

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee

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From: Riley Smith, Planner 1

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Subject: 2026 Regional Growth Strategy Monitoring Report

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RECOMMENDATION

This report is being brought forward for the Board's information and there is no staff recommendation.

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 Fraser Valley Regional District's (FVRD's) RGS monitoring program includes an annual report and a companion website that presents key findings and enhances them with interactive maps and additional information. Since 2022, annual updates of the monitoring report and website have provided data and context on regional trends and conditions in relation to the goals, policies, and desired outcomes of the RGS.

The monitoring program is an important tool for communicating regional trends and priorities to senior levels of government, First Nations, residents, private enterprise, educational institutions, health authorities, and others. Monitoring these trends also helps identify areas of regional concern, emerging issues, and opportunities for collaboration and partnerships. The information helps inform short- and long-term decisions by the FVRD, its member municipalities, the Province, and others in advancing the region's vision for future growth.

The monitoring program uses indicators, which are specific measures of regional conditions, to track trends relevant to the RGS. The indicators cover a range of topics associated with the eight RGS goals and draw on datasets from a range of sources, including Statistics Canada, BC Stats, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, BC Transit, and Insurance Corporation of BC.

DISCUSSION

The 2026 RGS Monitoring Report includes updates to indicators where new data or information has become available since the previous report. Each indicator is evaluated in relation to the corresponding desired outcome, with a focus on longer-term trends rather than short-term fluctuations. As a result, an indicator may be updated with new data without resulting in a change to its evaluation, particularly where the new data does not substantially alter the longer-term trend. Analysis of updated data, including comparisons with Metro Vancouver and the Province, as well as municipal and electoral area breakdowns, provides valuable context and insight into how regional conditions are changing in relation to shared goals and priorities.

Many datasets are updated at least annually, while other indicators rely on Statistics Canada Census data, which is released on a five-year cycle. The 2026 Census was conducted earlier this year, and updated Census data will be gradually released by Statistics Canada through 2027. Census-based indicators in the 2026 RGS Monitoring Report continue to rely on data from the 2021 Census, while relevant 2026 Census data will be incorporated into future monitoring reports as it becomes available.

2026 RGS Monitoring Report Highlights

The 2026 RGS Monitoring Report includes 32 indicators. Of these, 22 indicators were updated with new data or information since the previous report. Three of the updated indicators changed evaluations based on new data. These re-evaluations are listed in Table 1 of this report. A complete list of indicators and their evaluations is provided on page 52 of the attached draft monitoring report.

Two spotlight pages were also updated with new information:

- *Housing Prices by Type* (pg. 24)
- *Regional Solid Waste Management Initiatives* (pg. 46)

Updated pages are identified by an “[Updated 2026]” icon at the top of the page.

Table 1. Indicators with Changes in Evaluation

Indicator	2025	2026	Description
Housing Prices (pg. 23)	 Not On Track	 Making Progress	Housing prices in the FVRD remain elevated but increased housing supply and slower absorption appears to be marginally moderating housing prices.
Rental Housing Vacancy (pg. 25)	 Not On Track	 On Track	Rental housing vacancy rates have risen to a balanced rate of 3%.
Indicator	2025	2026	Description

Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions (pg. 49)	 Waiting for Data	 Observing	Total community GHG emissions have increased, while per-capita emissions have declined modestly. Continued monitoring will provide greater clarity on the region's long-term trajectory toward per-capita emissions reduction.
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Notable Monitoring Updates

The 2026 RGS Monitoring Report includes several notable updates to regional data and analysis, including:

- **Housing:** Average residential sale prices declined modestly in 2025, marking the slowest Fraser Valley real estate market in over two decades. Rental vacancy rates reached a balanced rate of 3% for the first time in a decade, despite average rents continuing to increase. Housing starts increased 49% year-over-year, with 89% of starts being multi-family units, a 7-percentage-point increase from 2024.
- **Transportation:** New data from TransLink's 2023 Trip Diary and Regional Screenline Survey provides an updated picture of regional travel. Approximately 90.9% of all trips originating in the FVRD remained within the region in 2023, a modest increase from 2017. Traffic volumes varied considerably by location, with the largest long-term increases occurring on Highway 7 and Highway 1 just west of Hope.
- **Transit:** Public transit ridership continued to recover following pandemic-era disruptions and a four-month transit strike in 2023, reaching 4.46 million passenger trips in 2024/25, compared with 2.65 million the previous year and surpassing pre-pandemic levels.
- **Regional Solid Waste Management Initiatives:** Two regional solid waste management pilots launched in 2025 diverted materials from disposal. The car seat recycling pilot diverted an estimated 8–10 tonnes of waste in its first eight months, while the agricultural plastics pilot collected 12 tonnes of bale and silage wrap for recycling in its first year.
- **Electric Vehicles (EVs):** The number of registered EVs increased 18% in 2025 to 8,986 vehicles, while public charging capacity expanded to 442 ports across 111 station locations. EVs now account for 3.6% of registered vehicles, up from 3.2% in 2024.

The RGS monitoring framework will continue to be reviewed as data sources, regional priorities, and reporting practices evolve. Indicators or spotlight pages may be changed or removed where data is no longer available or regularly updated, where data quality concerns arise, or where the information presented is no longer considered relevant for monitoring.

Following the release of the 2026 RGS Monitoring Report, staff will update the companion RGS monitoring website to reflect the latest indicator information and report analysis.

COST

The costs of the 2026 RGS Monitoring Report and RGS Monitoring website update are incorporated in the Regional Strategic Planning and Initiatives (601) budget.

CONCLUSION

The 2026 RGS Monitoring Report provides a snapshot of regional trends and conditions related to the overarching goals and policies of the *Fraser Valley Future 2050* RGS. This report incorporates new data and information made available since the previous monitoring report, while maintaining a focus on longer-term regional trends.

The monitoring of RGS indicators provides context for regional-decision making, supports implementation of the RGS, and helps communicate regional trends, concerns, and opportunities to member municipalities, senior levels of government, agencies, organizations, and the broader community. The 2026 RGS Monitoring Report meets the legislative requirements for RGS monitoring 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).