

SECTION I: REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT

The *Growth Strategies Act* and the *Local Government Act* provide a mechanism to link local community plans with regional plans.

Section 866 of the *Local Government Act* requires that where a Regional District has prepared a Regional Growth Strategy, the Official Community Plan (OCP) must include a Regional Context Statement that is accepted by the board of the regional district. The regional context statement must identify the relationship between matters contained in the regional growth strategy and the OCP, and how the OCP is consistent with the regional growth strategy.

The City of Kamloops and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD) have had a long history of co-operating on matters relating to growth management.

In the 1980s, the City and the TNRD established a Fringe Area Policy to deal with development applications on the fringes of the City. The Fringe Area Policy allows City officials to comment on development applications within five kilometres of municipal boundaries. The policy provides the City with a mechanism to comment on developments that have the potential to generate demands for extensions to municipal infrastructure at some point in the future.

Beginning in 1995, the City participated with the TNRD and other government agencies in the development of a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), which was adopted by the Board of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District as By-law 1767 in May of 2000. The RGS is not a land use plan, but rather a strategy for achieving a sustainable future for the region. The RGS provides a framework for:

- taking action on development and settlement issues;
- coordinating efficient land use, public facilities, services, finances, and resources over the next 20 years;
- encouraging a variety of economic opportunities, land use choices, and quality of life attributes in an affordable and efficient manner; and
- ensuring our environment and natural amenities are protected and conserved.

The RGS provides specific policies to manage human settlement, transportation and energy, economic development, environmental protection and open space, and cultural heritage issues.

Most recently, the City and the Village of Chase have participated with the TNRD on the preparation of the *South Thompson Settlement Strategy (2002)*. The strategy seeks to manage growth in the South Thompson corridor by directing growth to existing urban areas or rural residential clusters, preserving the agricultural integrity of the valley, and minimizing the impacts of development on the environment, particularly water quality.

The City of Kamloops is the largest urban area within the regional district. The City's population of approximately 80,000 (estimate 2001) represents 65% of the region's population. This percentage has increased slowly since 1986, when the City's portion of the region's population was only 63%. The decrease in primary and manufacturing activity which tends to affect the rural areas of the TNRD more than the urban centres, coupled with an increase in service sector jobs which tend to be concentrated in Kamloops, will likely increase this percentage in the future. The RGS notes that mining closures, forest industry consolidations, and variable agricultural commodity prices have all had their impact on the TNRD. The wildfires of 2003, the loss of the Tolko mill in Barriere, and the spread of the Mountain Pine beetle will also have an impact on growth in the TNRD. These and the projected closure of Highland Valley Copper in 2009 will contribute to the concentration of population in Kamloops.

The RGS anticipates an annual growth rate of 1.5%, with the regional population growing from 120,000 in 2000 to 160,000 by 2015. While the Official Community Plan uses the slightly more conservative growth projection of 1.25%, the City is in agreement with the RGS that the majority of growth will gravitate to the larger municipalities.

1.0 REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

GOAL

- To create a balance among human settlement, economic development, and environmental conservation such that development does not significantly limit the options of future generations.

Regional Growth Policies

- 1.1 The policies of the Official Community Plan are consistent with the policies contained in the Regional Growth Strategy.
- 1.2 Kamloops is the regional centre for the Thompson-Nicola Regional District. While recognizing that economic development in the region will benefit Kamloops, the City will not support development which may require future service extensions.

Human Settlement

The RGS encourages urban communities to:

- develop in a compact, cost-effective, sustainable manner;
- maintain and enhance the community's quality of life;
- establish a commercial base to provide employment and serve the needs of residents and visitors;
- encourage a high standard of development;
- protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment;
- ensure a range of housing types capable of meeting the needs of residents;
- encourage mixed use, higher densities, and pedestrian friendly developments; and
- minimize impacts on adjacent resource uses.

1.3 The Official Community Plan supports the Human Settlement policies contained in the RGS.

The RGS also recommends a review of the Fringe Area Policy Paper to ensure that growth management policies and procedures reflect the RGS. Through its participation in the *South Thompson Settlement Strategy (2002)*, the City has recently reviewed its fringe policy in the South Thompson Valley, which has experienced continuing development pressure over the years.

There has been little or no development pressure in the North Thompson, Cherry Creek, or Kamloops South fringe areas. Reviewing policies in these areas is of a lower priority and should be undertaken in response to development pressure.

1.4 The City of Kamloops will work with the TNRD to develop implementation strategies in relation to the newly adopted *South Thompson Settlement Strategy (2002)*.

1.5 The current fringe area policy agreement between the Thompson-Nicola Regional District and the City shall remain in place for the term of this plan for those parts of the fringe area outside the South Thompson Valley.

- 1.6 The City's support for future major development proposals at its periphery, in particular those providing permanent residential development, will be contingent upon developing a cost sharing/equity strategy for City services to ensure that Kamloops taxpayers will not have to bear additional burdens. While recognizing that economic development in the region will benefit Kamloops, the City will not support development which may require future service extensions.
- 1.7 The City will support and will co-operate with the Kamloops Indian Band (KIB) in its endeavour to develop its lands as a method of ensuring economic self-sufficiency and of accommodating future growth. The City recognizes that the development of the KIB lands in a cost-efficient and orderly manner supports and complements the City's and the region's overall growth management strategy.

Transportation and Energy

The RGS recognizes major transportation corridors for existing functions and potential expansion. The Official Community Plan recognizes the Trans Canada, Coquihalla, and Yellowhead Highways, as well as both national railways. It also contains policies recognizing the preferred alignment for the Trans Canada Highway from the east end of Valleyview to just east of the Peterson Creek Bridge along the Juniper bench. It is expected that this highway bypass will not be built for the next 10 to 15 years due to budget constraints.

As noted in the RGS, the Official Community Plan recognizes the importance of air transportation service and encourages the potential for expansion of facilities and service at Kamloops Airport.

- 1.8 The City supports increased development opportunities at the airport in accordance with the recently completed the *Kamloops Airport Area Land Use and Development Plan (2000)*.

The RGS encourages compact community design in order to save transportation and energy costs and to provide more opportunity for walking, cycling, and other forms of transportation. One of the fundamental principles of the Official Community Plan is the integration of land use and transportation planning to reduce vehicle trips and total miles travelled through the TravelSmart planning process. Recent work by the City on the *Bicycle Master Plan (2000)*, the *Pedestrian Master Plan (2002)*, the Rivers Trail, and the *Transit Master Plan (2000)* all support residents using alternate modes of transportation.

- 1.9 The City encourages intensification and infill over peripheral development to ensure that municipal services are provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

- 1.10 The City supports the use of alternate modes of transportation including transit, bicycles, and walking as encouraged through the TravelSmart planning process.

Economic Development

The RGS seeks to broaden the economic base through diversification and expansion. Kamloops has one of the most diversified economies in the TNRD and is not as dependent on resource based industries as other centres. Growth of the Thompson Rivers University and in the service sector is expected to continue through the time frame of this plan. In addition, Kamloops is expected to continue as the regional centre for health care and government services.

- 1.11 The City supports diversification and expansion of the local economy by supporting appropriate development proposals through a business friendly development approvals process, by continually reviewing regulations and procedures to ensure red tape is minimized, by using City-owned land to create development opportunities, and by participating in the region's economic development agencies and initiatives.
- 1.12 The City will support regional tourism development that will enhance Kamloops and the region as a tourist destination area, including the following initiatives:
- Sun Peaks Resort development,
 - Rocky Mountaineer Railtours,
 - Six Mile Ranch proposal, and
 - Kamloops Indian Band proposals.

Environmental Protection

The RGS seeks to protect and enhance the environment through the use of stewardship principles. The Official Community Plan includes policies that support the City's Environmental Management System, which include annual environmental performance audit reports, an environmental indicators program, and is guided by an Environmental Performance Advisory Committee. The City is a participant in the federal government's Partners for Climate Protection program and has completed Milestone 2 of the program. The City participated with the TNRD on the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, which includes recycling initiatives to divert waste from the landfill. The City is constructing a water treatment plant and is nearing completion of a Liquid Waste Management Plan, which will ensure that downstream water quality is protected. The Official Community Plan also contains policies and mapping of environmentally sensitive areas within City boundaries. The Official Community Plan recognizes the constraints placed on development by environmental factors and, in particular, contains extensive policies related to the silt bluff hazard lands.

- 1.13 The City supports the region's vision of a sustainable future which balances human settlement and economic development with the need for environmental conservation.
- 1.14 The City will oppose development which contributes to a potential degradation of the City's supply of potable water.
- 1.15 The City will work with the Kamloops Indian Band and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District to minimize development and growth in grassland areas. To be aware that each request reduces the overall grassland ecosystem to reduce fragmented development and to increase preservation protection, restoration, and enhancement of the natural areas so to retain ecosystems and biological diversity.

Open Space and Cultural Heritage

The RGS policies in relation to open space focus on the allocation of Crown land and the need for open space amenities on a region wide basis. The Official Community Plan supports these goals for open space and cultural heritage, but focuses on the parks and recreational needs for Kamloops residents and the use of open space for the natural drainage of storm water. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the Cultural Strategic Plan contain specific policies about the City's parks system and our cultural and heritage resources.

- 1.16 The City supports the provision of parks and recreational opportunities and the preservation, celebration, and interpretation of our cultural heritage.

Co-operation and Process

- 1.17 The City of Kamloops will continue to co-operate with the TNRD and other government agencies and First Nations to address growth management issues as they arise and to plan for the future in a collaborative manner.

Regional Context Statement

- 1.18 The current fringe area policy agreement between the TNRD and the City of Kamloops shall remain in place for the term of this plan for those parts of the fringe area outside the South Thompson Valley.