



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: DS-BRD-437

From: Development Services

Date: November 7, 2024

Subject: Regional Growth Strategy – Project Update

RECOMMENDATION: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board receive the report titled “Regional Growth Strategy – Project Update, DS-BRD-437” for information.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

The Peace River Regional District (PRRD) received provincial funding to undertake the Region’s first Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). Work commenced on the project in Spring 2023.

The RGS is the first project of its kind that the PRRD has undertaken and the first of its kind in northern B.C. An RGS is a long-range, high-level plan that will help the PRRD and member communities (City of Dawson Creek, City of Fort St. John, District of Taylor, District of Chetwynd, District of Hudson's Hope, District of Tumbler Ridge, and Village of Pouce Coupe) better understand and prepare for the potential changes that can be expected over the next 20 years due to a growing population, new service demands and affordable housing challenges among other issues.

Enabled through the provincial *Local Government Act*, an RGS is prepared and enacted by a regional district with the involvement of its member municipalities. The province leaves the process of preparing an RGS largely up to each region, so the PRRD RGS will be “made in the Peace River region.”

Like all regional growth strategies in the province, the PRRD RGS will not regulate land use. Land use and development are regulated by Official Community Plans, Zoning Bylaws, and building permit requirements where they exist in our region.

An RGS can cover a wide range of interconnected topics but must meet basic provincial requirements, which include:

- A 20-year time frame.
- A regional vision statement.
- Population and employment projections.
- Regional actions or policies for key areas such as housing, transportation, regional district services, parks and natural areas and economic development.

This is the PRRD's first RGS. The final product will be a long-range, high-level document that will aim to ensure the region is working toward a common future shared by its member municipalities and electoral areas. This includes helping guide long-term regional growth and development, and

supporting more coordinated region-wide planning, particularly around issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

For the PRRD, this RGS will help the region better understand and prepare for the potential changes that can be expected over the next 20 years. These changes include a growing population, new service demands and affordable housing challenges.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

This project is funded entirely through grants.

The PRRD gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The PRRD was also successful in obtaining a grant from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Canada Community Building Fund to cover half the costs of the project.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

The Have Your Say Page has been updated to include the attached report. Additional engagement will be undertaken in 2025.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

Attachments:

1. Regional Growth Strategy – What We Heard Report – Phase 1 and 2

External Links:

1. [November 16, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting](#) – See Item 4.2 titled “EcoPlan International & Peace River Regional District RE: Regional Growth Strategy Intro Project Overview”
2. [May 30, 2024 Regional Board Meeting](#) – See Item 8.14 titled “Regional Growth Strategy and Regional Climate Resiliency Plan Public Engagement Events – DS-BRD-403”
3. [Regional Growth Strategy – Have Your Say Page](#)