Adapt to the impacts of climate change</p>	

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE COVER LETTER

Date

Corporate Officer
Fraser Valley Regional District
1-45950 Cheam Avenue
Chilliwack, BC, Canada, V2P 1N6

Dear Corporate Officer,

RE: [Member Jurisdiction] Submission of Regional Context Statement

The [Member Jurisdiction] is pleased to submit its Regional Context Statement in accordance with section 446 of the *Local Government Act* to the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) Board for consideration and acceptance.

On [Date], at the [Meeting Title], [Member Jurisdiction] council passed [Resolution or Bylaw name or number] to submit the [Member Jurisdiction's] Regional Context Statement for acceptance to the FVRD Board.

[Optional section describing other staff reports, meetings, and resolutions by council related to the Regional Context Statement or Bylaw, including dates and report titles.]

[Optional section providing a summary of key highlights related to the Regional Context Statement.]

The [Member Jurisdiction] requests that the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) Board consider and accept the [Member Jurisdiction] Regional Context Statement. Should FVRD staff require any additional information regarding this matter, please contact [Member Jurisdiction Contact Name, Title], at [Phone Number] or at [Email Address].

Yours,

Signature

[Name]
[Title]
[Department]

[Title of Attachment(s), Date(s)]