



SHAPING OUR FUTURE
THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO
REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY REVIEW

Regional Growth Strategy Review 2007-2008

Parksville Workshop Report

For Saturday May 24, 2008

June 30, 2008

Introduction

The Regional District of Nanaimo undertook the first of two public workshops on Saturday May 24, 2008 to discuss the major issues affecting the review of the Regional Growth Strategy. The workshop was held at the Parksville Community and Conference Centre from 1 to 5pm, with about 30 people participating (Appendix 1). The event was facilitated by Vince Verlaan of HB Lanarc for the regional district.

The event was advertised extensively throughout the region to encourage participation in the workshop. Public notification methods used included advertisements in local papers, advertisements on Shaw television, press releases, a Facebook events page, a postcard sent to every household in the region, email blasts to groups and individuals, and notices on community and the RDN web sites.

In compliance with the RDN Corporate Climate Change Plan, minimizing waste and GHG production was factored into planning for the event. Composting and recycling facilities were provided, RDN staff carpooled to the event, re-usable dishes were used – no disposable cups, plates or cutlery, the number of handouts was minimized and were printed on 100% recycled post consumer waste paper, and a local caterer was used that provided local and organic food choices.

The workshop agenda and discussion topics at the event were based on the issues identified in the background assessment in the first phase of the Regional Growth Strategy review and the issues identified as the highest priorities in the preliminary results of the online survey. The topics at the Parksville meeting were:

1. What are the most powerful actions we can take as a region to protect wildlife, sensitive ecosystems and water?
2. What are the critical decisions the region must take to achieve substantial GHG reductions?
3. What are the most promising ideas, strategies and models for providing a better mix of housing?

Many participants came to the event with specific topics to discuss. Instead of affordable housing, one table decided to address the topic of farming issues in the region. Other ideas unrelated to the assigned table topics were collected on a 'Garden of Ideas' poster at the front of the room. The unedited comments on the poster are provided in Appendix 2.

Comments from participants at the workshop indicated the need for the 'political will' to implement the policies in the existing Regional Growth Strategy. Participants acknowledged that much of the work for the development of sustainability policies has already been accomplished at previous workshops. There was general agreement that discussion should now focus on the implementation of existing policies.

The Parksville workshop will be followed by a second workshop in Nanaimo on June 7 to continue to discuss the key sustainability challenges to be addressed in the growth strategy. Based on feedback from the Parksville workshop, these key challenges will not be predetermined for the second workshop but rather participants will choose the discussion topics for the workshop.

Purpose

The intention of the workshops and the online survey is to inform RDN staff in drafting possible changes to the Regional Growth Strategy. Based on public feedback and the background assessment, several areas of the RGS may need to be changed so that the document may realise the RDN's vision for a sustainable future. The input from the public workshop will be used in drafting a second discussion paper in the fall of 2008. A second online survey will also run in the Fall to determine if the proposed changes represent the community's views on how the RGS should be addressing the various sustainability challenges.

Format

The workshop format followed the World Café conversational process. Basically, the World Café is a method for hosting conversations about questions that matter.

A total of 15 World Café discussions were held on four different sustainability topics: green house gas reduction, affordable housing, environmental protection and support for farming. Three rounds of discussion took place giving participants the opportunity to take part in a conversation on three different topics. One person remained at each table to act as a table host, to make connections between the rounds and keep the focus of the group on the table topic. Each group member respects the opinion of others and do not dominate the conversation. After the final round of discussion, the groups prepared a summary of the discussion for each table, and the table host presented the results to the entire group.

Results

Each table host prepared a summary of the discussion and findings at each table between all three rounds of the World Café. Below are the results of the topic for each table, written verbatim. The complete discussion notes for each table is provided in Appendix 3. Please note that as the comments are written verbatim and have not been edited, statements and claims made in the comments have not been verified.

GHG emissions #1

Causes (Basis for ideas):

- Relationship between housing (residential) and transportation.
- Very little industry / future impact of change (i.e. power plant).

Traffic

- Auto use reduction
- New transportation models (i.e. roundabouts, reduce idling)
- Alternative fuels / propane – natural gas – electric cars

Land use

- Stop urban sprawl
- Increase urban density
- Incorporate available land within boundaries
- Adequate greenspace / recreational use
- In-law suites
- ALR should be used to satisfy urban density (not consensus)
- Create user friendly paths / sidewalks – cycling
- Green housing for future
 - Alternative energy sources
- Nodal development (small commercial)
- Reduce auto dependency
- Local food production – Reduces transportation.
- Encourage all greening programs\
 - Power generation – landfill, sewage
 - Bus fleets – biofuels
- Public relations
 - Education to encourage change
- Water protection, energy conservation

GHG emissions #2

1. Control economic growth – Population growth and use of resources / person.
 - Studies
2. Maintain ecosystems through rules with “teeth” (enforce stiff penalties).
3. Land use
 - a. Review node locations and boundaries for dense development around nodes. After completed, allow development(s) / density only contained to nodes (enforce with teeth).
 - b. More thoughtful rules for development cost charges (i.e. for good uses in lieu of roads).
 - c. “LEED” or other good standards for new building.

Farmland

1. Support for farmers – subsidies and secure farmland
2. Consistency in ALR – Land use bylaws and uses (agri-tourism).
3. Support watershed drainage management plans
 - a. For recognising irrigation and flooding of farmland
4. Recognise suitability of some ALR lands to be subdivided (ALR within community needs).

Protection of wildlife, sensitive ecosystems and water #1

1. Restructure priorities:
 - a. Environment
 - b. Social well being

- c. Economy
 - Economic growth model restructured to share wealth thru efficiency.
 - Move from ever growing economy to steady state economy.
2. Legislate and enforce conservation laws
 - a. DFO policies
 - b. Wildlife conservation
 - c. Current containment boundaries
 - d. Think “sustainability strategy” instead of “growth strategy”
 - e. Watershed protection on private and public land
3. Politics, media and taxes
 - a. Truth and accuracy in all media. No muzzling of enviro scientists (paid by the public)
 - b. Return to progressive tax – corporations to pay their way, not society for reparations etc...
 - c. Forest management licences should not be given away for real estate.
 - d. Educate politicians and make accountable.
4. Developments should include:
 - a. Grey water management
 - b. Renewable energy resources – wind, solar, etc...
 - c. Cradle to grave product introduction
 - d. No draining wetlands for development
 - e. Low flush toilet incentives
5. Selective logging practices on private and public land.

Protection of wildlife, sensitive ecosystems and water #2

1. Implement region wide “Drinking water and watershed protection action plan.” (water habitat and sensitive ecosystems).
2. Restrict development to specific areas and identify areas to protect first before developing residential or commercial areas. (water habitat and sensitive ecosystems).
3. Protect resource lands and ALR and green space (water habitat and sensitive ecosystems).
4. Update SEI and inventory those non-human resources affected by development (habitat and sensitive ecosystems).
5. Cooperation amongst jurisdictions and requirement for leadership and commitment at the RDN (municipal and electoral areas) and senior government to implement (all).

Affordable Housing

1. Suites / Carriage houses
 - a. Allowed in all single family areas
 - b. Rental units – no DCCs
 - c. Allow strata of units

2. Co-op housing
 - a. Increase of units based on CPI – not market
 - b. Income cap on eligibility
 - c. Model – home ownership alternatives – options for homes (Toronto)
 - d. Close to amenities and transit
 - e. Support of local politicians

3. Rental apartments
 - a. Government ownership
 - b. Government incentives for private industry construct
 - c. Subsidized units for low income
 - d. Close to amenities and transit
 - e. Local political support

Open Discussion

Following the presentation of the results from the World Café exercise, participants engaged in open discussion about addressing sustainability in the region. Discussion topics range from the format of the public workshop to the effective implementation of the policies in the RGS. Statements and concerns of participants included:

- Are Electoral areas being adequately consulted throughout the RGS review process?
- Table hosts were not able to fully participate.
- How can Regional District Directors make the right decisions on sustainability in the region?
- How do we fit desired features into existing houses and neighbourhoods?
- Implementation is the biggest challenge and should be the focus of these workshops. We have all of the technical solutions, we just need to get them implemented. This requires political will.
- There is a real need for leadership to coordinate sustainability actions across the region.
- Higher density is required to make the cost of new infrastructure more feasible.
- Putting off change is more expensive the longer we wait.
- How can we keep politicians accountable and implement sustainability commitments?
- Need redevelopment to 'green' existing communities.
- Education of public officials on sustainability is needed.
- Protection of farmland to feed ourselves.
- Anything worth doing has a cost.
- Have to deal with root cause of problem instead of symptoms (i.e. GHG., loss of habitat). The root cause is economic growth. A growing economy requires natural resource extraction.

- The capacity of the world has reached its limits, but we still follow traditional model of growth.
- No Sunday driving except for essential services.
- Workshop subjects are too narrowly focussed, as there is a lot more to address in RGS.
- Table subjects could be different for next workshop.

Next Steps

A report will be prepared for the Regional Board that includes all feedback received so far, including the information received through the workshops, the online survey and other comments received. The input received during this first part of the review process will be fundamental in preparing the second discussion paper, which will have possible amendments and additions to the growth strategy. The discussion paper will be available in the Fall, as will a another opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments through an online survey.

Appendix 1: Registered Participants

Dave Bartram	Director, Electoral Area 'H'
Joe Burnett	Director, Electoral Area 'A'
Betty Collins	
Neil Dawe	
Zweitse Dewit	
Janet Dunnett	
Sandy Hele	Mayor, City of Parksville
Michael Jessen	
Karen Laplante	
Murray Laplante	
S. Laplante	
Pauline Liste	
Gary Murdock	
Ronda Murdock	
Ceri Peacey	
Milt Pearson	
Dave Scott	
F. A. Shelly	
Joanna Smith Tait	
Joe Stanhope	Director, Electoral Area 'G'
Charlie Stone	
Jacquie Thomson	
Teunis Westbroek	Mayor, Town of Qualicum Beach
Brenda Wilson	
Dale Wilson	
Craig Young	
Y. A. Zarowny	

Appendix 2: Garden of Ideas

The following are additional comments made by participants on topics that did not fit in with the World Café discussion topics.

- “Who is not in the room? Those who can’t read this stuff, all dense reports. Those not confident of expressing themselves in a group. Those too busy working a second job today. How does the RDN “not preach to the choir?” Telephone survey, survey in the mall, go door to door. “
- “To make the best of the bad job that has been done so far.”
- “re: sustainable development – Cultural diversity as important as bio-diversity – U.N.”
- “Implementation – recognition of the difference of the rights as established in law for municipalities as compared with electoral areas. Must be equal partners.”
- “Vibrant and sustainable economy goal – Goal 6 (didn’t make it to top). No society can adapt if 4 in 10 adults are functionally illiterate. That is the stat. So what about building citizenship / problem solving skills. No one under 40 in this room!”
- “Governance – implementation is the problem!”
- “Need a mutually agreed definition of sustainability”
- “Sustainable growth no longer a possibility”
- “We need to accept limits on growth and economic development”
- “Nodal interconnection for all modes of transportation – Alternatives to car and truck (walk, cycle, rail)”
- “To tighten regulations so those that want something different go elsewhere. Lots of room in this province.”
- “To have input into RGS process and to hear what residents have to say about RGS.”
- “To give people a better understanding of issues involving ALR land, from the farmers voice. Heritage, family, pride on these lands. Explain to people how land was incorporated into the ALR (airphotos, no soil test). Issues that farmers are being faced with by municipal bylaws and urban growth. Water, natural buffers, etc... Give people an understanding that farms have provincial legislation that governs all farms in B.C. – ‘The Right to Farm Act.’”

- “That most people have very positive views on farming with relation to subdivision and issues relating to keeping farming within our community.”
- “The ‘Me First’ or ‘Greed’ culture is the most awkward impediment to implementation. Changing mindset to win-win from win-lose needs to happen.”
- “Where was the Area F representative?? Please put his answer in the newspaper.”
- “Things move as fast as the slowest person involved.”
- “Better water management (we have enough water). Better cooperation amongst jurisdictions on water.”
- “Implement regulations that acknowledge the environment has limits to human impact. Cap economic growth. Live within the ecological limits.”
- “Recognise that subdivision of farmland can be positive with our community.”
- “Implementation is not happening do to a “disconnect” between Federal, Provincial, Regional and Municipal governments. Responsibilities are down loaded to lower government while authority to make the decisions is stripped away.”
- “Provincial government seems to be busier enabling corporations and businesses to profit while ignoring the needs of the people they are supposed to serve and who pay their wages!”
- “What are we going to do about the existing “plant”?”
- “I think it is important to begin a workshop on sustainability with a presentation that emphasises what is and is not physically and ecologically possible if we’re going to be a sustainable region.”
- “Should supply rebates for dual flush toilets – save water, less sewage.”
- “There was no opportunity for discussion on most RGS issues.”
- “People are not attending sessions as they feel their input is not listened to.”
- “Political support for projects that meet RGS and OCP objectives.”
- “Secondary suites and carriage houses – restricted to zoning around community centres (i.e. hospitals, institutions, shopping centres, etc...).”
- “The three discussion items were too narrow a focus and were determined from a small amount of input (200 surveys).”
- “Greenhouse gases – Supply free public parking on surplus lands at major intersections to promote carpooling.”

- “Regional and municipal governments are evidently adverse to beneficial, socially responsible actions. In November, think before you vote!”
- “RDN should hire professional survey consultant to randomly obtain opinions (face to face interviews) throughout community.”
- “Political will to implement change.”
- “Limit growth in areas outside of UCB. i.e. no Cable Bay, it makes people cynical of RGS and political process.”
- “Input from too small a cross section of RDN population to make meaningful decision.”
- “CO-OP housing model.”
- “Product lifestyle needs to include “cradle to grave” design – recycle or reuse. Don’t ‘bury’ it.”
- “Economic development – sustainability impact.”
- “Keep all recommendations for farmland consistent with the Right to Farm Act and ALR regulations.”
- “Provide incentives to encourage site self sufficiency – limit DCC for sites that don’t require – specific facilities.”
- “RDN needs to hold meeting (not necessarily a workshop) in the individual electoral areas to allow them to participate in the revisions.”
- “CO-OP housing that’s unrelated to rising / changing real estate values.”
- “Develop new housing like row housing that uses more efficient and economic infrastructure.”

Appendix 3: Table Discussion Notes

GHG Reductions #1

Critical Decisions

- Residents/Transportation – Source of problem – Type of transportation
 - Semi trucks - Government needs
 - Movement of goods to legislate fuel
- Balance – Tree Removal
 - Alternative Fuels
 - Electric car
 - Motivate better forms of transportation
 - Enabling – laws to allow innovation
 - Unintended consequences – ying / yang
 - Human understanding element as a component of implementation
 - Reaching out to the community
 - Greater number of people
 - Opening land adjacent to the city boundaries – regardless of designation i.e. ALR or other
 - Pedestrian or cycling friendly housing
 - Add granny suites
 - No Sunday driving – with the exception of essential services
 - Size of home – in-law suite included
 - Energy efficiency of homes
 - Stop urban sprawl
 - Density is the way to go
 - User friendly walkways (pedestrian / cycling)
 - Decision making - Water (important considerations)
 - Energy (important considerations)
 - Growing local food
 - Water protection
 - Site choice for housing
 - No idling of vehicles
 - Power generation
 - Liquid wastewater – generating power
 - Bus fleet biodiesel
 - Green buildings
 - Look at what is realistic
 - Incentives: Bike lanes and scooters (no parking fees)
 - Farming / Residential issues
 - Conflict
 - Understanding of density need
 - Neighbourhood challenges?
 - Voluntary pick up
 - Card designation for destination
 - Monetary cost of decisions
 - Infrastructure changes / costs

- Education – public relations to encourage people to change
- Nodal development
- Influence Ministry of Transportation re: roundabouts and improving traffic movement.

GHG Reductions #2

- Nodal development – if any permitted
 - Inconclusive (?) income + affordability + age
 - Review of nodal location / boundaries as “reality” sets in (then enforce with teeth to confine development to nodes).
- Distinguish between authentic wants and needs given critical situation.
- Requirement of “LEED” standards
- Car share / community car
- A more effective public transit system (including train)
- Education – individual choices and behaviours
- Maintenance of indigenous trees and wetlands for “lungs”
- Bill 27 – commitment to reduce GHG
- Forest – Maintain ecosystems
 - Loss of ecosystems for development
 - Needs rules to protect ecosystems
- Control growth
 - More people moving here (what values do we want to protect)
 - 75% of GHG attributable to global economic growth
 - A symptom and problem of urban growth
- Change the way we live (what we expect from the earth in terms of resource extraction).
- Building permits must have time limit for implementation.
- Rules for development cost charges – instead of roads, water, sewer, parks, bicycle facilities (more thoughtful use).
- More efficient transit – contract it out and localise (reduce empty buses)
- Control of property owner urges / drives
- Get strict laws to enforce
- Encourage people to move to former industrial towns in BC
- Huge protected areas surrounded by development
- Heating home – Geothermal heat, solar heat (including water)
- Peak oil
- No control over how much water taken from Hamilton Marsh
- Time limits on development permits
- Employers provide dry secure place for bike and place to change if raining
- Plug in for electric cars
- Tax incentives to provide bicycle facilities
- Trees – planting program
- How can RDN reverse 2003 decision to dissolve Forest Land Reserve
- Quality of trees – maintain the indigenous ones we have
- Increase gasoline tax
- Increase frequency of public transit
- Co-op car share network
- RDN incentives for solar panels (subsidy)
- Awareness of significant gases other than carbon dioxide

- Methane controlled at landfill
- Capture methane at sewage treatment plant

Farmland

Future use of farmland?

- Issues:
 - Development permits not consistent on adjacent farms
 - Classification of ALR land – not all ALR land suitable for farming
 - Influence of municipal bylaw on farms
 - Issue of subdivision (smaller) on farmland; still to be in ALR; city at Parksville would not support application.
 - Consistency of application of “guidelines” to determine support for subdivision of land; e.g. Parksville and Qualicum Beach not consistent.
 - Adjacent land uses incompatible with farming (cattle) – e.g. golf courses, town.
- Subdivide and create a parcel on non-arable land closer to the urban centre.
- Community needs affordable and senior housing
- 100 mile diet incentives
 - Local supermarkets
 - Labelling
- Local gardens
- RGS – No residential / urban land uses on food producing lands
- RGS – Add agri-tourism to ‘rural integrity’ and sustaining vibrant economy.
- Be able to subdivide land within city limits as regards to ALR

Solution

- No taxation on farming
- Recognise farming is a way of life; heritage
- Adopt a farming community culture
 - e.g. to accommodate family members to live on farms
- Small scale slaughter houses
- Food security for Vancouver Island
- Farm what you want
- Water and watersheds on private lands (especially private forest)
- Urban growth impacts on water supply
 - Return water to water table
 - Green infrastructure
 - Preserve wetlands
- Neighbourhood relationships
 - What if a farm was there first
- Municipalities have to recognise farmland capacity and role in agri-tourism
- Stopping urban sprawl.

Protection of wildlife, sensitive ecosystems and water #1

- Enforce existing
 - DFO policies
 - Wildlife conservation
 - Current urban containment boundaries
 - Sustainability strategy rather than “growth strategy”
- Elect and educate our representatives
- Watershed protection enforcement on public and private lands
- Truth and accuracy in all media. No muzzling of environmental scientists who are paid by the public.
- Taxes – Return to progressive tax – the more you make the more you pay. Corporations are bankrupting the public – privatization of profit – socialization of costs.
- New developments must include grey water management (rainwater collection) solar and wind power, etc...
- Laws to support sustainable logging practices
- Restrict draining wetlands for subdivisions
- Low flush toilets – Incentives to separate grey water and hold grey water.
- Get involved to accomplish this
- Get educated from independent credible sources
- Economic growth model needs restructuring to share the wealth through efficiency.
- Move from ever growing economy to a steady state economy
- Create / keep wildlife corridors
- Define universal sustainability within ecological and physical confines
- Develop sustainable energy within the Regional District of Nanaimo
- What is the carrying capacity of this region for wildlife and humans
- Reorder priorities
 - Environment
 - Social well being
 - Economy
- Cradle to grave product introduction
- Groups to speak with one voice about growth / environmental concerns and change
- Site adaptive planning

Protection of wildlife, sensitive ecosystems and water #2

1. Restrict development to specific areas in RDN based on watershed, wildlife corridors, and sensitive ecosystems.
 - a. Identify areas to protect first before designing accommodation or commercial.
 - i. Protection of wetlands (rights of owner vs. sustainability) – political issue
2. Implement region wide “Drinking water and watershed protection action plan”
 - a. Watershed protection plan
 - b. Conservation strategy
 - c. Education (telling residents where we are today in various municipalities or electoral areas)

- d. Quality monitoring
- e. Stormwater management (2 management structures)
- f. Water recycling (grey water) (VIHA)
- g. Coordination of management responsibilities
3. Protect resource lands and green space from development (private or crown land)
 - a. Sustainable logging practices vs. clearcutting (partial retention / variable retention)
4. Protect ALR for agricultural use
 - a. Support greenspace (rights of owners)
5. Designate specific habitat for certain wildlife species
 - a. i.e. heron rookery, eagle tree, marmot habitat
6. RDN definition of green space
 - a. Are golf courses supporting wildlife habitat in definition of greenspace!
 - b. Is ALR land green space?
7. Regulate private land owners right to deforest / devegetate
8. RDN lobby provincial government to implement selective logging practices
9. Update SEI inventory
10. Detailed inventory of:
 - a. Wildlife
 - b. Wind
 - c. Trees
 - d. Insects
 - e. Those non-human resources affected by development
11. Need to balance human water consumption with wildlife protection and sensitive ecosystems
12. In context of our question: "how do you get people from different jurisdictions to work together for common good."
13. Requirement for leadership at the RDN (municipalities and electoral areas) to implement.

Affordable Housing

- Cooperation amongst different levels of government (i.e. funding formulas)
- New types of housing
 - How about house clusters where elders and young families live together? Younger take care of elders for "free rent"?
- Political support for alternate housing (higher density)
 - i.e. house plans that would allow for future owners to make a monster house into two or three smaller ones (wiring / plumbing setup)
 - Encourage the market to do this???
- Developers to provide affordable housing in developments
- Suites / carriage houses
 - Allow on all single family properties or limited areas
 - Strata title
 - Parking
- Mixed housing income and age
 - Assorted square footage in development
- Subsidization of DCC's for low income housing
 - Only for truly affordable housing (i.e. CMHC)

- Government supplies land for low income housing
- Smaller lot sizes (in cities)
- Residential over commercial
- Services for higher density in electoral area nodes
- Suites / carriage houses
 - Should be near amenities and transit
- Co-op housing
 - Government policies to support
- Rental apartments
- Government support of incentives
- Green building
- Higher density
- Co-op housing – unrelated to rising real estate prices
- Row housing
- More efficient and economic infrastructure
- Minimum density zoning
- Government incentives for apartments
- Councils should look at opening more land for affordable housing
- Better transit to affordable housing
- Close to amenities
- Workforce housing supplied by resorts / business owners
- Dialogue within community