



REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO



2023-2026 | **Strategic Plan**



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Message from the Chair

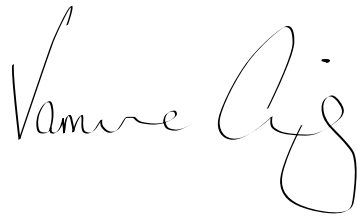
On behalf of the Regional District of Nanaimo Board of Directors it is my pleasure to present the 2023-2026 Regional District of Nanaimo Strategic Plan.

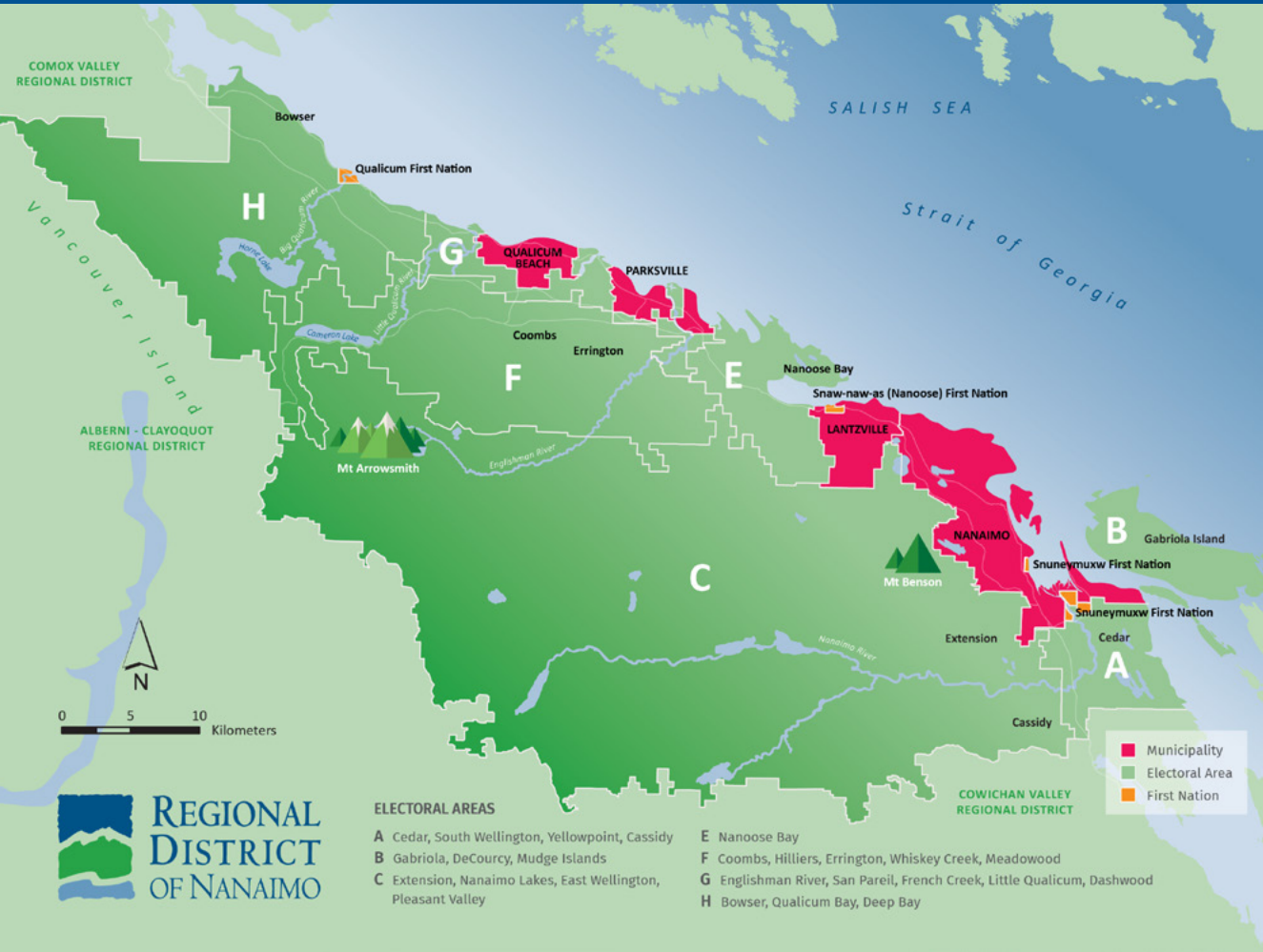
This Strategic Plan is a guiding document that sets out the Board's vision, role, and commitments. It identifies five strategic focus areas for our work over the next few years: protecting our vital lands and ecosystems, managing impacts of climate change, planning and managing for growth, water security, and advocacy. It articulates a clear direction for the RDN Board which will enable us to be proactive in addressing important opportunities and challenges in our region.

The Plan will also serve as a communication tool in the work we do with the public and our partners, and as we advocate with other levels of government for solutions to the critical issues impacting our communities.

Recognizing that priorities evolve, we commit to being adaptable and to revisiting the Strategic Plan within this term of office to ensure it continues to reflect our priorities. We also commit to reporting regularly on our progress in implementing our Plan.

We invite you to review the RDN's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan and to share your thoughts with us. Together, we will continue working towards a stronger and more resilient region for everyone.





Our Region

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is located on the beautiful central east coast of Vancouver Island, incorporating the municipalities of Nanaimo, Lantzville, Parksville, and Qualicum Beach, and seven unincorporated electoral areas that lie between Cassidy to the south and Bowser to the north. The RDN is situated within the traditional territory of several First Nations, including Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As and Qualicum First Nations. The region is home to approximately 170,000 people and is growing at a very rapid pace. New residents are moving to the region from across BC, Canada and internationally, due in part to a mild coastal climate, diverse ecosystems and landscapes from the Salish Sea to rugged mountains, easy access to a range of outdoor recreation and a high quality of life. Additionally, there are unique cultures, a sense of place and a strong spirit of volunteerism and pride in each of the communities of the region. With increasing growth and vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change, the region is in transition - economically, environmentally and demographically. As a gateway for visitors to Vancouver Island and a strategic transportation hub, the region enjoys a stable economy and all the amenities of larger urban areas with an abundance of open space and clean air.





Our Vision

It is our obligation to consider how we want the region to grow and evolve over the long term to help guide and inform the decisions we make today. As we look to the future, we envision a region with diverse and balanced urban and rural communities, with citizens who are engaged and knowledgeable on civic matters. Our citizens and communities are healthier with quality health care facilities and services, improved socio-economic equity and attainable housing. Our water sources and green spaces are abundant and protected, and communities enjoy the benefits of their tree-planting and greening efforts. Our local economies have shifted to be more sustainability-based and our landfill management and diversion targets are drivers of a robust circular economy and complementary industries. Our region benefits from inclusive First Nations governance with strong collaboration at all levels in addressing important and pressing issues.

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Our Role

As a regional government, we are responsible for providing a variety of local and multi-jurisdictional services on behalf of our citizens, while ensuring our services offer good value and strike a balance between the needs of communities and our citizens' ability to pay. Equally important is our responsibility to develop a collective vision for the region and establish policy that will ensure sustainable and adaptive growth and development into the future. As a governing body, we provide consistent and cohesive direction to the regional district's administration, leverage our strong voice as a federation of local governments to effectively advocate to other levels of government on important issues and challenges facing our region and play a role in convening parties and facilitating solutions to issues facing our communities. In the spirit of reconciliation, we are committed to respecting the history, traditions and cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples and to listening, learning, and working together to create opportunities for a stronger and more resilient region for everyone.

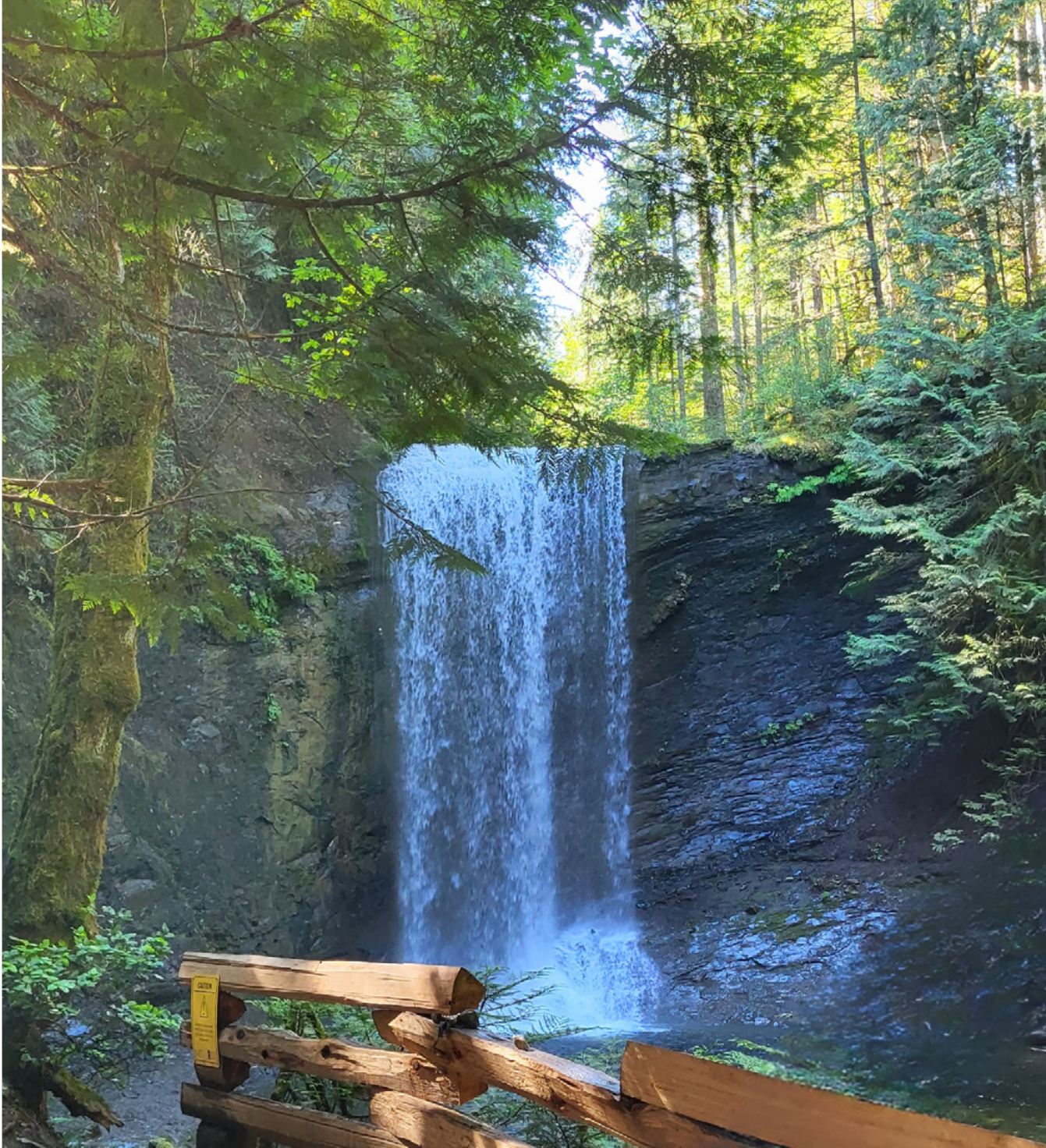




As we fulfill our roles and responsibilities as a regional government, we will endeavour to:

- Be **TRANSPARENT** in our decision-making;
- Make decisions with an **OPEN MIND**, listen to and consider all views;
- Be **STRATEGIC** and **FORWARD-THINKING** as we make decisions and establish policy;
- Be **CONSIDERATE** of RDN staff and their capacity;
- Ensure **EFFECTIVE** and **EFFICIENT** delivery of services and actions; and
- Be **FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE** and **ACCOUNTABLE**.

Purpose of the Strategic Plan



This strategic plan has been developed by the Board to provide a collective vision and strategic direction for the organization, enabling us to be proactive in addressing opportunities and challenges. The plan establishes attainable and measurable goals and objectives that will assist in prioritizing the efforts of the organization and guide the allocation of financial and human resources. The strategic plan sets a tone for the term of office and will serve as a communication tool with the public, our partners and other levels of government.

Quarterly reports to the Board will provide the opportunity to review, communicate, and celebrate progress in achieving the Board's goals, and to update the plan as circumstances and priorities evolve.

The following strategic focus areas address the most important opportunities and challenges facing the regional district and its communities, and were established with a recognition that the financial resources and capacity of the regional district have limits. Emphasis has been placed on advancing existing programs and initiatives to achieve the Board's goals, thus limiting the pursuit of new initiatives that require increased levels of funding.



Strategic Focus Areas

1. Protecting Our Vital Lands & Ecosystems

Goal:

To accelerate the acquisition of regional parkland to secure and steward natural areas with high conservation and recreation values.

Why:

Parks and protected areas contribute to community well-being and help mitigate the impacts of climate change. Increasing costs and high demand for land in the region require that the regional district proactively identify strategic park and conservation lands and be in a position to acquire those lands in a timely manner when opportunities arise.

Strategies:

- 1.1 Review and update the Regional Park Acquisition Criteria & Rating Framework to address new and emerging priorities for land protection.
- 1.2 Identify and foster partnering opportunities with other organizations, including First Nations, land trusts, federal, provincial, and local governments, that have shared interests in land protection to leverage resources.
- 1.3 Leverage existing development approval processes to acquire vital lands and ecosystems.





2. Managing Impacts of Climate Change

Goal:

To understand the impacts and risks to our communities from a changing climate and develop effective, science-based adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Why:

We must accept responsibility for our contributions to climate change and take immediate steps to ensure the future sustainability and survivability of our region.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Shift to more environmentally sustainable modes of transportation to help achieve provincial objectives and regional targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2.2 Plan and implement risk management and mitigation strategies for identified hazards and vulnerabilities associated with climate change.
- 2.3 Advance priority actions that are identified within RDN Board-approved plans and initiatives.

3. Planning and Managing for Growth

Goal:

To plan for and manage growth in our region to meet the needs of our communities within the means of the environment and to improve quality of life.

Why:

We are experiencing consistent growth across our region and we have a responsibility to future generations to develop our communities in a manner that protects water and the environment, mitigates future costs and maintains the integrity, character and unique attributes of our rural and urban communities.

Strategies:

- 3.1 Understand and develop an inter-connected framework of strategies and plans to manage growth to support complete communities, including planning, transportation, infrastructure, and fiscal sustainability.
- 3.2 Complete our Asset Management program to ensure physical and natural assets across the region are optimally managed.
- 3.3 Explore strategies to address the housing affordability crisis in the region.



4. Water Security

Goal:

To be leaders in the governance and stewardship of our region's watersheds and water resources, ensuring a sustainable supply of water to meet current and future needs.

Why:

We all need water to survive. Climate change, population growth and resource extraction are placing increasing pressure on our current water supply and there are significant costs associated with enhancing storage or developing alternative sources.

Strategies:

- 4.1 Understand our water resources and their risks, to manage our water resources effectively and sustainably.
- 4.2 Evaluate our land use decisions through a water security lens.
- 4.3 Collaborate with regional partners including First Nations, land trusts, federal, provincial, and local governments, to ensure water resources are managed and shared equitably and responsibly.





5. Advocacy

Goal:

To effectively communicate the region’s challenges, objectives and potential solutions to the provincial and federal governments and compel an appropriate response to the critical issues impacting our communities.

Why:

Senior governments are not meeting their obligations and responsibilities within their scope of authority and we must exercise our collective voice to ensure accountability for addressing issues that are outside local government responsibility.

Strategies:

- 5.1 Collaborate with the Province in undertaking restructure studies to improve the RDN’s governance.
- 5.2 Partner with First Nations, local governments, associations, and the Province to modernize the legislative framework within which BC’s local governments operate.
- 5.3 Collaborate with First Nations, regional districts and the Province to facilitate discussion and engagement about First Nation representation on regional district boards outside the treaty process.
- 5.4 Advocate for a continuum of specialized services to be established in the region to address the crisis of people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, with compassionate solutions viewed through the lens of housing and health.

