
OCP Schedule A

REGIONAL GROWTH CONTEXT STATEMENT

The Regional Growth Strategy, *Choices for our Future* (2004), sets out a framework to manage growth in the Fraser Valley and to ensure that the FVRD continues to be a desirable place to live, work, and play. The City of Chilliwack supports the RGS with its healthy community vision and intends to be an active partner in the implementation of the RGS.

Section 866 of the Local Government Act mandates all official community Plans to include a Regional Context Statement (RCS), affirming their compliance to the Regional Growth Strategy that is in effect in their regional district. In *Choices for Our Future*, the FVRD has established eight regional goals. These goals and their recommended actions set out a clear, logical framework for Chilliwack to explain how its OCP corroborates with the RGS. These regional goals are:

1. Increase Transportation Choice and Efficiency
2. Support and Enhance the Agricultural Sector
3. Manage Urban Land Responsibly
4. Develop a Network of Sustainable Communities
5. Protect the Natural Environment and Promote Environmental Stewardship
6. Protect and Manage Rural and Recreational Lands
7. Achieve Sustainable Economic Growth
8. Manage Water, Energy Resources and Waste Responsibly

REGIONAL VISION:

The Fraser Valley Regional District will be a network of vibrant, distinct, and sustainable communities that accept responsibly managed growth while being committed to protecting the land resource and the natural environment to ensure that a high quality of life is accessible to all.

Similarly, this OCP is anchored on five major goals based on its healthy community vision:

1. Manage Growth Responsibly
2. Strengthen Agriculture
3. Grow the Economy
4. Protect the Environment
5. Build Healthy, Attractive Communities

CITY'S VISION:

The City of Chilliwack is a healthy, engaged and sustainable community

The following descriptions demonstrate a close relationship between the OCP and the RGS goals.

RGS Goal 1: Increase Transportation Choice and Efficiency

The RGS makes its first priority to increase transportation choice and efficiency throughout the Fraser Valley Regional District. This OCP, under *Mobility* of Goal 5 “Build Healthy Attractive Communities”, outlines objectives and policies that support an integrated, multi-modal

transportation circulation system, including public transit, the automobile, pedestrian movement, and cycling. This is to be achieved by integrating current road network plans, long term capital works, the Transit Future Plan, bicycle plans, and sidewalk/walkway capital work programs, into a comprehensive healthy community transportation strategy that reinforces mobility choices and balanced prioritization amongst various transportation modes. Concurrently, the OCP's land use policies emphasize the development of community cores and the urban corridor in support of transit use and active transportation.

RGS Goal 2: Support and Enhance the Agricultural Sector

Under the OCP's Goal 2, "Strengthen Agriculture", the City speaks to responsible management of the region's agricultural lands. It reconfirms its commitment to protecting farmlands and preserving the integrity of the Agricultural Land Reserve, especially on the Fraser Valley floor. The City's agricultural policies also aims to create an investment climate that will reinforce Chilliwack's critical role in agriculture at both the provincial and national levels, and promote food processing and other agri-businesses that are essential to the industry's sustainability. The Agricultural Area Plan, OCP Schedule D-3, proposes further strategies, policies and procedures that help future agricultural development.

RGS Goal 3: Manage Urban Land Responsibly

OCP Goal 1, "Manage Growth Responsibly", and RGS Goal 3 "Manage Urban Land Responsibly", share many common grounds. In particular, the OCP promotes the following policies:

- ✓ retention of an urban growth boundary
- ✓ densification;
- ✓ comprehensive planning of sustainable communities;
- ✓ development of select hillsides; and
- ✓ new developments to contribute adequate funds for future infrastructure expansion and upgrades.

By accommodating future growth in the Urban Corridor and following infill redevelopment / densification best practices through neighbourhood planning, the OCP will resolve or minimize urban-ALR conflict at the development-farmland interface. Future neighbourhood plans will strive for a compact urban form and an efficient urban structure that facilitate sustainable healthy community development. Under this OCP, the role of hillside developments in the City's overall growth strategy will be limited in order to avoid urban sprawl, maintain efficient infrastructure, and preserve the hillside environment.

RGS Goal 4: Develop a Network of Sustainable Communities

OCP Goal 5 "Build Healthy Attractive Communities" and related policies will advance this regional goal by making Chilliwack a compact, integrated community based on a traditional

downtown and its corridor form and structure. Essentially, the City follows a sustainable path for a community design that includes well-serviced residential, commercial, industrial lands, a strong economic land base, and social activism. From this sustainable development approach, the OCP extends its vision to “active living”, community health and social well-being, which is embedded in the design of the built environment, mobility infrastructure (choice and active transportation), and social/cultural/amenity initiatives. More specifically, healthy community development in Chilliwack embraces the provision of a wide range of affordable accessible and suitable housing, recreational facilities, parks and other green space, cultural and education initiatives, and a variety of community services.

RGS Goal 5: Protect the Natural Environment and Promote Environmental Stewardship

OCP Goal 4 “Protect the Environment” recognizes the Regional District’s high priority of protecting the natural environment. It highlights the importance of community stewardship in widening public support for environmental protection, transforming our lifestyle from consumption to conservation, and ultimately, building a healthy city based on a sustainable footprint. More specifically, the OCP recommends environmentally sensitive approaches to resource management (water, air, gravel and forests), waste management (with a zero waste emphasis), hillside development (selective and limited scale), ground and service water protection (protection policies and development permit area design guidelines), and general subdivision development (Hillside Development Standards and Development Permit Area Design Guidelines). The City is building an environmental database and mapping environmentally sensitive areas to inform the public, the development industry and other stakeholders.

RGS Goal 6: Protect and Manage Rural and Recreational Lands

OCP Goal 1 “Manage Growth Responsibly” emphasizes maintaining the urban growth boundary and limiting hillside development to select areas. This manages not only urban growth, but also protects the rural assets such as the ALR and rural hillsides from urban sprawl. Under its Goal 2, “Strengthen Agriculture”, the OCP intends the rural areas to remain oriented to farming; and under “Utilities” and “Neighbourhood Planning” of Section 4, the OCP outlines its rural-based planning approach to larger rural communities. The City remains open to those communities in choosing their future with respect to servicing – within a rural context and based on local improvement funding principles.

The OCP recognises the importance of park and recreation development in Chilliwack and its potential prospect of serving the entire region. Island 22, a former municipal park, is now a FVRD regional park. Currently, the City and FVRD are working on the establishment of a second regional park in Chilliwack, namely, a nature reserve on the top of Chilliwack Mountain. Although provincial parks and resorts such as those in the Columbia Valley and Chilliwack River

Valley lie outside the City's boundaries, Chilliwack remains supportive of the higher level park systems and their visitors' needs: it has been planning the reconstruction of Vedder Bridge and related intersection improvements. Chilliwack is also a partner in the region's Experience the Fraser - Lower Fraser River Corridor Project.

RGS Goal 7: Achieve Sustainable Economic Growth

OCP Goal 3 "Grow the Economy" promotes diversifying economic and employment opportunities, revitalizing downtown, and creating jobs for the anticipated population increase. Future commercial and industrial growth will, in large parts, come through the densification of existing commercial and industrial districts. The OCP encourages greater site coverage, multi-level built-forms, and the recruitment of businesses that thrive in a compact and intensive use environment. On diversification, the Plan recognizes the important contribution of tourism, other niche sectors and entrepreneurship.

Under its "General Economic Development" policies, the OCP sees a continuing leadership role for the Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation to recruit new industries, assist the retention of existing businesses, and liaise among the industrial community, the Province and community stakeholders in the preparation of the future labour force.

Part of the "Grow the Economy" policies highlight the emerging knowledge economy, which is to be centred on the Canada Education Park development, in particular the campus expansion of the UFV in the Education Park and in the downtown business district. Through its "General Economic Development" and "Centre of Excellence" policies, the OCP reinforces the RGS's objective of "developing and maintaining a skilled labour force and a high quality of life".

RGS Goal 8: Manage Water, Energy Resources & Waste Responsibly

The Regional Growth Strategy encourages responsible management of water, energy resources and waste through public awareness, innovation, local solutions, and community-regional coordination in infrastructure development. OCP Goal 1 "Manage Growth Responsibly" and Goal 4 "Protect the Environment" mirror this regional goal. They stress public awareness, environmental design guidelines and standards that advance water and energy conservation, the protection of air quality, and best practices in waste management.

In the Regional Growth Strategy, the FVRD and the City agreed that Chilliwack's growth capacity should be able to support a population of 134, 000 by 2030. The Lower Mainland's growth rates have since slowed down, such that the City has realigned its population projection to a slower growth scenario – 132,000 by 2040. This revision is necessary in order to reflect the new reality and continual changes in the future, including an aging population and a declining birth

rate. Despite this lower projection, Chilliwack's share of regional growth is not expected to contract – as the entire region is growing at a similar rate and becoming more urbanized.

Since the inception of the RGS (2004), Chilliwack has significantly expanded its transit budget and system. Its commitment to agriculture has resulted in the development of an agri-business park and two new food processing facilities, and ensured a strong economic underpinning for the ALR in the upper Fraser Valley. Its efforts in densification and infill – in support of the market – have contributed to a housing development trend favouring multi-family dwellings and the consolidation of the urban corridor. In the meantime, successes in economic development and the establishment of a significantly larger industrial land base have helped Chilliwack to maintain a robust economic base and reduce commuting. In recent years, major developments in recreational facilities and parks, wastewater treatment and recycling, as well as the adoption of various environmental policies, have enabled the City to preserve its livability amidst growth. In summary, the City of Chilliwack considers that it has fulfilled the RGS from the beginning, and this OCP will continue with the same path toward a more sustainable and healthy future.