



REPORT

To: Chair and Directors

Report Number: DS-BRD-477

From: Development Services

Date: March 20, 2025

Subject: Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2571, 2025

RECOMMENDATION: [Corporate Unweighted]

That the Regional Board give Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2571, 2025 first and second readings; Further, that a Public Hearing be held pursuant to Section 434 of the *Local Government Act* on April 10, 2025 before the Regional Board Meeting, and that public notification be authorized pursuant to Section 466 of the *Local Government Act*.

BACKGROUND:

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is the first project of its kind that the Peace River Regional District (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 was truly “made in the Peace River region.”

Like all Regional Growth Strategies in the province, the PRRD RGS does 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.

The RGS includes nine (9) goal areas and associated policies:

1. Community Building
2. Economic Strength
3. Agriculture and Food
4. Living Well
5. Infrastructure and Services

6. Ecosystem Health
7. Transportation and Mobility
8. Climate Resilience
9. Regional Collaboration

This is the PRRD's first RGS. The final product is a long-range, high-level document that aims 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.

Timeline:

July 12, 2018:	The Regional Board authorized staff to explore the development of a Regional Growth Strategy.
May 26, 2022:	The Regional Board authorized staff to apply for a grant to fund the Regional Growth Strategy.
February 2, 2023:	The Regional Board authorized a supplemental budget request to fund the Regional Growth Strategy, if the grant application was unsuccessful.
May 4, 2023:	The Regional Board received confirmation that the grant application was successful.
July 20, 2023:	The Regional Board authorized the contract award for the Regional Growth Strategy to EcoPlan International.
November 16, 2023:	PRRD staff and EcoPlan International presented an overview of the Regional Growth Strategy project to the Regional Board.
November 17, 2023 – February 1, 2024:	The Regional Growth Strategy Survey was open for public input.
April 3 – May 27, 2024:	PRRD staff presented on the RGS project and upcoming engagement to all member municipalities.
May 30, 2024:	PRRD staff shared the engagement schedule for the project.
June 8 – 11, 2024	PRRD staff and EcoPlan travelled around the region to gather public input for the Regional Growth Strategy.
November 7, 2024	PRRD Staff and EcoPlan presented a project update to the Board and shared the “What We Heard” report.
February 20, 2025	PRRD staff presented the draft Regional Growth Strategy to the Board.
February 24 – March 24, 2025	PRRD staff presented the draft Regional Growth Strategy to all member municipalities.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

1. That the Regional Board provide further direction.

STRATEGIC PLAN RELEVANCE:

- Not Applicable to Strategic Plan

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION(S):

This project is entirely funded through grants from the Federal and Provincial governments.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATION(S):

Notifications will be done in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

OTHER CONSIDERATION(S):

None at this time.

Attachments:

1. Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 2571, 2025

External Links:

1. [July 12, 2018 Board Meeting Minutes](#) – See Item C-1 on the Regional Board Meeting Minutes dated July 12, 2018
2. [Regional Growth Strategy](#) – See Item 9.6 on the Regional Board Meeting Agenda dated May 26, 2022
3. [Function 400 – Management of Development, Regional Growth Strategy 2023 Budget Supplemental Request](#) – See Item 8.11 on the Regional Board Meeting Agenda dated February 2, 2023
4. [UBCM News Release - New Investments support 45 local infrastructure projects across BC](#) – See Item 12.4 on the Regional Board Meeting Agenda dated May 4, 2023
5. [RFP Award 54-2023 Regional Growth Strategy](#) – See Item 8.11 on the Regional Board Meeting Agenda dated July 20, 2023
6. [EcoPlan International & Peace River Regional District RE: Regional Growth Strategy Intro Project Overview](#) – See Item 4.2 on the Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda dated November 16, 2023
7. [Regional Growth Strategy & Regional Climate Resiliency Plan Public Engagement Events](#) – See Item 8.14 on the Regional Board Meeting Agenda dated May 30, 2024.
8. [Planning Department and EcoPlan International Re: Regional Growth Strategy "What We Heard" Report](#) – See Item 4.2 on the Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda dated November 7, 2024
9. [Regional Growth Strategy – Project Update](#) – See Item 13.1 on the Regional Board Meeting Agenda dated November 7, 2024
10. [PRRD Development Services Re: Regional Growth Strategy Project Update](#) – See Item 4.2 on the Committee of the Whole Meeting Agenda dated February 20, 2025
11. [Draft Regional Growth Strategy](#) – See Item 12.1 on the Regional Board Meeting Agenda dated February 20, 2025