

2.0 Introduction

What will Electoral Area ‘A’ be like in 2033? For every citizen, there is undoubtedly a different prediction. More important than predictions is to know *what* residents *want* it to be like and to *plan today* to work towards that desirable future. For example, how can we make sure our children will continue to want to live here when they grow up? Will they be able to afford a home, have a job and enjoy the same or better quality of life as residents do today? Will seniors and young families be able to stay in the community in which they grew up? How can we protect the environment, preserve rural character and enhance the economy?

In addition, other increasingly important aspects to consider include reducing greenhouse gas emissions and encouraging local food production in pursuit of becoming a more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable community. These are some of the challenges and opportunities faced by the community and which are addressed in this Official Community Plan (OCP).

2.1 What is an Official Community Plan?

The [Local Government Act](#) authorizes local governments to adopt OCP’s that guide the community’s future development. The same legislation provides direction on the focus of an OCP and its content as well as its adoption procedures. The [Local Government Act](#) defines an OCP as a “*statement of objectives and policies to guide local government decisions on planning and land use management within the planning area.*”

An OCP must be adopted by a local government as a bylaw, which requires four readings by the Regional Board as well as a public hearing. The OCP bylaw must also be referred to the Agricultural Land Commission and approved by the Minister of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI).

To provide flexibility for any changes that may occur over the duration of this OCP, the [Local Government Act](#) states that an OCP does not commit a local government to implement policies specified in the plan but limits them to ensure their actions are consistent with the plan. Amendments to this plan must only be considered following consultation/communication with the community in accordance with the RDN public consultation/communication framework. Please note that at a minimum any amendment to this plan requires a public hearing in accordance with the [Local Government Act](#).

2.2 Purpose

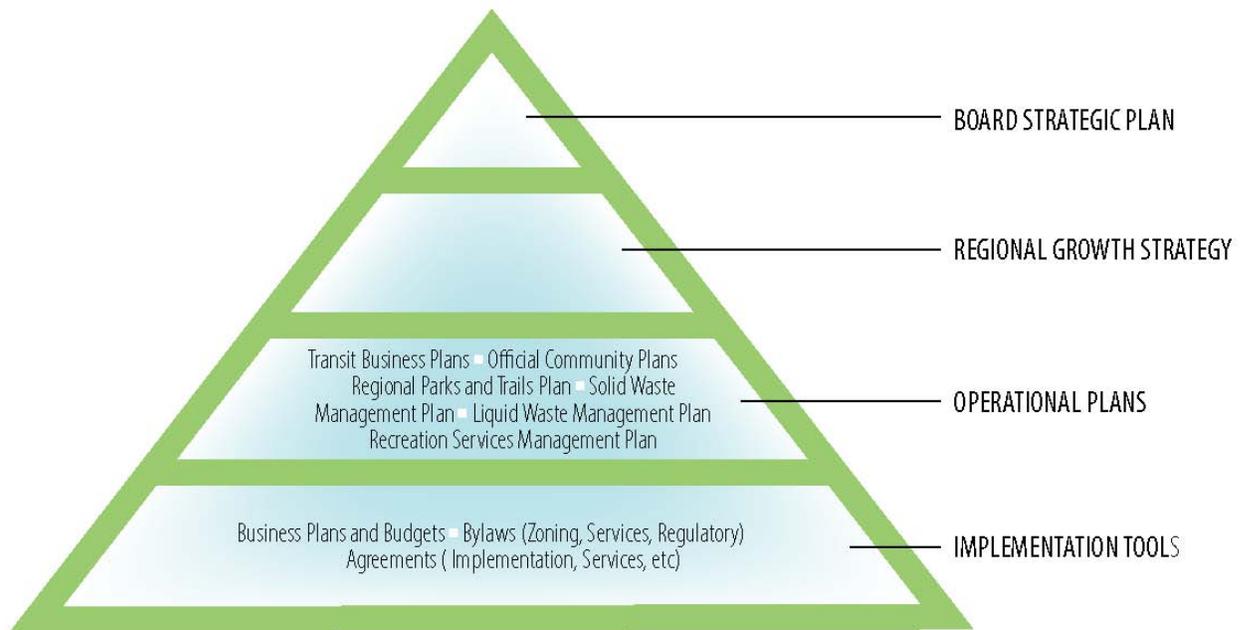
The purpose of this OCP is to:

- help Electoral Area ‘A’ move towards becoming more environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable;
- present a long-term vision complete with goals, objectives, and policies which, if implemented, will help the community achieve its vision;



- provide guidance on decision-making towards the achievement of community goals;
- encourage sustainable development and discourage non-sustainable development;
- direct discussion and decisions about land use and development; and,
- help the community prepare for change, future challenges and growth.

The diagram below illustrates the hierarchy of Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) plans and strategies. The 2010-2012 Board Strategic Plan provides direction to the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) which in turn provides direction to a full spectrum of operational plans including OCP's. All RDN land use bylaws must comply with the intent and direction provided by the policies in the OCP.



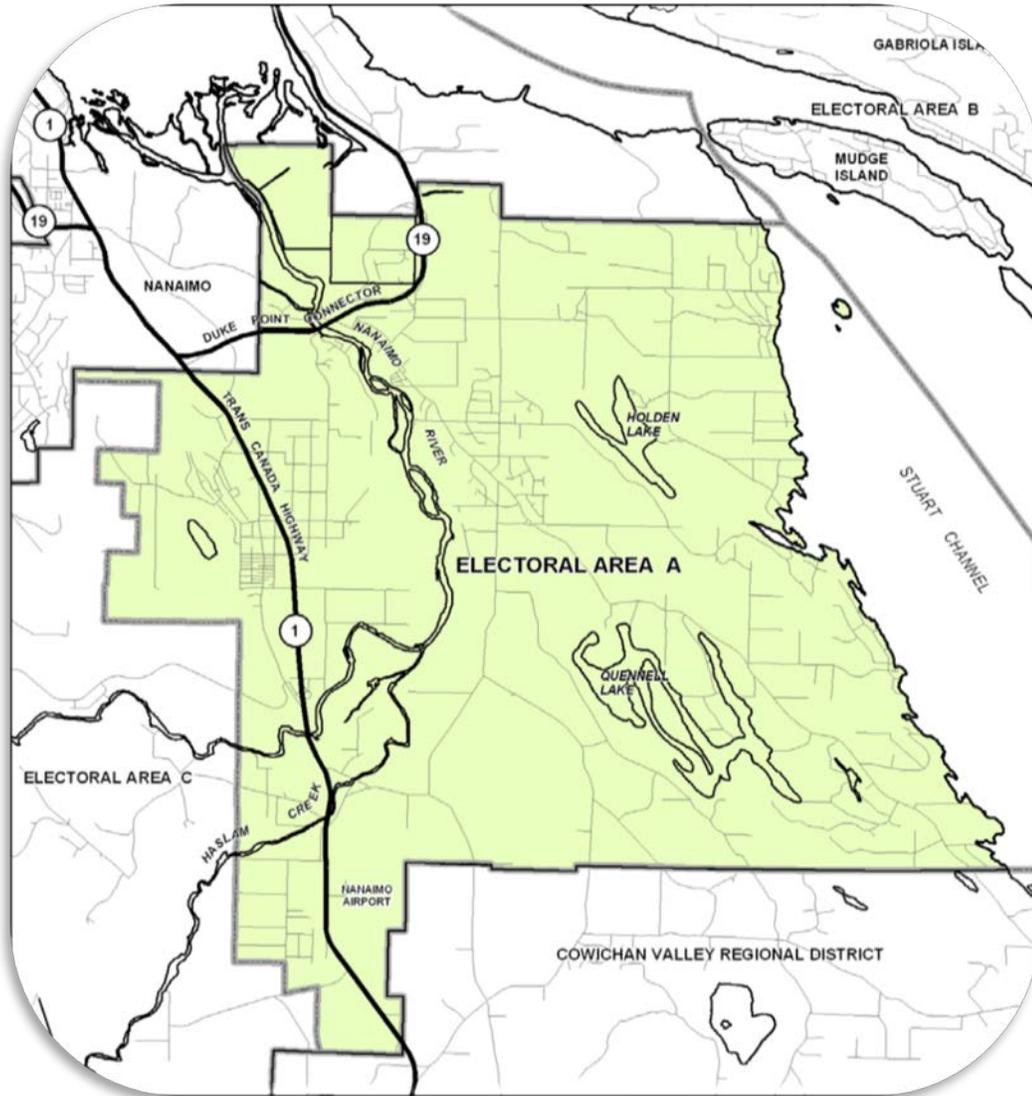
Comprehensive Approach to Sustainability

2.3 Scope

The Electoral Area ‘A’ OCP (plan area) is bordered by the City of Nanaimo to the north, Electoral Area ‘C’ to the west, the Strait of Georgia to the east, and the Cowichan Valley Regional District to the south. The plan area is home to three Snuneymuxw First Nation reserves located near the mouth of the Nanaimo River. Although these lands are located within Electoral Area ‘A’, policies in this plan do not apply to the Snuneymuxw reserves. The plan area also includes the neighbourhoods of Boat Harbour, Cassidy, Cedar, Cedar-by-the-Sea, South Wellington, and Yellow Point. The plan area is shown in Figure No. 1 below.



Figure No. 1 – Electoral Area ‘A’ Plan Area



Approximately 6,751 people live within the plan area based on the Statistics Canada 2006 Census. Over the past few years, the rate of growth of Electoral Area ‘A’ has been slower than other areas in the RDN. If the current growth trend continues, it is anticipated that as many as 8,700 people could be residing in Area ‘A’ by 2026. It should be noted that this is a very rough estimate which does not take into account factors such as migration patterns, rates of growth, and birth and death rate, which may result in greater growth rates than anticipated by this plan.

The intent of this OCP is to provide direction on how the plan area will grow and change over the next five to ten years while recognizing the needs and desires of the community for the next fifteen to twenty years. However, it is recognized that the plan may require amendment in response to future changes in legislation, changing community opinions, and amendments to the RGS.

The Plan Area, including the lands subject to the Cedar Main Street Village Plan, is designated a ‘development approval information area’ pursuant to the RDN’s Impact

Assessment Bylaw No. 1165, 1999. This Bylaw outlines information requirements for zoning amendments, development permit applications, and applications for a temporary industrial or commercial use permit. The Cedar Main Street Village Plan is attached to and forms part of this Bylaw to provide detailed guidance on future land use and community preference and desirable changes within the Cedar Main Street Plan Area.

2.4 OCP Review Process

The Electoral Area 'A' OCP review was a collaborative effort which involved an extensive public consultation process. This process was held between May 2008 and November 2010. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a list of opportunities for public engagement which were provided during the OCP review.

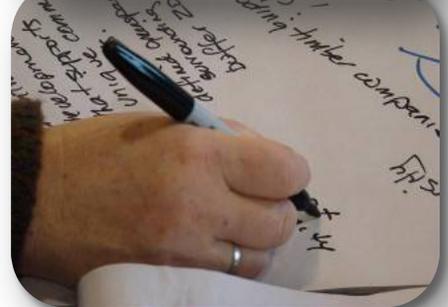
Community input indicated that there was support to rewrite the previous Electoral Area 'A' OCP with a focus on sustainability. A variety of techniques were used to engage the community and obtain their input, as were a variety of methods used to communicate with the community and for the process to be open and transparent.

In addition, a Citizen's Committee consisting of 17 members representing a variety of interests and geographic locations within the plan area was also established. The purpose of the Committee was to augment the input received by the general community and to act as resident experts to discuss issues and ideas, make recommendations to the RDN, as well as to encourage open dialogue about the OCP review.

2.5 Organization of the Plan

An OCP must be clear and understandable. Its organization must provide clear linkages between goals, objectives, and policies. It must also articulate a strong vision where the land use plan and policies can be demonstrated to be consistent with the vision. In this way, the vision becomes a story line that ensures that goals, objectives and policies are all working in the same direction. *Figure 2* on the following page provides an overview of how this OCP is structured.

The Electoral Area 'A' Official Community Plan includes Schedule A and Maps 1-10 which specify the policies and Development Permit Area designations¹ applicable to all of The Plan Area and Schedule B and Maps 1-4, the Cedar Main Street Village Plan which provides policies and Development Permit Area designations² specific to Cedar Main Street Development Permit Area exemptions and guidelines are found in the zoning bylaw³.



¹ Bylaw 162.05, adopted December 4, 2018

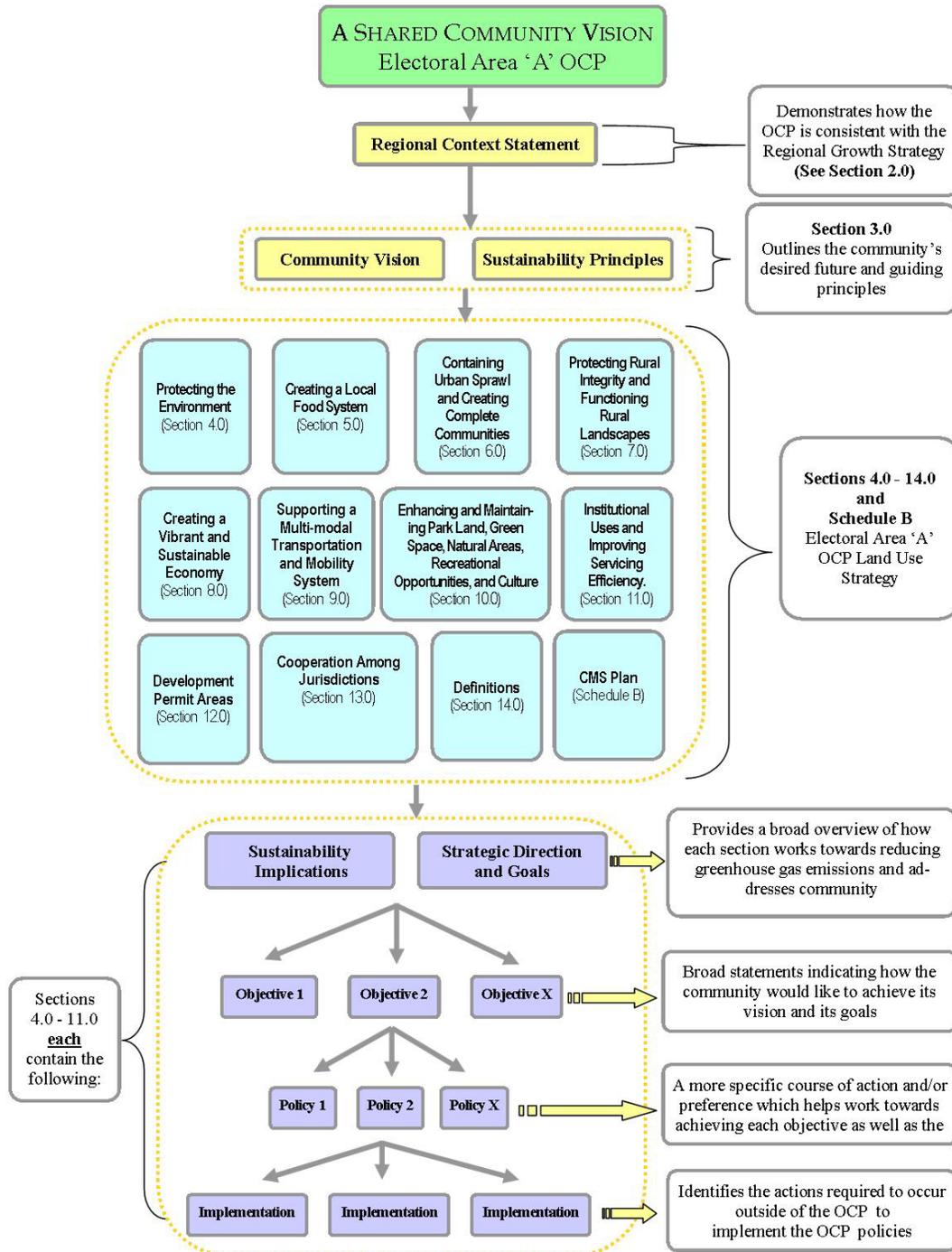
² Bylaw 162.05, adopted December 4, 2018

³ Bylaw 162.05, adopted December 4, 2018



The Cedar Main Street Village Plan forms part of this OCP. The location and boundary of the Cedar Main Street Village Plan is shown on Map No. 3 Land Use Designations and Growth Containment Boundaries.

Figure No. 2: OCP Structure



2.6 Regional Context Statement

In accordance with Section 865 of the [Local Government Act](#), this plan must be consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). Therefore, all policies in the Electoral Area 'A' OCP are consistent with or complementary to the goals and policies of the RGS. It is recognized that where policies contained in this plan recommend changes to the RGS, that the actions or uses identified by the policies shall not be supported unless the Regional Board supports an amendment to the RGS.

The OCP's response to the eleven RGS Goals is outlined below:

RGS Goal 1: Prepare for Climate Change and Reduce Energy Consumption

In accordance with Section 877(3) of the [Local Government Act](#), the Area 'A' OCP includes targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions as well as policies and actions for achieving the targets. This plan also supports the creation of compact, complete communities to reduce automobile dependence and encourage a range of housing types and sizes. In addition, this plan encourages green development and infrastructure, and efficient use of energy and resources.

RGS Goal 2: Protect the Environment

The Area 'A' OCP supports the use of policies and DPA's to provide protection to the plan Area's environmentally sensitive features identified in Section 4.0. The plan includes policies that apply at the time of rezoning, policies which encourage property owners to protect groundwater resources and the environment, and policies which are intended to communicate the community's preference to other levels of government and other agencies.

RGS Goal 3: Coordinate Land Use and Mobility

The Area 'A' OCP supports land use patterns and mobility networks within the Rural Villages and on lands within the Growth Containment Boundary (GCB) which reduce automobile dependency and provide for efficient movement of people and goods. This plan supports the creation of compact communities served by active transportation networks and a multi-modal system of transportation which includes the automobile, transit, rail, air, as well as human powered forms of transportation.

RGS Goal 4: Concentrate Housing and Jobs in Rural Village and Urban Growth Centres

The Area 'A' OCP supports a range of housing types and sizes, as well as areas for commercial and mixed use development within rural villages. In doing so, the plan provides opportunities for people to live closer to their place of employment and the services which they require on a daily basis; thereby reducing auto dependency and creating vibrant rural communities.

RGS Goal 5: Enhance Rural Integrity

The Area 'A' OCP seeks to enhance rural integrity by supporting agricultural, forestry and environmental goods and services, resource uses, as well as providing opportunities for more efficient use of land by supporting alternative approaches to subdivision and development such as conservation design, clustering, and density transfer.



RGS Goal 6: Facilitate the Provision of Affordable Housing

The Area 'A' OCP supports the provision of affordable housing through policies which provide for the creation of a range of parcel sizes and housing types. In addition, the plan supports the provision of affordable housing as a community amenity.

RGS Goal 7: Enhance Economic Resiliency

The Area 'A' OCP supports opportunities for strategic economic development in each of the three core communities in the plan area including Cedar, South Wellington, and Cassidy. The plan supports a new designation titled '*Cedar Main Street*' in Cedar along the historic Cedar Road to encourage strategically placed commercial, residential, and mixed use development to provide local employment, a wider range of housing options, and a variety of additional local services. In South Wellington, the plan supports a transition from low intensity heavy industrial uses towards high intensity low impact light industrial uses which provide more opportunities for local employment and improve its aesthetic appeal. In Cassidy, the plan supports an expansion to the GCB to make Cassidy a more complete community with a broader range of housing types and sizes, local employment, and local services. Cassidy provides a unique opportunity for low impact industrial/commercial development strategically located on a transportation hub with access to rail, highway, and air.

RGS Goal 8: Enhance Food Security

The Area 'A' OCP vision states "*In 2033....Electoral Area 'A' has become a leader in local food production*". The plan supports this by including policies and implementation actions which are intended to encourage agriculture and make it more viable. In addition, the plan supports the preservation of the plan area's agricultural land base for agricultural use and supports uses which are compatible with agriculture and contribute towards making it more viable.

RGS Goal 9: Celebrate Pride of Place

The Area 'A' OCP contains policies and implementation actions which recognize and support preservation and enhancement of the plan area's unique beauty, culture, history, and arts.

RGS Goal 10: Provide Services Efficiently.

The Area 'A' OCP supports efficient cost-effective community services by encouraging growth into well-defined compact areas at densities that support the efficient use of land and are capable of funding the long-term maintenance and operating costs of these services. The plan also supports the use of a triple bottom line approach in selecting appropriate servicing options. The plan supports the provision of community water and sewer to areas within the GCB for the purpose of facilitating the additional development supported by this plan. The plan also recognizes that these services may be required outside of the GCB to address health or environmental concerns, but not to facilitate additional development beyond that which is supported without community water or sewer servicing.

RGS Goal 11: Enhance Cooperation Among Jurisdictions

The Area 'A' OCP supports ongoing communication and cooperation among jurisdictions. Specifically Section 13.0 establishes a framework designed to facilitate the resolution of issues with interjurisdictional ramifications, as well as other issues which have not yet been identified, through cooperation and consultation.



2.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Targets

In 2008 the Province adopted [Bill 27, the Local Government \(Green Communities\) Statutes Amendment Act](#) which requires local governments to include policies, targets, and actions for GHG emissions reductions in their OCP's.

It is estimated that local governments have direct or indirect control over 44% of GHG emissions

-Federation of Canadian Municipalities

In 2007, the Province adopted Bill 44 (2007), the [British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Reductions Targets Act](#), which establishes a province wide greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 33% reduction from 2007 levels by 2020, and 80% reduction from 2007 levels by 2050. This target reflects consensus from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the leading global authority on climate science, that emission reductions of this magnitude are necessary to prevent average global temperature increase from exceeding 2° C above pre-industrial values. This is widely considered to be the threshold beyond which the effects of climate change would become severe.

The RDN is one of over 176 local governments in BC to partner with the Province and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities to find ways to tackle the challenges posed by climate change and as a result has a directive to significantly reduce GHG emissions. By signing it the RDN has agreed to develop strategies and take actions to achieve the following goals:

- i. being carbon neutral in respect of its operations by 2012, recognizing that solid waste facilities regulated under [the Environmental Management Act](#) are not included in operations for the purposes of this Charter;
- ii. measuring and reporting on their community's GHG emissions profile; and,
- iii. creating complete, compact, more energy efficient rural and urban communities (e.g. foster a built environment that supports a reduction in car dependency and, energy use, establishes policies and processes that support fast tracking of green development projects, adopts zoning practices that encourage land use patterns that increase density and reduce sprawl).

To provide perspective on the magnitude of this challenge, total emissions in the RDN in 2007 were estimated to be 690,000 tonnes of CO² equivalent. With a population of approximately 140,000 people, this amounts to about five tonnes CO² equivalent per person. Achieving a community wide reduction of 33% below that level by 2020, when the population in the region is forecasted to approach 190,000 people, translates to halving emissions to 2.5 tonnes CO² equivalent per person in ten short years.

Similarly, achieving an 80% reduction in community emissions in 2050 equates to about 0.5 tonnes CO² equivalent per person, or 90% below 2007 per capita levels when emissions are measured against predicted population growth.

This plan is consistent with the requirements of Bill 27 and the RDN's commitments under the [Climate Action Charter](#). The plan contains targets, policies and actions for reducing GHG emissions in the plan area.

At this time, reliable and accurate data for assigning specific tonnage of GHG emissions reduced achieved by a particular action is not available. Therefore, in the context of this plan,



targets are specific actions and/or direction which if followed will generally result in a reduction in GHG emissions. Specific GHG emission reduction targets are found throughout this document and this section provides an overview of how this plan assists the community in achieving its overall GHG emissions reduction target.

The RDN is in the process of developing a region-wide Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) which is intended to establish a baseline level of current GHG emissions in the Region as well as targets, policies and actions that could be considered to reduce GHG emissions. It is noted that this section of the OCP may be amended following the completion of the CEEP.

The following outlines the overall target and general policy direction. Specific actions are identified in the plan as implementation items to be considered by the Regional Board.

Electoral Area ‘A’ Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction Strategy

Section 2.7	Targets/Policy	Significance/Contribution
Overall GHG Emissions Reduction Target	Reduce GHG emissions by 30% below 2007 levels by 2020 and 80% below 2007 levels by 2050.	Consistent with the Provincial target and meets the RDN’s obligations as a signatory to the Climate Action Charter.
General Policy Direction	Create compact complete communities within well-defined Growth Containment Boundaries	Together with policies to reduce sprawl, encouraging development in existing urban or rural villages can reduce the largest source of emissions in the RDN. On road transportation had comprised more than 60% of annual emissions in the RDN in 2007. When dwellings are located close to shopping, work and leisure activities residents are less reliant on driving. Higher population densities within existing communities can also support both improved public and commercial services within walking distance of residential uses.
General Policy Direction	Encourage the use of energy efficient buildings and homes	The second largest source of personal GHG emissions in the region is energy consumption in buildings. Smaller homes and multi-unit buildings consistent with compact community policies reduce energy consumption associated with space heating, while other building features and appliances make more efficient use of the energy consumed for other household activities including lighting and hot water use.
General Policy Direction	Promote Active Transportation	Active transportation is any human-powered mode including cycling, walking, and horseback riding. Reducing the dependence on the automobile not only increases physical fitness and community health, but also improves air quality and reduces GHG emissions by reducing the vehicle miles traveled in personal



Section 2.7	Targets/Policy	Significance/Contribution
General Policy Direction	Increase sustainable local food production and reduce fossil fuel dependence	<p>automobiles.</p> <p>Nearly every step of the current industrial food production system is dependent on fossil fuels. For example natural gas is the main ingredient used in nitrogen fertilizer and petroleum is the foundation of industrial pesticides. Both are essential in obtaining the crop yields currently expected in commercial agriculture. In addition, equipment used to sow, manage, harvest, process, and transport crops is also in many cases heavily dependent on fossil fuels. The cost of food is expected to rise as the input costs of producing and transporting agricultural products increases.</p> <p>Although there is some debate over exactly how much energy is required to produce and transport food, the fossil fuel energy required to transport food from the farm to the plate can be more than the food energy obtained by eating the food. This is a trend that needs to be reversed in response to peak oil and climate change.</p> <p>Producing food locally in a way such as permaculture design can minimize dependence on fossil fuels and utilize natural organic methods that lead to a reduction in the amount of GHG emissions associated with agricultural operations.</p>
General Policy Direction	Support sustainable forestry initiatives	<p>Plants, and in fact all living organisms capture and store carbon from the atmosphere. A growing forest is a carbon sink capable of absorbing emissions from other sources including buildings and transportation. But these areas are threatened by land use change and deforestation.</p> <p>Regulating forestry or tree cutting is outside of the RDN's jurisdiction, but the RDN may encourage sustainable forestry practices and act to discourage land use change.</p> <p>Directing development into existing communities before permitting new development on green field sites will protect the forest resource land base, a necessity for a healthy local forestry sector that invests in sustainable practices and initiatives.</p>



Section 2.7	Targets/Policy	Significance/Contribution
General Policy Direction	Support community education on GHG emissions reduction	Community education can result in significant opportunities for GHG reduction by helping residents make better decisions. Through increased knowledge, area residents will gain a better understanding of how their actions and decisions affect GHG emissions and what they can do to make a difference.

