SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Regional Growth Framework

Thursday, June 1, 2023
TO BE HELD
IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE SUNSHINE COAST
REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICES AT 1975 FIELD ROAD, SECHELT, B.C.
AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER 1:30 p.m.

AGENDA

1.	Adoption of Agenda	Page 1

REPORTS

2.	Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) Regional Growth Framework Baseline Research Reports *General Manager, Planning and Development* **Regional Planning (Voting – All)**	Annex A pp. 2 - 117

COMMUNICATIONS

NEW BUSINESS

IN CAMERA

ADJOURNMENT

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT STAFF REPORT

TO: Special Committee of the Whole – June 1, 2023

AUTHOR: Ian Hall, General Manager, Planning & Development

SUBJECT: **SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT (SCRD) REGIONAL GROWTH FRAMEWORK BASELINE RESEARCH REPORTS**

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) THAT the report titled Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) Regional Growth Framework Baseline Research Reports be received for information;

(2) AND THAT direction on next steps be provided, based on the recommendations presented or on other options.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to direction of the Board and the SCRD Strategic Plan staff undertook a regional growth framework baseline research project, with the following goals:

1. Develop a shared understanding among regional local governments of historical growth patterns and anticipated future growth needs;

2. Understand sustainable thresholds for servicing capacity;

3. Foster dialogue about opportunities for future growth that aligns with shared goals, objectives and values.

The project was led by MODUS consultants and began in mid-2021. A project team of staff from participating local governments including SCRD, District of Sechelt, Town of Gibsons and shíshálh Nation Government District was established to support the project. Skwxwú7mesh Nation was invited to participate but did not/was not able to.

MODUS has now completed this project with analysis and findings delivered in four reports.

An overview presentation of the work was presented by MODUS to Sunshine Coast elected officials on May 18, 2023.

Additional background information is posted on Let's Talk SCRD: letstalk.scrd.ca/growth.

DISCUSSION

Overview

The SCRD Regional Growth Framework Baseline Research project includes three phases:

1. Data Review and Forecasting (Attachment A)
2. Policy Review (Attachment B)
3. Strategy Recommendations (Attachment C)

The reports consolidate a range of current and future (forecast) data and information across all participating local governments, including demographic, environmental, land use, transportation and infrastructure data, and current policies and strategies. Maps that synthesize current/point-in-time data into spatial constraints and opportunities are part of Attachment C.

Analysis

The eleven recommendations put forward by MODUS can guide policy development. They are informed by data analysis, a review of key strategies and policy plans and planning best practices.

Some recommendations can be undertaken by individual governments (e.g. explore marine use policies), others require agreement between multiple governments (e.g. growth allocation). Many would benefit from a cooperative or coordinated approach.

Work on some of the recommendations has already/recently been directed by the Board/Councils or is included in the scope of approved projects (e.g. updates to OCPs and master plans, SCRD Development Approvals Process Review). Many of the principles and values described in the report have been referenced and affirmed through recent intergovernmental dialogue by elected officials about water supply.

Options / Organizational & Intergovernmental Implications

Implications Associated with Growth & Growth Management

Regional growth and how that growth is managed has impacts on nearly all local government services and services provided by other governments and agencies. Examples of growth-related implications include:

- Water demand is dramatically impacted by the form of development (e.g. multi-family dwellings use far less water than single family dwellings);
- Fire protection areas and the nature of fire protection services demanded including the types of apparatus required and number of responding personnel are influenced by development footprint, population, building heights, etc.;
- How we grow drives demand for parks, greenspaces, recreation facilities and transit services and impacts the character of those services;
- Growth management impacts needs for housing, schools, roads/road maintenance, healthcare services and policing (not SCRD services; in some cases not local government services);
- Development patterns have impacts on greenhouse gas emission generation/carbon sequestration and impacts on natural assets/ecosystem services;
- Growth management can be an opportunity to advance reconciliation with First Nations.

Referral processes and collaboration on specific projects are used to guide the social, physical and environmental development of the region. Examples include development referrals, Water Summit, Climate Action Plan development and the collaborative, intergovernmental approach to this Regional Growth Baseline Framework project.

Further history and analysis of regional growth management is included in a staff report to the June 21, 2018 Infrastructure Services Committee and can be found on letstalk.scrd.ca/growth.

Implications of the Regional Growth Framework Baseline Reports

The reports from MODUS present recommendations that have extensive implications for SCRD service development and delivery and for intergovernmental coordination and relationships.

The recommendations include "continued collaboration between Electoral Areas and Incorporated Municipalities in ensuring regional alignment…".

The Board requested the information in the MODUS reports to inform next steps. **Staff are seeking direction on next steps.**

Options & Analysis

Key Question	Recommendations
Would the Board like feedback from other local governments, First Nations and SCRD-established advisory bodies?	1. Refer this report to other local governments and First Nations, and to Advisory Planning Commissions and the Roberts Creek OCPC, inviting feedback. 2. Refer this report to SD46, VCH, and MOTI, inviting feedback.
Would the Board like to inform and consult stakeholders and partners (such as Community Associations) and the community, and/or to gather information?	3. Continue development of a Let's Talk SCRD page to gather comments and ideas from the community.
Would the Board like to use this report as an input for upcoming strategic planning?	4. Refer this report to the SCRD Strategic Planning process.
Would the Board like to set direction for SCRD that regional growth management be a focus for the official community plan renewal project? And advocate for a similar focus to other Sunshine Coast local governments as they embark on OCP renewal?	5. Direct staff to use the Regional Growth Baseline Framework as a key input for the PEP2 (official community plan renewal) project. 6. Encourage other local governments to use the Regional Growth Baseline Framework as a key input for any upcoming official community plan updates or renewals.
Would the Board like a set of options for next steps / implementation to consider, beyond integration with strategic plan and officials community plans?	7. Direct staff to prepare in Q3/Q4 2023, following receipt of referral comments and Let's Talk input.

The recommendations above are not the only options.

Staff are prepared to support direction received from the Board. Some (limited) capacity will become available from the [500] Regional Planning service in Q3 2023. Further assessment/feedback of resourcing can be provided in response to proposals/direction received.

Financial Implications

Implications are dependent on direction received.

Significant changes to how regional growth is coordinated (for example, initiating a new growth management structure, undertaking further studies or initiating a Regional Growth Strategy) would constitute an increase to service level. Further analysis and a resourcing plan would need to be prepared and decisions taken.

Costs for proactive management should be considered against costs for response to growth issues, missed opportunities, etc. Unmanaged or mismanaged growth will continue to place / will place growing pressure on local government/SCRD service levels and demands on other levels of government. The threshold for affordable service delivery could be exceeded.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The **Working Together** priority in the Strategic Plan includes strategy *3.2 Develop Growth Management Plan*, with the tactic to "pursue [a] regional planning framework for local governments and First Nations to address regional growth with consideration to economic, social and environmental values and impacts (Phase 1)".

CONCLUSION

The SCRD Regional Growth Framework Baseline Research project has been completed with the presentation of the final project reports. This area of work is a Strategic Priority for the organization. Direction on next steps is requested.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – SCRD Regional Growth Framework Baseline Research Phase 1 Report – Data Review and Forecasting

Attachment B – SCRD Regional Growth Framework Baseline Research Phase 2 Report – Policy Review

Attachment C – SCRD Regional Growth Framework Baseline Research Phase 3 Report – Strategy Recommendations

Reviewed by:			
Manager	X – J. Jackson	CFO	X - T. Perreault
GM	X – I. Hall X – M. Brown X – S. Gagnon	Legislative	
CAO	X – D. McKinley	Other	X – Y. Siao

Sunshine Coast Regional District

Regional Growth Framework

Phase 1 Report
Present & Future Data

January 7, 2022

prepared by

Licker Geospatial Consulting

MODUS

The Sunshine Coast Regional District is located within the traditional and unceded territories of the shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh nations, whose people have inhabited these lands for time immemorial.

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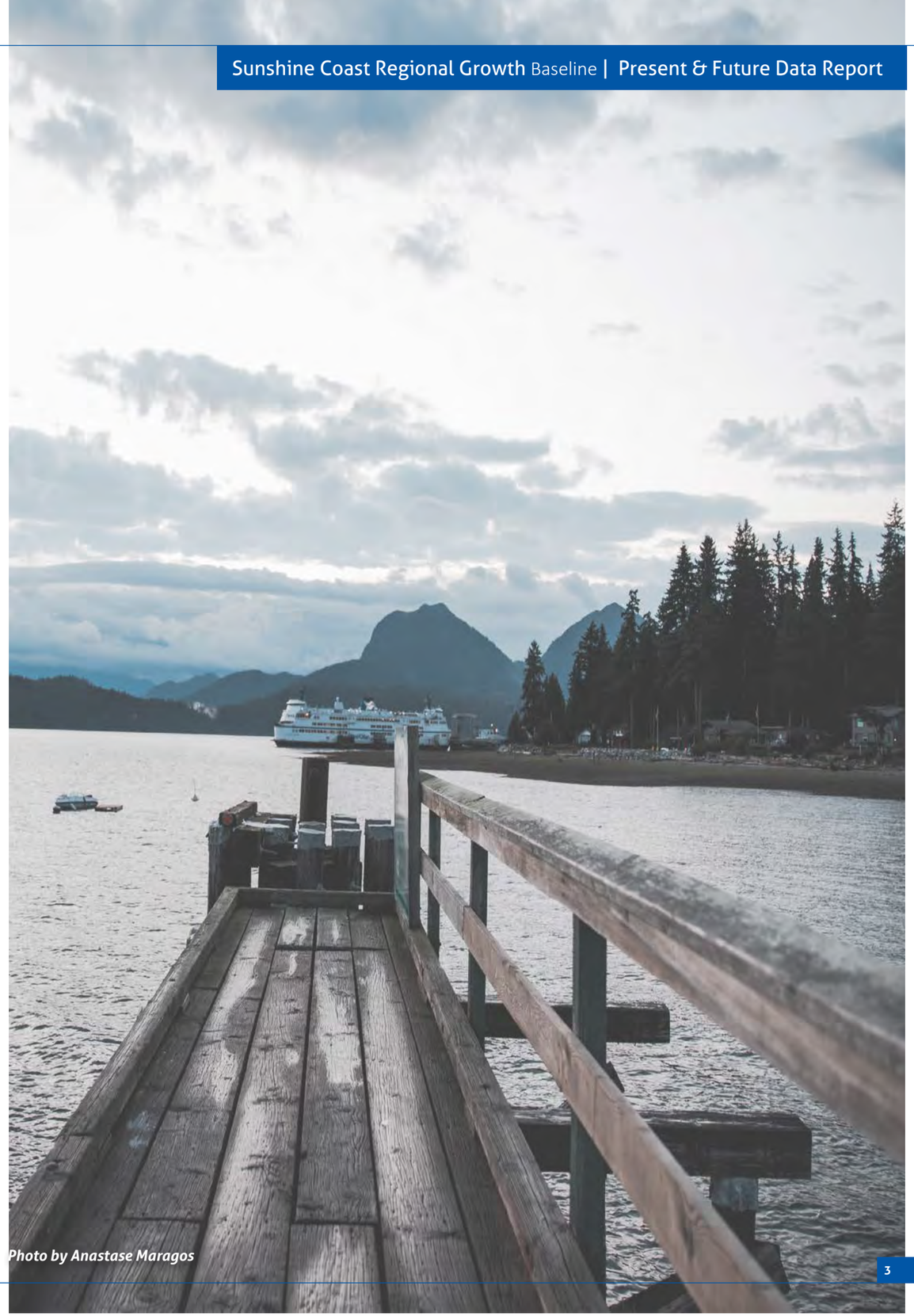


Photo by Anastase Maragos

INTRODUCTION

1 | Context

The Sunshine Coast is a picturesque region defined by its mountainous, coastal landscapes and attractive towns and villages that dot the shores of the Salish Sea. These lands have been home to the shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh First Nations for time immemorial and the stunning natural setting has been sought after by many other peoples for generations. Residents and tourists alike have much to enjoy and celebrate in this location.

Nonetheless, water supply, infrastructure, natural asset management, affordability, the climate crisis, equity, and other issues are all top of mind as residents, elected officials, and local governments within the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) contemplate how to accommodate growth.

Consisting of three member municipalities (Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, and shishalh nation Government District) and five rural electoral areas (Egmont/Pender Harbour, Halfmoon Bay, Roberts Creek, Elphinstone, and West Howe Sound), the region is facing serious challenges in providing affordable and accessible housing and managing the pressures of growth.

At the same time, the global COVID-19 pandemic has wrought tremendous uncertainty to the future of communities, both big and small, urban and rural. Anecdotally, the new found ability to work from home and away from major provincial employment centres like Vancouver and Victoria is placing immense pressure on smaller towns, villages, and rural communities of the Sunshine Coast. How can the regional district

In 2011, the Sunshine Coast Regional District adopted a new Sustainability Plan titled "We Envision". It is a call to action for an economy that supports a high quality of life, social and cultural development, and personal fulfillment, while recognizing nature is not infinite in its resources.

The document sets out a vision for regional land use which calls for "complete, compact, low environmental impact communities based on energy-efficient settlement patterns, in harmony with the natural environment in which they are set." Paired with the vision are two key actions:

1. Adopt a set of sustainable land-use principles to guide future development decisions.
2. Create a Land-Use Classification System and Map

The Present & Future Data report is an initial step in the development of a Regional Growth Framework which will respond directly to these key actions.

2 | Process

To develop the Regional Growth Framework - Baseline Reasearch, a three phase process is being followed.

In **Phase 1** we are collecting and assuring input data can be translated into a series of synthetic analyses which will be used to support regional growth planning. The Present & Future Data report represents the summary of the input data being used for this project.

In **Phase 2** we will facilitate staff interviews and review all relevant policy documents across local First Nation governments, the municipalities, and electoral areas. The results of the staff interviews and policy review will lead to a Policy Review Report in which we will identify key community values and policy direction that can shape the growth strategies in Phase 3.

In **Phase 3** we will map the constraints and opportunities to growth based on the findings in our prior work. The final report will serve as a strong, defensible, data-driven foundation for regional planning efforts.

3 | Goals & Outcomes

The creation of a Regional Growth Framework is an exciting opportunity to build off a strong collaborative spirit among the SCRD's local governments and First Nation communities.

By the end of this project the SCRD and its partners will have developed a baseline of information resources with which to convene informed and meaningful dialogue about regional planning opportunities. This information will be supported by a set of maps synthesizing the data inputs into constraints and opportunities, and a set of strategic recommendations for future planning efforts.

4| Report Purpose

The Present & Future Data report provides a summary of all data inputs being used to inform the following phases of the Regional Growth Framework - Baseline Reasearch project. It includes — for each data type — the data's source, purpose, and any limitations or assumptions that could impact the accuracy of the analysis.

The report has separated data into two categories:

Present Data - representing what we know about the Sunshine Coast today

Future Data - representing our best guess about the Sunshine Coast of tomorrow

PRESENT DATA

Data informing what we know about the Sunshine Coast today

5 | Demographic Data

5.1 Sources

Demographic data for the region is available through Statistics Canada census of population at the dissemination area level for 2016, as well as through Environics for 2016 and projected forward to 2021. The Environics data is derived from the census. The variables available for analysis are extensive and include gender(male/female), age cohorts, median income groupings, household composition, household sizes, educational attainment, employment by industry, journey to work, language and immigration. It should be noted that employment by industry and journey to work are not available through Environics, but are available through Statistics Canada.

Total population can be disaggregated to the parcel level for 2016 using the average household size by dwelling type tables and applied to the number of units and actual use codes on the parcels. This disaggregated data can be used for fine grained servicing, access or provision-type analyses.

Additionally, the 2016 census data are comparable to the 2006 data set allowing for trend based analyses on an as-needed basis.

5.2 Purpose

Demographic data provides an understanding of the socio-economic composition of the region and its member municipalities. This information provides the foundation for informed planning of housing, services, facilities and amenities. This data can be used to characterize regions or areas that diverge significantly from local or regional averages, prioritize locations based on models of demand or need and allow for forecasting of resident-based requirements based on existing trends. While census data are only a snapshot of the population in time, it is currently the authoritative data source to help decision-makers profile and comprehend their constituent populations.

5.3 Limitations and Assumptions

Demographic data from the census is moderately outdated, being last collected in 2015. A fresh sample collected in 2020 will be released sometime in 2021 (it should be important to note, however, that the 2020 dataset will present some anomalies with regards to workforce participation, housing tenure and journey to work due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic).

Furthermore, while the smallest resolution of census data (which is at the dissemination area-scale) is appropriate for a general understanding of the regional socio-economic composition, it may not provide enough detail for some planning efforts, and additional modeling or disaggregation work may be required to increase the precision of the information.

6 | Land Use Data

6.1 Sources

Land use data (both regulatory and current) were sourced directly from the SCRD and through District liaison with the District of Sechelt and Town of Gibsons. Available land use data are listed in Table 1 below. Additionally, current land use information is also available through BC Assessment's Building Information Report for all buildings across the district, which was sourced from BC Assessment and provides building stock data (such as building size, use and age) aggregated to the parcel level.

Servicing information including water, sewer, electrical and gas connections are available from the District and Town of Gibsons.

DATA	SOURCE - DATE
Parcel boundaries and building information •Actual use •Land value and building value •Number of units •Floor area •Building age	SCRD - 2021 BC Assessment - 2020
OCP Land Use •General allowable uses	SCRD - Various •Elphinstone - 2008, amended 2018 •Hillside / Port Mellon - 1995 •Twin Creeks - 2018 •West Howe Sound - 2011, amended 2018 •Pender Harbour / Egmont - 2018 •Roberts Creek - 2012, amended 2020 •Halfmoon Bay - 2014, amended 2018 District of Sechelt - 2011 Town of Gibsons - 2015
Zoning •Detailed allowable uses •Detailed capacity information	SCRD - 1987 (consolidated 2020, 2021) District of Sechelt - 1987 (consolidated 2021) Town of Gibsons - 2007 (consolidated 2020)
Classified Parks Civic and Recreation Facilities (ToG)	SCRD Town of Gibsons

DATA	SOURCE - DATE
Development Permit Areas (DPAs) •Gravel Pit •Watercourse - Habitat and Hazard •Marine Foreshore Shoreline •Rocky Beach Front Escarpments Slope Hazards •Rockfall Hazards •Steep Slopes •Adverse Fill Areas •Local Plan Areas (ToG) •Geotechnical Hazards (ToG) •Aquifer (ToG) •Possible Contaminated Sites (ToG)	SCRD - Various (see OCP list above) District of Sechelt - 2011 Town of Gibsons - 2015
Servicing - Sewer and Water •Water mains and connections •Sewer mains and connections •Electrical (overhead and underground powerlines) •Gas (distribution and transmission pipes)	SCRD
Building / Development Permits	Unavailable
Agriculture data / ALR	Agricultural Land Commission, through DataBC - 2021

Land Use Data

6.2 Purpose

These data can be used to identify areas that could be prioritized for additional growth given favorable development circumstances or to identify where capacity exists under current policy. They can be used to delineate areas which are not suitable for growth and where constraints to growth may exist. They can additionally be used to characterize current utilization of lands in the district to comprehend the impact and/or outcomes of various land use policies implemented to-date. In conjunction with census data these information can be used to determine occupancy by dwelling type which can be used as a critical input in growth forecasting. Should the need arise relevant land use information can be stitched together into a unified general land use layer that can be used for district-wide policy analysis and growth forecasting.

6.3 Limitations and Assumptions

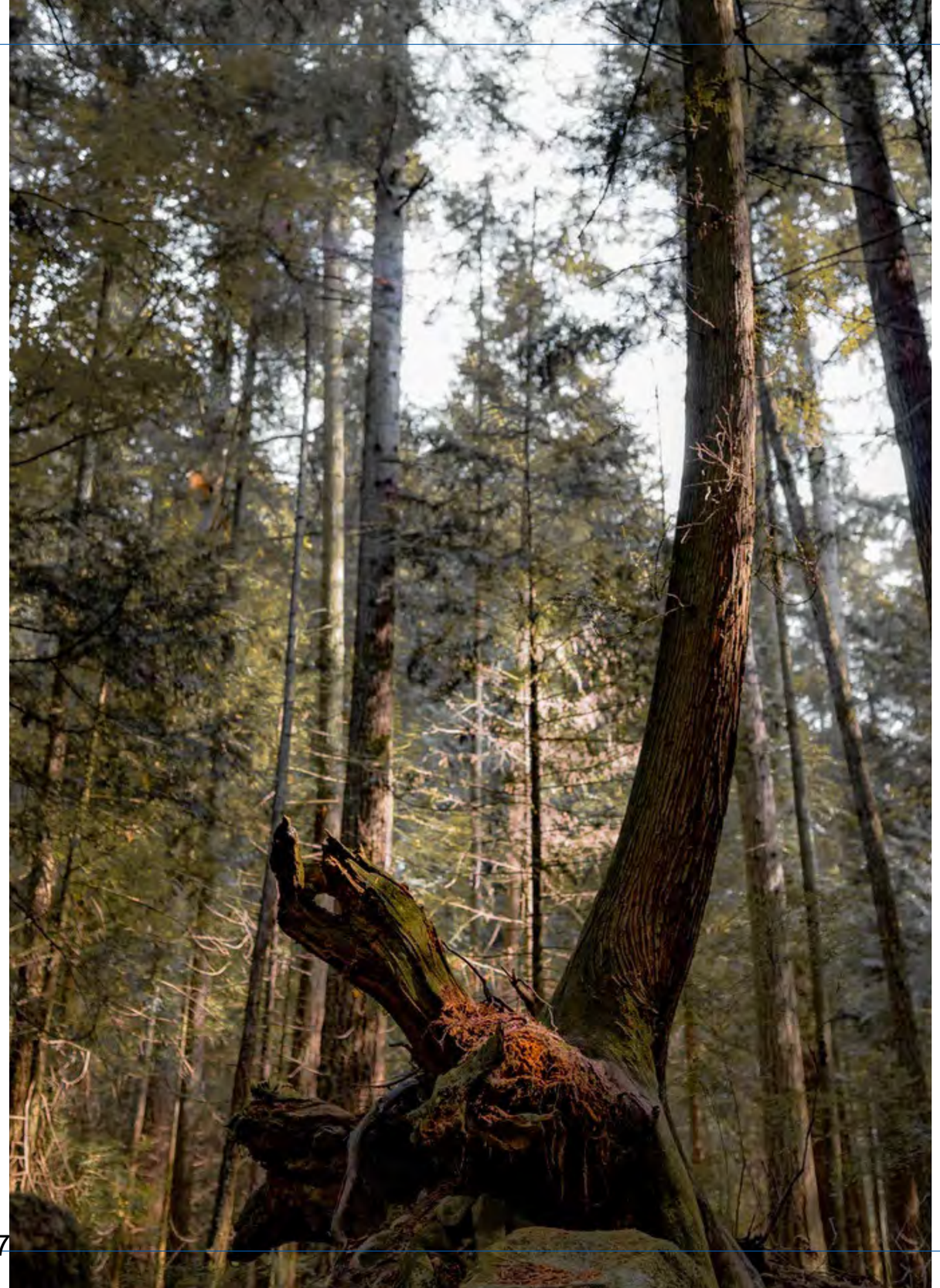
The District does not currently have classified current land cover in accordance with well adopted general land use classifications; however, these could be derived at a reasonable resolution using freely available Landsat imagery.

Assessment data has been typically developed for alternate purposes than growth management. As such, there are many known limitations in the information such as:

- Many institutional buildings do not have associated building records, or records are incomplete
- Basements in single family homes are not accounted for in building areas
- Secondary suites are poorly accounted for in assessment data
- Tenure is not directly accounted for in assessment data though purpose-built rentals can be inferred through alternate means (i.e. purpose-built rentals can be inferred from multi-family buildings through the actual use code that have more than one unit).
- Year built information may not reflect information in development or building permits.
- Assessment data may not effectively map to the districts parcels

Zoning and land use both provide guidance on use. A capacity analysis can be conducted using either zoning or land use; however, there is often significant misalignment between the two as they are each regulated separately. Zoning indicates current property entitlements while land use indicates prefered future uses, often subject to rezoning applications which may or may not be approved by the local government. As such, a capacity analysis executed using zoning information will present significantly different results than those completed using regulated land use and caution should be exercised when reviewing results.

Data has undergone a cursory review for correctness and completeness at a high level. It is not within the scope of this project to undergo a detailed review for quality assurance; however, data will be constantly assessed as analysis progresses.



7 | Environmental Data

7.1 Sources

Environmental data has been received from the SCRD and includes regional coastline delineation, watercourses, lakes, and sensitive eelgrass habitat areas. Additional datasets available that are not sourced directly from the District may also help inform growth modeling, especially with regards to constraints to growth and development. These datasets may include information sourced from the Provincial Government's Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development (FLNRO) as well as from generally available imagery and could include products such as forest canopy extent in 2020, forest canopy net growth over the last 20 years, areas of steep slope, and sensitive ecosystems.

DATA	SOURCE - DATE
Conservation •Environmentally Sensitive Areas •SEI •SCRD Water Conservation •Natural Wildlands Land Use •Terrestrial Protected Areas	SCRD (Area A) - September 2017 Prov. BC - March 2010 SCRD - August 2021 Prov. BC - July 2017 Prov. BC - April 2021
Administrative •Parks •Regional coastline delineation. •Beach access locations •Trails network •Groundwater wells	SCRD - updated 2021 SCRD - updated 2021 SCRD - updated 2021 SCRD - March 2021 2021-09-24
Natural Areas •Eelgrass habitat •Wetlands •Watercourses •Lakes •Forest cover, loss, and growth	SCRD - March 2021 SCRD - March 2021 FWA SCRD - March 2021 USGS (Landsat 8) - 2000 - 2020
Hazards •Provincial Strategic Threat Analysis •Fire Threat Rating	BC Wildlife Service - 2020 data

7.2 Purpose

Environmental data provides insight into areas that are identified to have biophysical and cultural importance. Once amalgamated and evaluated, environmental datasets can inform regional growth management policy so that the integrity of sensitive areas are sustained. Furthermore, environmental data can be used to assess ecosystems goods and services which can be interpreted as based on their amenity value to residents, their ability to sequester atmospheric carbon, their ability to mitigate the harms of climate change through adaptation, their promotion of biodiversity and potentially agricultural productivity. Finally, environmental data can be used to inform risks to the community and can be used to update development permit area information on an as-needed basis.

7.3 Limitations and Assumptions

Datasets may not properly capture areas of biophysical and cultural importance, as the datasets may be or become out of date, inadequately measure dynamic natural phenomena, or fail to incorporate impacts of climate change and anthropogenic impacts over time. Additional limitations may include questions of scale and accuracy (i.e. some data are 1:1m whereas others are collected at a more finite resolution)

Photo by Anastase Maragos

8 | Transportation Data

8.1 Sources

Transportation data for the region includes: roads, traffic counts for the highways, and congestion data available through TomTom.

DATA	SOURCE - DATE
Roads	SCRD - 2021 (Also available through the province)
Traffic volume counts •Annual Traffic Volumes 2004-2010 •Monthly Traffic Volumes (Jan 2011-June 2011)	Province of BC - 2004-2010; 2011 (highways only)
Average weekday (4:00-6:30pm) travel times and average speeds for major roads	TomTom Traffic Stats Area Analysis - 2021
Transit stops and routes	Google Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) - real-time; 2021

8.2 Purpose

Transportation data is useful in understanding mobility in the region - driving access, pedestrian access and transit access. These data can be used for access analysis as well as for growth opportunities (e.g. where infrastructure currently exists vs where investment will be required). The GTFS data can provide an understanding of frequency of service and level of service. Traffic volumes and travel times can provide an understanding of congestion, which allows a useful element in planning as a key area of concern for commuters.

8.3 Limitations and Assumptions

Data coverage for traffic counts is limited to highways and is also fairly outdated. The TomTom data can be used in lieu, particularly for the major roads, where available. There is little information on usage for local roads. There is no information available on road quality. There is also no data for sidewalks, which results in an incomplete understanding of the pedestrian network in the region.

FUTURE DATA

Data informing our best guess about the Sunshine Coast tomorrow

9| Demographic Data

9.1 Sources

Future demographic data for trends in total households, total population, average household income are available through to 2049. The demographic data including all variables (gender, age cohorts, median income groupings, housing type, household composition, household sizes, educational attainment, language and immigration) available for 2016 through Environics are projected forward and are available for the following years: 2021, 2024, 2026, 2031.

The Sunshine Coast Housing Needs report produced in September of 2020 provides some high level population projections to 2025. As a supplement to the Environics data discussed above, population projection estimates can also be acquired from Stats Canada out to 2068 for the entire province and could be used proportionally to provide a population projection beyond 2025.

9.2 Purpose

While understanding the opportunities and constraints to growth are important, it is equally as important to understand the magnitude of anticipated growth to properly identify these opportunities and constraints. Similarly to the purpose and importance outlined under Present Data above, demographic forecasts provide insight on the potential socio-economic composition of a future community, providing a starting point for good planning.

9.3 Limitations and Assumptions

It is important to recognize that demographic forecasts are broad estimates and approximations, at best. Additionally, while forecast values may seem precise (ie 45 people here), that precision should not be mistaken for accuracy. Forecasts typically consider historic averages and trends in their calculation. As a result, forecasted data may not incorporate unpredicted local and global events, such as impacts of climate change, COVID-19, or global externalities in their calculations.

Finally, forecasted data may not properly capture all determinants of socio-demographic distributions over time and space and therefore will have an increasing margin of error the further forward we extrapolate. In plain English, we must treat all forecasts with a considerable degree of caution.

10 | Regulatory Land Use Data

10.1 Sources

Current regulatory land use data, particularly general land use, which is the most likely data to be used in assessing opportunities for growth, were created with particular time horizons for which they are expected to be useful for planning. Per provincial regulation that horizon is ~20 years, which is corroborated in the OCP bylaws for both the Town of Gibsons and the District of Sechelt. The years of adoption for the member OCPs vary, with the oldest being adopted in 1995; however, this OCP is for an industrial area.

10.2 Purpose

OCP land use currently offers the best guidance for how the region can develop over time under current regulations.

10.3 Limitations and Assumptions

It is important to note that land use regulations can be significantly complicated by externalities such as development permit areas, zoning and overlapping Provincial legislation that can equally affect development over time.

The majority of the OCPs were produced or amended ~5 years ago, with the exception of the District of Sechelt, which is ten years old. This is a limitation as well as an assumption for assessing future growth opportunities.

11 | Housing Data

11.1 Sources

The regional Housing Needs report produced in September of 2020 is an up-to-date picture of the housing needs, including key information on population trends, housing stock, rental availability, rental cost, future demand, local economics in order to better understand what housing types are needed in the next 5 years and beyond.

It was developed in collaboration with the Town of Gibsons, the District of Sechelt, and the SCRD.

11.2 Purpose

The Housing Needs report provides projections for household types and population growth to estimate the demand for future housing types and identifies key issues and trends to inform future housing-related policies and initiatives. It uses the housing wheelhouse as an organizing tool depicting the different forms and tenures of housing available and in need throughout the region.

Understanding the type and tenure of housing that is needed in the future helps broadly determine the amount of land, infrastructure, and important adjacencies that would be suitable for such housing.

11.3 Limitations and Assumptions

Given the projections in the Housing Needs report are based on the demographic data in section 9 of this report, the same limitations and assumptions about the accuracy of forecasts apply to future housing needs.

CONCLUSION

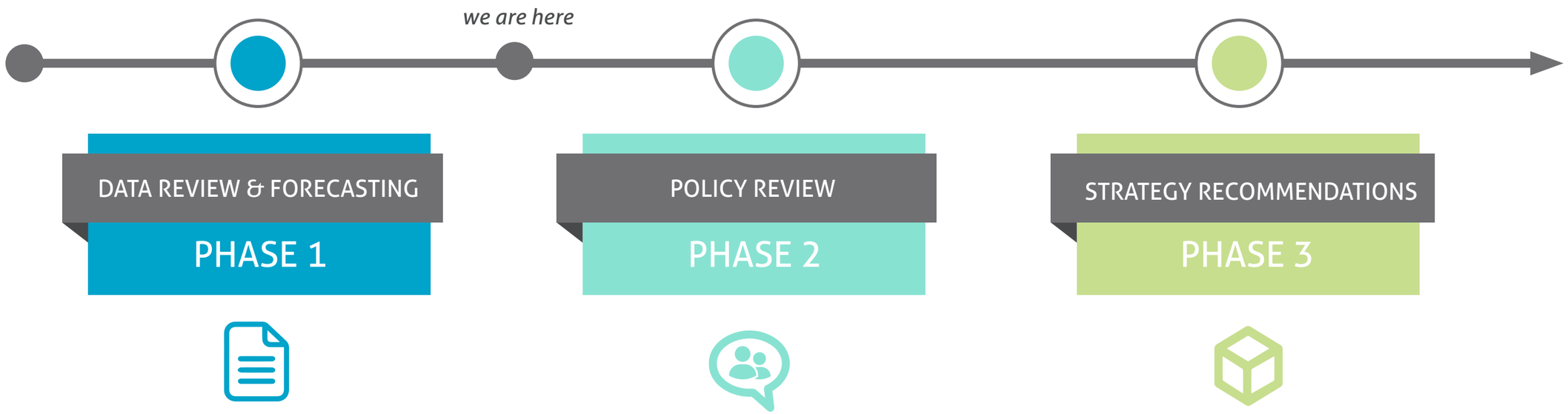
12 | Conclusion

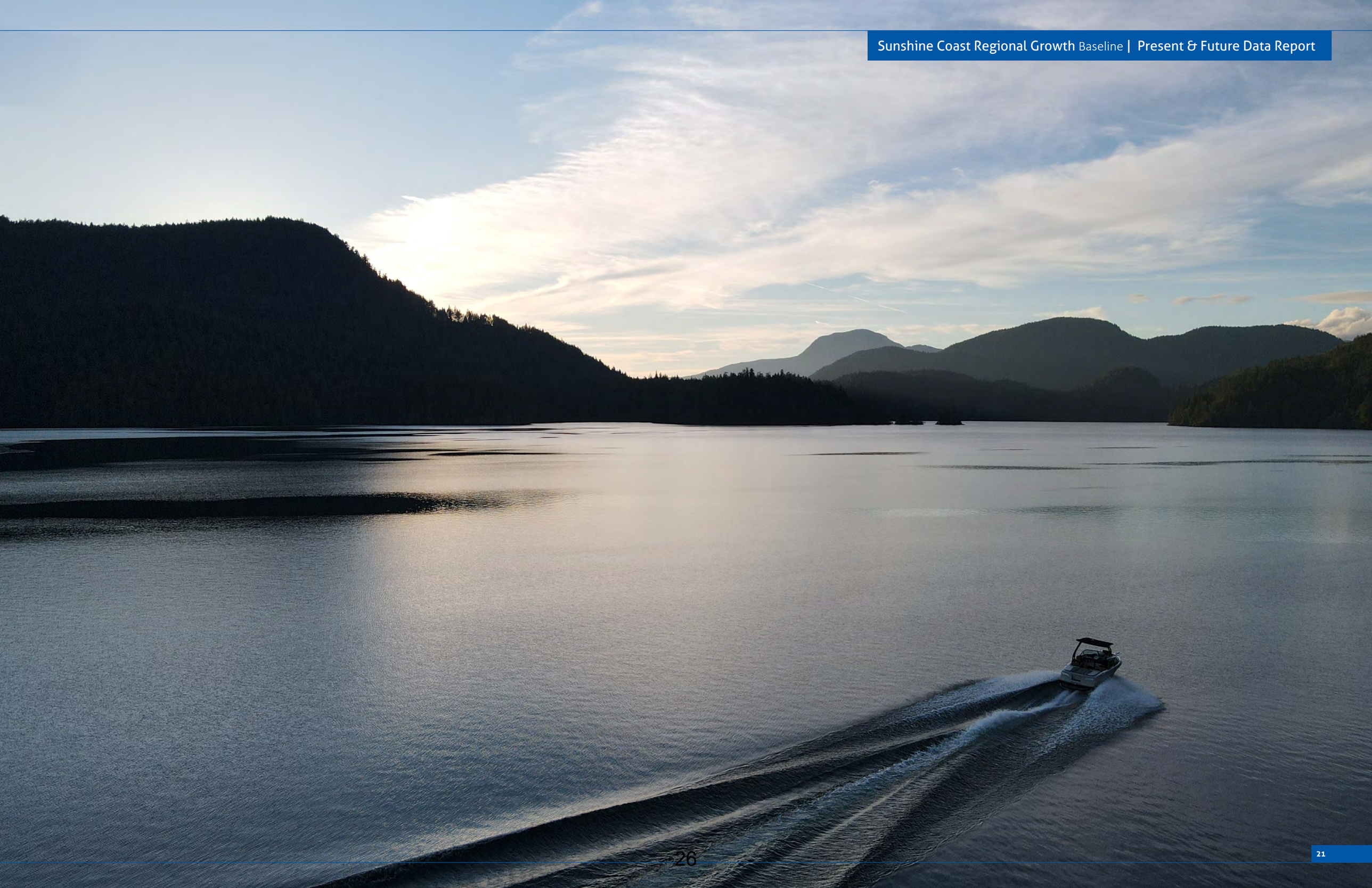
The comprehensive list of data noted in this report will provide a strong foundation for the analysis proposed as part of this projet. While some data may be missing (e.g. building permits, development applications, flood, and slope instability data), these are not anticipated to cause significant challenges in the the following phases. In reviewing policy documents and in working with the SCRD and its partners' staff members, gaps may be filled through anecdotal evidence and on-the-ground experience.

12.1 Next Steps

With the quantitative data inputs of the Sunshine Coast of today and tomorrow recorded, the project can move into its second phase where staff interviews and policy review will look at the more qualitative aspects of sustainability, growth, and resilience.

Together the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the baseline research will help form growth constraints and opportunities through a set of maps. These will, in turn, inform a set of recommendations for future regional planning efforts.





Sunshine Coast Regional District

Regional Growth Framework

Phase 2 Report
Policy Review

June 3, 2022

prepared by

STEEP ROCKY TERRAIN SPECIALISTS
WEBSTER ENGINEERING LTD

MODUS

The Sunshine Coast Regional District is located within the traditional and unceded territories of the shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh nations, whose people have inhabited these lands for time immemorial.

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Photo by Anastase Maragos

INTRODUCTION

1 | Context

The Sunshine Coast is a picturesque region defined by its mountainous, coastal landscapes and attractive towns and villages that dot the shores of the Salish Sea. These lands have been home to the shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh First Nations for time immemorial and the stunning natural setting has been sought after by many other peoples for generations. Residents and tourists alike have much to enjoy and celebrate in this location.

Nonetheless, water supply, infrastructure, natural asset management, housing affordability, the climate crisis, equity, and other issues are all top of mind as residents, elected officials, and local governments within the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) contemplate how to accommodate growth.

Consisting of three member municipalities (Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, and shishalh nation Government District) and five rural electoral areas (Egmont/Pender Harbour, Halfmoon Bay, Roberts Creek, Elphinstone, and West Howe Sound), the region is facing serious challenges in providing affordable and accessible housing and managing the pressures of growth.

At the same time, the global COVID-19 pandemic has wrought tremendous uncertainty to the future of communities, both big and small, urban and rural. Anecdotally, the new found ability to work from home and away from major provincial employment centres like Vancouver and Victoria is placing immense pressure on smaller towns, villages, and rural communities of the Sunshine Coast. How can the regional district

In 2011, the Sunshine Coast Regional District adopted a new Sustainability Plan titled "We Envision". It is a call to action for an economy that supports a high quality of life, social and cultural development, and personal fulfillment, while recognizing nature is not infinite in its resources.

The document sets out a vision for regional land use which calls for "complete, compact, low environmental impact communities based on energy-efficient settlement patterns, in harmony with the natural environment in which they are set." Paired with the vision are two key actions:

1. Adopt a set of sustainable land-use principles to guide future development decisions.
2. Create a Land-Use Classification System and Map

This Policy Review Report is an important step in the development of a Regional Growth Framework which will respond directly to these key actions.

KEY STATISTICS*

The Sunshine Coast Regional District ("SCRD") is a growing community with a land area of 3767.43km² and a popultation density of 8.5 people per square kilometer in 2021. In particular, the population of the SCRD has grown from 29,970 in 2016 to 32, 170 in 2021, representing a 7.3% population increase in population between 2016 and 2021.

The median age of the SCRD in 2021 is 56.0 years old. This indicates that at least half of the poplation in the SCRD is over 56.0 years old. This represents an increase from the SCRD's median age of 50.0 in 2021 and it is higher than the provincial median age of 42.8. If these trends continue, the SCRD can expect to see a growing and ageing population in the future. In 2021, there were 14,935 occupied private dwellings out of a total of 17,982 private dwellings and an average household size of 2.1. Average household sizes for Electoral Areas, Gibsons and Sechelt are expected to decrease between 2020 and 2025. A majority of households (79.8%) in the SCRD live in single-detached homes.

Projected population growth is not expected to be evenly distributed throughout the SCRD. Electoral areas are expected to experience moderate and steady population growth between 2020 and 2025. In particular, Electoral areas are projected to see an addtional 106 new people between 2020 and 2025 or an increase of 0.73%. All SCRD Electoral Areas are projected to see a 1.2% increase in the number of households between 2020 and 2025. Since projected household growth for the Electoral areas is expected to be relatively higher compared to projected population growth, new households in the Electoral areas may be smaller than in the past, which may be indicative of the SCRD's ageing population.

On the other hand, both Gibsons and Sechelt are projected to experience noticeable increases in their population between 2020 and 2025. Gibsons is projected to experience an increasing rate of growth in this time period while Sechelt is expected to see a more moderate increase in growth, as compared to previous years. Specifically, Gibsons is expected to see an additional 254 people (a 5.24% increase in population) between 2020 and 2025, while Sechelt is expected to see an addtional 340 people (a 3.2% increase in population) in the same time period. Gibsons is projected to see 197 new households between 2020 and 2025 (an 8.2% increase) and Sechelt is projected to see 223 new households in the same time period (a 4.3% increase). Similar to the Electoral Areas, both Gibsons and Sechelt, have projected household growth that is relatively higher than projected population growth, may be indicative of the SCRD's ageing population.

KEY STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

Land Area in km²
3767.43

Population Density per km2
8.5

Population in 2021
32, 170

% Population Change 2016-2021
7.3%

SCRD Median Age in 2021
56.0

BC Median Age in 2021
42.8

Occupied Private Dwelings
14,935

Average Household Size
2.1

**Projections on this page were sourced from the SCRD's 2020 Housing Needs Assessment, founded on data from the 2016 Census. Other key statistics were sourced from the 2021 Census.*

2 | Process

To develop the Regional Growth Framework - Baseline Reasearch, a three phase process is being followed.

In **Phase 1** we are collecting and assuring input data can be translated into a series of synthetic analyses which will be used to support regional growth planning. The Present & Future Data report represents the summary of the input data being used for this project.

In **Phase 2** we will facilitate staff interviews and review relevant policy documents across local First Nation governments, the municipalities, and electoral areas. The results of the staff interviews and policy review will lead to a Policy Review Report (this report) in which we will identify key community values and policy direction that can shape the growth strategies in Phase 3.

In **Phase 3** we will map the constraints and opportunities to growth based on the findings in our prior work. The final report will serve as a strong, defensible, data-driven foundation for regional planning efforts.

3 | Goals & Outcomes

The creation of a Regional Growth Framework is an exciting opportunity to build upon a strong collaborative spirit among the SCRD's local governments and First Nation communities.

By the end of this project the SCRD and its partners will have developed a baseline of information resources with which to convene informed and meaningful dialogue with local government staff about regional planning opportunities. This information will be supported by a set of maps synthesizing the data inputs into constraints and opportunities, and a set of strategic recommendations for future planning efforts.

4| Report Purpose

This report provides a summary of the key findings from a review of all relevant policy documents across all of SCRD's member jurisdictions (Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, shishalh nation Government District and the five rural electoral areas - Egmont/Pender Harbour, Halfmoon Bay, Roberts Creek, Elphinstone, and West Howe Sound), as well as the results of interviews with staff from the SCRD.

The results of this review are an identified set of community values and policy direction that will shape the growth strategies in Phase 3.

The report is organized into four sections:

Policy Review - representing what we learned from reviewing policy documents from the SCRD's member jurisdictions

Infrastructure Review - representing what we learned from reviewing infrastructure and servicing master plans and strategies from the SCRD's member jurisdictions

Staff Interviews - describing what we learned from SCRD staff on a range of growth-management-related topics

Principles - distilling what we learned from the policy review and staff interviews into a set of community values and policy directions

POLICY REVIEW

What we learned about SCRD member jurisdictions and their policies related to growth management

5 | Process

Vision and goal statements found in policy documents are articulations of each community's aspirations and intent as it relates to growth. Understanding where member jurisdictions' align, or not, is instructive for shaping the SCRD's policy direction for the Regional Growth Framework

Documents relating to growth management, such as Official Community Plans, housing strategies and other land-use related plans, from the following member jurisdictions have been reviewed and are summarized in the subsequent sections.

- **Town of Gibsons**
- **District of Sechelt**
- **shíshálh Nation and** shishalh Nation **Government District**
- **Electoral Areas (Egmon/Pender Harbour, Elphinstone, Roberts Creek, Halfmoon Bay, West Howe Sound)**

6 | Town of Gibsons

Key findings from the document review demonstrate that the Town of Gibsons values protecting its natural environment, and supports growth patterns that align with Smart Growth principles, ie. compact and complete communities. Policies direct growth to be focused "within existing municipal boundaries", more specifically within certain areas, such as the Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Area, Harbour Plan Area, and Gospel Rock Neighbourhood Area. Growth in the Town is not to exceed the capacity of its aquifer and other natural assets the Town relies upon for ecosystem services.

Higher-density uses in Gibsons are focused near the Harbour and along Gibsons Way. Policies in the Official Community Plan indicate that development applications in the Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Plan Area and Harbour Area Plan will be prioritized for short to medium term development, and the Gospel Rock Neighbourhood Area contemplated to accommodate medium and long term development.

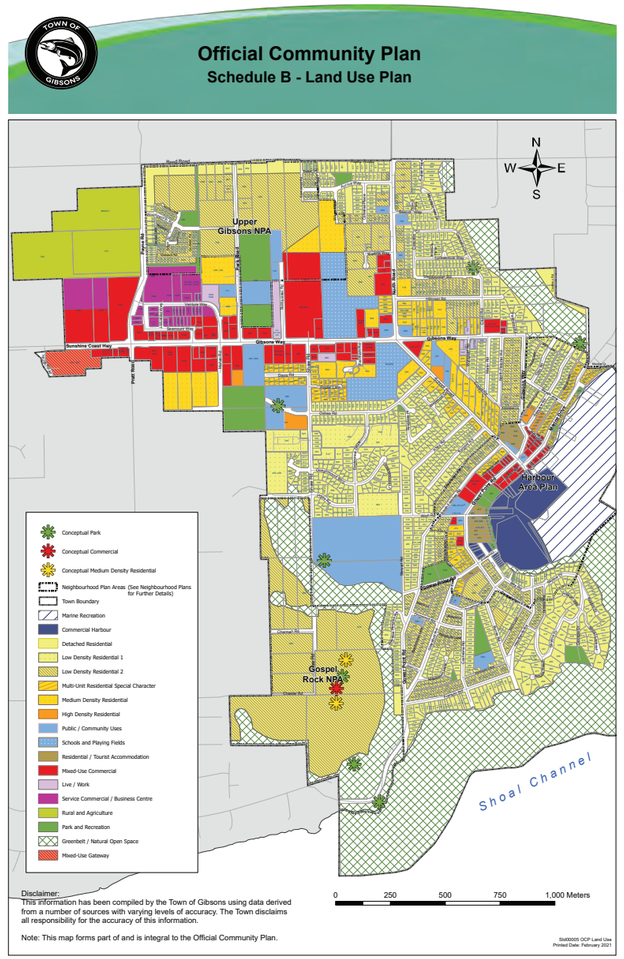
Excerpts from the Official Community Plan (2015)

Goals (abridged)

- Preserve natural assets, natural beauty and environmentally sensitive areas
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to impacts of climate change
- Preserve and protect environmental integrity and natural beauty of foreshore and harbour and pristine quality of waters
- Preserve small town character and livability while allowing for moderate growth and change
- Encourage forms of economic development that support livability, generate wealth within the community
- Discourage speculation and forms of ec dev that undermine town's livability and natural environment

Growth Management Objectives

- Manage growth patterns to achieve a balance of environmental, social, economic goals
- Maintain Gibsons as a complete, compact community
- Manage growth so as to use land and infrastructure efficiently
- Ensure the most effective use of Gibson's limited land base by supporting higher densities in appropriate locations



7 | District of Sechelt

Key findings from the review of relevant District of Sechelt documents indicate that new growth is to be focused within the Urban Containment Boundary. In particular, growth is to be targeted for higher density residential developments close to Downtown. Environmentally sensitive areas, hazardous areas, and agricultural lands are not intended for urban development.

Other areas outside of the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) are not intended to develop within the next 15-20 years, and will not be considered for residential development until lands within the Urban Containment Boundary are substantially built out and development is intensified within the Downtown Centre and neighbourhood centres. However, the objectives and policies in other sections do not clearly define what it means for lands within UCB to be "substantially built out".

Other policies encourage more uptake of industrial lands, and expansion of industrial lands north of the Airport.

Excerpts from the Official Community Plan (2010)

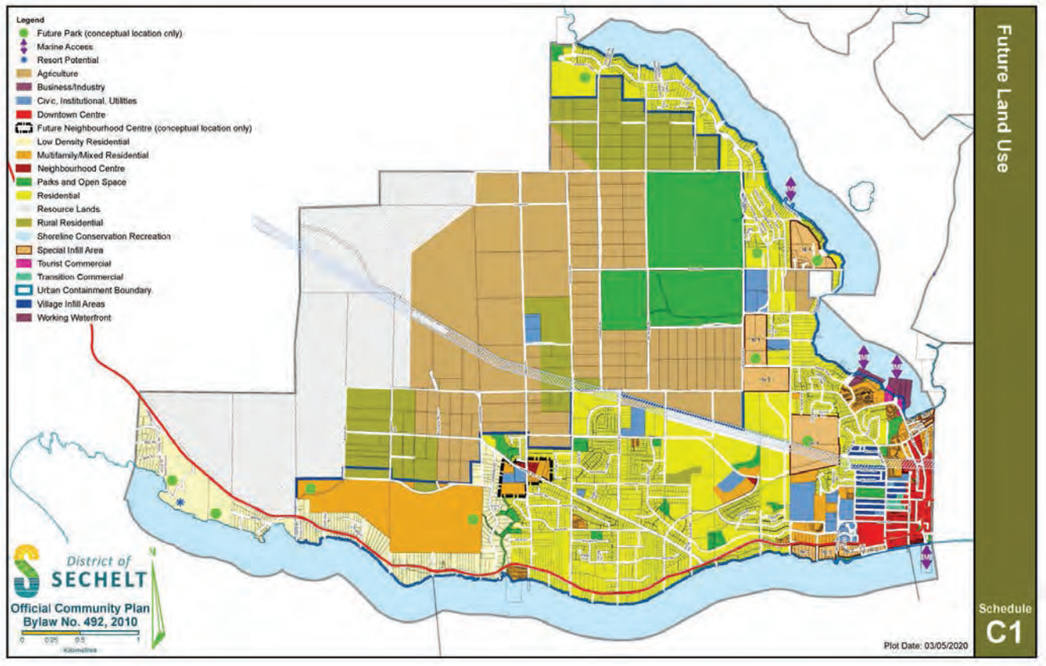
Principles related to Growth

- **Managed Growth** - Sechelt ensures that growth and development, including redevelopment and renewal, are planned, managed and sustainable.
- **Compact Development** – Sechelt seeks to limit sprawl and will support approaches to development, including redevelopment, renewal and adaptive reuse, that will create a more compact and well-designed community.
- **Protect and Enhance the Environment** - Sechelt is developed in harmony with its unique natural environment, and protects its natural ecosystem.
- **Provide a Range of Housing Opportunities** - Sechelt supports the development of diverse housing types to increase affordability, and to meet the needs of the changing demographics in the community.

Growth Management Objectives / Policies

- Limit sprawl and focus compact development within well-defined urban containment boundaries (UCB). This maximizes use of existing infrastructure
- New residential and commercial development will be focused within the Urban Containment Boundary

Growth in Sechelt will be focused within the Urban Containment Boundary, indicated by the bolded blue on the map below. The majority of new growth, particularly higher density residential uses, will be located close to the Downtown, colour-coded in red.



8 | shíshálh Nation & shíshálh Nation Government District

Key findings from a review of relevant shishalh nation Government District documents show that development is to be prohibited or restricted in areas identified as cultural resources and sites, wildlife habitats, important hunting and gathering grounds, water sources and watersheds, and lands that contribute to overall biodiversity. Important types of habitat to be protected include wetlands, riparian forests, ungulate winter range, calving areas and security habitats.

Some areas are permitted to have industrial or commercial activities but must do so in a way that protects cultural and ecological values.

Excerpts from the Strategic Land Use Plan (2008)

Vision and Objectives

- Key areas of our territory will be protected from development, to preserve areas of cultural importance so that our land and waters can continue to support healthy populations of wildlife and we ourselves as a people that depend on them for our way of life.
- We will resettle some of the village sites that were in place before Europeans arrived.
- Protect cultural resources: The necessity to protect our culture should be primary over the needs of external development. Therefore all land use within our territory must be planned so as to result in as little conflict as possible with shíshálh cultural resources.
- Wildlife and habitat management: conserve biodiversity to ensure viable populations of different species; protect rare/high value habitats (wetlands, riparian forests) and critical habitats (ungulate winter range, calving areas, security habitat); Desire to protect sakinaw lake and Pender Harbour (declining fish populations).
- Rehabilitate habitats in the shíshálh Nation territory that have been degraded due to past industrial disturbance.

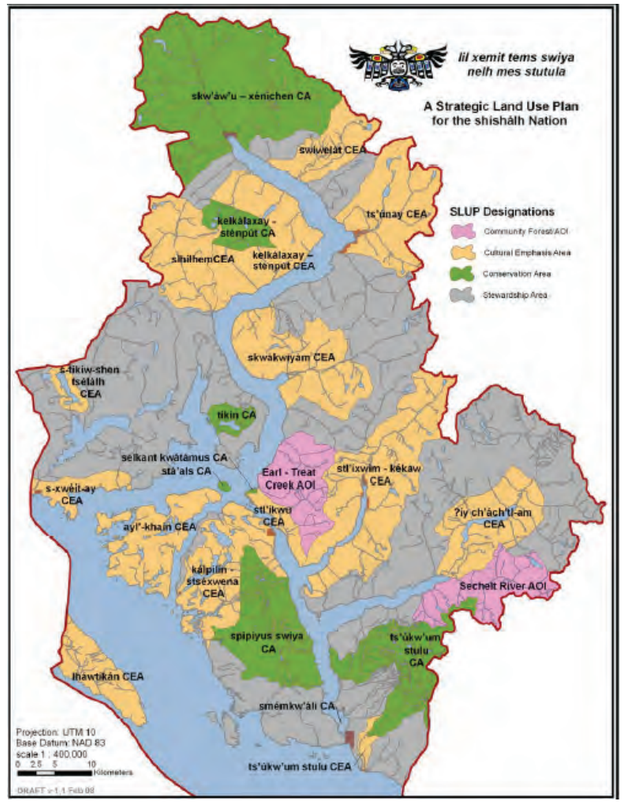
The shíshálh nation is currently working with the BC government to update the swiya land use plan to provide clear management direction on biodiversity, watershed integrity, resources important to shishalh culture, and sustainable economic development. It is expected that a draft plan will be made available in Fall 2022.

The shíshálh lil xemit tems swiya (shíshálh conservation areas), indicated by the colour green in the map below, are areas identified for their high cultural and ecological values where industrial and permanent land disposition is prohibited.

shíshálh kw'enit sim alap (shíshálh cultural emphasis areas), orange allow for tourism and recreational uses, appropriate resource development that aligns with cultural values and resources.

shíshálh community forestry areas of interest (AOIs): These are areas identified for their potential suitability for long-term forest management by the shíshálh Nation.

The remaining stewardship areas (grey) are lands that adhere to the general management direction.



9| Electoral Areas

Key findings from the review of OCPs for each of the SCRD's Electoral Areas highlight the importance of protecting rural character and the natural environment. Commercial and community-oriented uses, and denser forms of housing to be located in village centre/areas identified as community hubs. Certain electoral areas, such as Egmont/Pender Harbour, are open to more economic and industrial land uses.

Excerpts from Electoral Area Official Community Plans

Vision and Objectives

- **Egmont/Pender Harbour:** Promote and attract a thriving, diverse and balanced community which allows economic and employment opportunities able to support healthy lifestyles for current and future generations
- **Elphinstone:** Minimize visual, air, water and sound pollution in the Elphinstone community; Protect the long term potential for agriculture and to provide for agricultural activities that promote food security on the Sunshine Coast
- **Roberts Creek:** Ensure that land is put to an aesthetically pleasing and environmentally responsible use and ensure ongoing biodiversity through the protection, restoration and enhancement of plant and animal habitats; Maintain downtown Roberts Creek as the community core, on a human scale, as a social focus, and as a service centre for the community
- **Halfmoon Bay:** Maintain the rural characteristics of the area, reinforced by the low density community; Ensure on-going biodiversity through the protection, restoration and enhancement of plant and animal habitats

INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICING REVIEW

What we learned about SCRD member jurisdictions' plans related to infrastructure and servicing.

10| Current Capacity and Future Needs

The region relies on its natural environment to provide potable water for consumption. Sewerage is handled locally and discharged back into the environment. Roadways and access corridor geometry are heavily driven by the contours of the natural terrain. Maintaining the environment and sustainable growth is understood to be a consistent intent of local stakeholders, policy makers and local residents.

Chapman Creek Water System

Chapman Creek provides water for about 83% of residents in the District of Sechelt, the Town of Gibsons and Electoral Areas B, C, D, E, and F. Chapman Creek has been identified as having capacity issues for current maximum demand and for future growth. The Chapman Creek water treatment plant is operating close to its design capacity.

Electoral Area A - Egmont/Pender Harbour

- Electoral Area A has three separate water service Areas: Regional Water Service Area (RWSA), North Pender Harbour Water Service Area (NPHWSA), and South Pender Harbour Water Service Area (SPHWSA). The water supply for the South Pender Harbour Water Service Area (SPHWSA) meets current and short-term needs. The water license for McNeill Lake requires increased capacity to meet long-term demands. Water supply policy should consider seasonal population increases during warmer months. Meeting future water demand will require extensive conservation efforts.
- Higher density and commercial areas (such as Madeira Park and Garden Bay) may benefit from future liquid waste management servicing. Meeting future demands may also require upgrades to the sewerage treatment system in Madeira Park.
- Public transit is not accessible in this Electoral Area. Transportation corridor studies could be extended from Halfmoon Bay to Madeira Park, to review public transit in the area.

Electoral Area B - Halfmoon Bay

- Electoral Area B's water is supplied from the Chapman Creek water system. There are certain areas within Electoreal Area B where water distribution is deficient in providing minmum municipal fire flows. In particular, upgrades have been identified for the Redroofs area.
- Under Intensive Demand Management, the reconstruction of the Caleta Pump Station and 584m of 200mm upsizing is required to support future demand on water resources. Future water demand in Electoral Area B can be sustained with further expansion of the Chapman Creek Water System.
- Additional study into the expansion of the existing water treatment facilities and the requirement for a neighbourhood sewage treatment plant for Redroofs should be considered.

Electoral Area D - Roberts Creek

- Water supply in Electoral Area D is from the Chapman Creek System and local ground water sources. Potential development along the Highway 101 corridor may benefit from a review of extending the existing water system to these areas. Under Intensive Demand Management there are fire flow challenges on the west side of Roberts Creek.
- Upgrades to the water system are identified for existing conditions and further upgrades are anticipated to be required to support potential growth. Further study should review suitability of community sewerage collection and treatment.

Electoral Area E - Elphinstone

- Water supply is from the Chapman Creek System, Chaster well, and local ground water sources. The transmission supply ends at Reed Road Reservoirs. Deadends on Gower Point, and in the surrounding that area would benefit from looping.
- Any potential future development north of Highway 101 would benefit from a water supply extension but this would require more upgrades to the Chapman Creek System or an alternative source of water supply. It is anticipated that enhancements along Highway 101 should support the provision of services north of the Highway.

Electoral Area F - West Howe Sound

- Water supply comes from Chapman Creek, Langdale well, Soames Point well, Granthams Landing well, Collector and Gordon wells, and local ground sources. The OCP does not allow for system expansion outside of the Residential Settlement Boundary.
- Any potential growth along Port Mellon Highway within the Residential Settlement Boundary and Gambier Island is not limited by current infrastructure. Gambier Island could benefit from a developed water system to provide fire protection.
- There may be a need upgrade to road transportation infrastructure in this area in response to anticipated future transporation demand. Most roads do not meet Provincial standards.

Town of Gibsons

- Water supply comes from four wells in the Town of Gibsons, and bulk supply from Chapman Creek. During fire flow conditions there is a reliance on SCRD water sources to cope with the Town's deficiencies. The Town's Water Supply Strategy outlines $1.7 million of high priority upgrades needed to meet anticipated future demand and a program of added dead-end blow-offs equaling $125,000 over 5 years. It is understood that further extraction from the existing aquifer is to be avoided. Any future growth within the Town of Gibsons will see an increase in reliance on the Chapman Creek Water System.
- In the Towns Wastewater Collection Strategic Plan there is an identified 2.4km of gravity sewer and 1.18km of forcemain to be replaced to grow with projected demands. It is understood that the existing Waste Water Treatment Plan (WWTP) is currently at capacity and requires additional buffering tanks to handle inflows. Water supply and waste water treatment upgrades are required to support future growth.

District of Sechelt

- The SCRD provides water supply to the District of Sechelt through the Chapman Creek supply. The required fire flows under the Intensive Demand Management scheme are insufficient in Davis Bay, West Sechelt, East Porpoise Bay and Sandy Hook. Extensive work is needed to provide future needs in the Sechelt area through 7.6km of watermain upgrades and the addition of a new reservoir in West Sechelt, along with two (2) new pump stations totaling and estimated $9.42 million.
- The District uses two waste water treatment plants to dispose of liquid waste – the Sechelt Water Resource Centre (SWRC) and Dusty Road plant. While the SWRC is recently constructed, the current wastewater treatment plan is outdated. Water supply and waste water treatment upgrades will be required to support future demand.

shíshálh nation

- The SCRD provides water supply to the shíshálh nation primarily through the Chapman Creek supply. Additional water supply comes from the North and South Pender Harbour Water Service Areas.
- The nation uses two waste water treatment plants to dispose of liquid waste - the Sechelt Water Resource Centre (SWRC) and Port Stalashen WWTP. Port Stalashen facility provides pre-treatment only, and is sent to the SWRC for tertiary treatment. Upgrades to the Port Stalashen WWTP are underway, which will serve IR#1 and the Evolve (Haley) Development. Outside of these collection areas the Nation relies on on-site individual standard type 1 to 3 septic treatment systems.
- Transportation access is provided by Highway 101, with roads in the nation owned by the nation. Implementation of active transportation infrastructure has taken place in collaboration with the District of Sechelt and the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure.

Recommendations:

To keep robust infrastructure operating along the Coast, the SCRD has taken the right steps in reviewing regional growth. To sustain this growth the following recommendations are made:

1. Further capacity development for South Pender Harbour Water Service Area;
2. Further corridor study from Redroofs Road to Madeira Park;
3. Transit capacity review to Madeira Park;
4. Further development and protection of the Chapman Water Supply;
5. Updated Water Transmission Lines throughout Chapman Water Distribution System;
6. Updated wastewater collection strategy for the District of Sechelt; and,
7. Climate change policy updates in the regions' OCPs

STAFF INTERVIEWS

What we heard from Gibsons, SCRD, Sechelt, and shíshálh staff

11 | Staff Interview Summary

11.1 Process

A total of 9 staff members from each of the partenr governments were interviewed to gain a more qualitative understanding of growth management, infrastructure servicing, and jurisdictional challenges. The interviews were intended to explore the effectiveness of local land use plans and infrastructure strategies, while identifying areas with strong potential for collaboration at the regional level.

Interviewees are listed below.

Town of Gibsons

- Emanuel Machado, CAO
- Leslie-Anne Staats, Director of Planning

District of Sechelt

- Andrew Allen, Director of Planning
- Paul Appelt, Engineering Services
- Marina Stjepovic, Community Planner

Sunshine Coast Regional District

- Yuli Siao, Senior Planner
- Shane Walkey, Manager of Utility & Infrastructure Services

shíshálh Nation

- Isabelle Houde, Senior Professional Biologist
- Jesse Waldorf, Operations Manager

11.2 Emerging Topics

8 key topics emerged from the interviews and these signal priorities for a future Regional Growth Framework. The following list identifies the topics and summarizes what we heard from the staff interviews.

Topic 1: Growth, Land Use & Densities

- Downtown areas of Gibsons and Sechelt are increasingly dynamic and attractive for development
- Densifying Sechelt and Gibsons, especially in and surrounding Downtown Areas is a key growth strategy
- Explore the idea of "villages centres" or "community hubs" in key locations within the Electoral Areas to focus growth
- Form & Character Development Permit can be onerous in both Gibsons and Sechelt
- Most development is happening within the Growth Containment Boundaries of Sechelt and Gibsons, but there is significant amount of growth and development pressure in the Electoral Areas that might undermine these efforts
- Sechelt and Gibsons have the capacity to handle most growth
- There is a need to better plan for growth in Electoral Area fringes adjacent to Gibsons and Sechelt
- Alignment between OCPs & Zoning Bylaws in all jurisdictions is important
- Industrial lands that can accommodate future growth should be identified and then serviced for sustainable economic vitality
- A need for stronger criteria for assessing development proposals, especially in relation to environmental impacts and sustainability goals
- Desire for a more consistent but somewhat less prescriptive approach to density (e.g. Floor Area Ratio vs. Units per Hectare)

Topic 2: Housing

- Single detached form is still important and easiest to build, but policies could stress clustered formats, secondary suites, plex housing, and other more diverse formats
- Infill development generally takes more time, effort, and considerations given neighbourhood opposition
- The threat of rural subdivisions in far flung places exists and should be limited
- Lately there has been an increase in dwelling occupancy rates which is positive
- Potential to re-imagine regional-serving commercial areas for future affordable housing projects
- May be opportunities to allow affordable housing types like mobile home parks and tiny homes in rural areas (i.e. places that aren't necessarily well serviced by transit/services)
- Significant crowding in Indigenous community housing means more action is needed to build housing, likely in partnership with BC Housing

Topic 3: Natural Assets & the Climate Crisis

- Opportunity to consider cumulative impact and carrying capacity as we plan for growth
- Environmental impact studies are currently not robust enough - (i.e. groundwater disturbance near Calvin Creek)
- Large increase in tourism and future growth impacts the natural environment and has potential to conflict with Indigenous rights (e.g. hunting vs. hiking trails)
- Ecosystems health and climate crisis impacts know no boundaries and as such require a consistent regional approach
- Strong potential for natural asset management at the regional scale, working off Gibsons' established model
- Tree canopy protection is key, especially for Coastal Douglas Fir and Arbutus tree habitats

- There is a need to better manage invasive plants
- Ecological restoration efforts should be done at a watershed scale
- Flood and foreshore risk assessment would help better understand potential flooding impacts (e.g. could a big flood event reconnect the Salish Sea to Porpoise Bay? Indigenous elders speak of Sechelt as having been built on a former saltwater marsh)
- The Sunshine Coast is particularly vulnerable to sea level rise given the length of the coastline and common approach to address this threat is needed

Topic 4: Infrastructure

- Many engineering bylaws and documents are old and need modernization (take advantage of technological advances)
- Right now infrastructure upgrades are just trying to catch up, important to align land use plans with infrastructure and prepare for future growth, be proactive
- Installation and maintenance of infrastructure can and should be done across jurisdictional boundaries to be more effective (e.g. bike lanes, water mains)
- Investigate and allow for innovative water conservation approaches (i.e. use of greywater)
- Consistent and coordinated approach to aquifer protection is needed to prevent contamination of drinking water sources
- Water supply constraints are key barriers to future growth and drilling programs should continue in order to find more sustainable water sources
- Water rights for Angus and Shannon Creeks show potential for a joint water project with the shíshálh Nation.
- Water and sewer pipes were not designed for the level of growth now occurring
- May need to upgrade the sewer treatment plant to service and process all septic discharges across the Sunshine Coast
- Important to closely monitor sewage levels (especially for shíshálh/Sechelt collaboration)
- Should be exploring the tying in of small and private sewer treatment plants into the public system
- Replacement of Wilson Creek Plant may be necessary in the future
- Transportation - must work more collaboratively with MOTI, ensure MOTI understand local goals
- Highway 101 may require a new corridor in or near Sechelt and might have to start accommodating more traffic despite a lack of space for additional lanes
- A new landfill may be necessary soon to avoid shipping waste to other regions
- Emergency response strategy is required at the regional scale

Topic 5: Truth & Reconciliation

- First Nation involvement in major projects from early stages is essential
- Follow the province and adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Safer and more inclusive processes are needed to welcome Indigenous voices into public processes (e.g. public hearings are often forums for racist, offensive, and hurtful commentary)
- Archaeological sites and other sites of cultural importance are everyone's — and every level of government's — responsibility
- Education about colonization and truth and reconcilitation are key to raising awareness
- Cultural sensitivity training is an important initial step
- Ability to practice Indigenous rights (i.e. hunting and collecting cedar bark) should not be impacted by growth and development
- Archeological protection of culture sites... should be top of mind, it's everyone's responsibility
- Infrastructure agreements are important to support housing and economic development on reserve

Topic 6: Healthy Communities

- Child care spaces are needed all over the region
- Social connections have suffered through the COVID-19 pandemic, placing an emphasis on community spaces
- There may be a need for a social/cultural planner at the regional level whose role would be to coordinate social planning efforts across various jurisdictions and potentially facilitate a socio-cultural roundtable
- Better coordination with School District No. 46 is needed to manage catchment areas as growth begins to influence enrolment

Topic 7: Regional Character

- The Sunshine Coast has a unique character that is intimately linked to the natural environment
- Design of new development should be sensitive to this regional character and avoid clear cutting of trees
- Communities each have their own unique character and that should be celebrated

Topic 8: Community Involvement & Buy-in

- Important to effectively communicate the value and benefits that are derived from growth
- Increase awareness about development process and jurisdictional boundaries
- Planning documents should be user-friendly and accessible

PRINCIPLES

Shared principles and priorities to shape a Regional Growth Framework

12 | Proposed Growth Management Principles

The following 11 principles build upon the goals of the SCRD's 'We Envision' Sustainability Plan and translate initial staff input into a set of priorities. In Phase 3, they will form the basis for recommended strategies and actions and help inform the constraints and opportunities mapping.

Growth should...

be coordinated across jurisdictions and be informed by investments from other levels of government.

respect and protect Indigenous rights and heritage.

be focused in existing developed areas, reduce environmental impacts, and fit into natural settings.

complement natural asset restoration at a watershed scale and protect biodiversity.

enhance water conservation measures while maintaining aquifer health.

be resilient to climate impacts and emergency events.

reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

be shaped by climate-informed land use and infrastructure plans.

diversify housing types and tenures to meet the needs of current and future residents.

foster healthy communities, social connectivity and wellbeing.

be managed through inclusive and accessible planning processes.

NEXT STEPS

13 | Next Steps

The review of growth, land use, and infrastructure policy provides an overarching understanding of what the various governments across the Sunshine Coast envision for their future. Paired with the results of staff interviews, it tells the story of shared interests and values that have the potential to guide the creation of a Regional Growth Framework.

13.1 Next Steps

With the policy review and staff interviews completed, the project can move into its third phase where detailed GIS modelling will apply the identified principles into a "constaints and opportunities" mapping exercise. The resulting maps will provide strong direction on the suitability of sites for future growth. In addition to these sites, a set of recommendations founded on the 11 principles listed in this report will suggest how that growth should be shaped with the intent of providing the maximum benefit to Sunshine Coast communities and the ecological systems in which they thrive.

SCRD Regional Growth Framework

Infrastructure Policy Review

Prepared for:

Prepared by:

January 12, 2023

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) has retained MODUS to prepare a Regional Growth Framework document for the purpose of identifying and evaluating strategies to accommodate the forecasted population growth within the Regional District. Webster Engineering Ltd. (WEL) was brought onto the team by MODUS with the specific task to review supportive infrastructure in context of the future population growth. WEL's review includes examining existing infrastructure capital, planned capital works projects, and infrastructure policy documents. The intended conclusion through our study is to identify high value areas to focused growth from an infrastructure planning perspective.

The Sunshine Coast is an attractive region with a natural settings that has recently seen consistent and increasing population growth. Recently, rural areas have been subdivided into residential developments, and core areas now densifying with multifamily developments. Most of the populated area remains in a rural setting. The region relies on it's natural environment to provide potable water for consumption. Sewerage is handled locally and discharged back into the environment. Roadways and access corridor geometry are heavily driven by the contours of the natural terrain. Maintaining the environment and natural setting with sustainable growth is understood to be a consistent intent of the local stakeholders and policy makers on behalf of the local residents.

2.0 Study Outline

Our study outline includes examining the Regional District as well as the surrounding municipalities and approval authorities, specifically including:

- Electoral Area A – Egmont/Pender Harbour
- Electoral Area B – Halfmoon Bay
- Electoral Area D – Roberts Creek
- Electoral Area E – Elphinstone
- Electoral Area F – West Howe Sound
- Town of Gibsons
- District of Sechelt
- Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure.

For each areas listed above, the following infrastructure categories are included with the study:

- Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution
- Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal
- Access and Mobility
- Sustainability, conservation, and climate change
- Suitability for future population growth

3.0 Electoral Area A – Egmont/Pender Harbour

Egmont/Pender Harbour is located on the west side of the Sunshine Coast. It encompasses 1,901 sq. km. and a population of 3,039 (2021 Census). This Electoral Area is known for its numerous lakes ranging from less than 10 Hectares to 686 Hectares. The primary commercial services are located in Garden Bay and Madeira Park. Population fluctuations occur with an increase in population during the warmer months within this area.

3.1 Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution

Electoral Area A has three (3) separate water service Areas: RWSA, North Pender Harbour Water Service Area (NPHWSA), and South Pender Harbour Water Service Area (SPHWSA). The water supply is Ruby Lake (1.2 ML/d), Waugh Lake (0.22 ML/d), Hotel Lake, Garden Bay Lake, McNeill Lake, and Haslam Creek. These systems rely on chlorine treatment for disinfection prior to potable distribution. Ruby lake supply (0.48 ML) and Waugh Lake (0.27 ML) is stored in local above ground reservoirs.

The Water Treatment Feasibility Study for SPHWSA outline the distribution for future growth will require additional water licensing.

The SPHWSA is fed by McNeill Lake System and Haslam Creek and meets current and short-term needs. The water license for McNeill Lake would need to be increased by 22% to meet long-term demands. A feasibility study was completed to review treatment plant options and determined that two (2) separate facilities were recommended.

Considerations on water supply policy should consider the increase in population during the warmer months within this area.

3.2 Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal

The SCRD currently has eight (8) small wastewater systems in Electoral Area A. Residents outside of these systems rely on on-site septic tank and drain fields, private package-treatment plants, community sewer systems, and ocean outfalls. No reports are publicly available for growth development for these systems. The OCP recognizes that future development in Higher density areas and commercial areas such as Madeira Park and Garden Bay will require future liquid waste management planning to accommodate redevelopment and future growth.

Long-term development in the SPHWSA would require the treatment systems to be upgraded as suggested by the Feasibility Study, which was estimated to cost $4.1 million to $5.4 million.

3.3 Access and Mobility

Access through Area A is through Highway 101 which is designated as a Rural Arterial Undivided (RAU) and runs from Langdale to Earls Cove. Communities in Area A are accessed through this road. No publicly available studies show changes to the geometry of the Highway to support future growth in this Area. Public Transit is not accessible in this area. Area A has a high volume of transient water-users during the summer months, which should be identified in sewerage policy.

It appears that geometric improvements will be constrained due to topography. Further studies would be required to determine serviceability ratings of this roadway and suitability for future development along the corridor. We were not able to find any existing studies reviewing road serviceability ratings for existing conditions nor considering future growth.

3.4 Sustainability, Conservation, and Climate Change

The OCP for Electoral Area A does not provide direction on Climate Change policy, which leads to sustainability and conservation methods for infrastructure and water supply. Water metering is used in NPHWSA and SPHWSA. Additional studies and policies should be commissioned in order to support future growth planning.

The Egmont/Pender Harbour Official Community Plan provides policy for the Water Service Areas. Further water supply and management strategy is needed to help the SCRD with growth guidance in Area A. This should include a comprehensive review of the water sources to ensure resiliency with climate change and conservation.

3.5 Suitability for Future Population Growth

Future growth in Area A will require upgrades to the sewerage treatment system in the Madeira Park area. In support of future growth extensive conservation efforts to maintain within the capacity limits of the existing water sources. Further development in the Cove Cay and Egmont neighborhoods should consider implementing small system treatment systems, for future growth. Transportation corridor studies should be extended from Halfmoon Bay to Madeira Park, to facilitate growth in this area, and review Public Transit to this area.

Development in Cove Cay would require an extensive review of the water system to address minimum fire flows near the reservoir.

4.0 Electoral Area B – Halfmoon Bay

Halfmoon Bay is located between Electoral Area B and the District of Sechelt, on the west side of the coast. Area B is 1,271 sq. km. in size, and has a population of 2,969 (2021 Census). Halfmoon Bay presents itself as "Rural By Nature", and is considered itself the fastest growing rural electoral area in the SCRD.

4.1 Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution

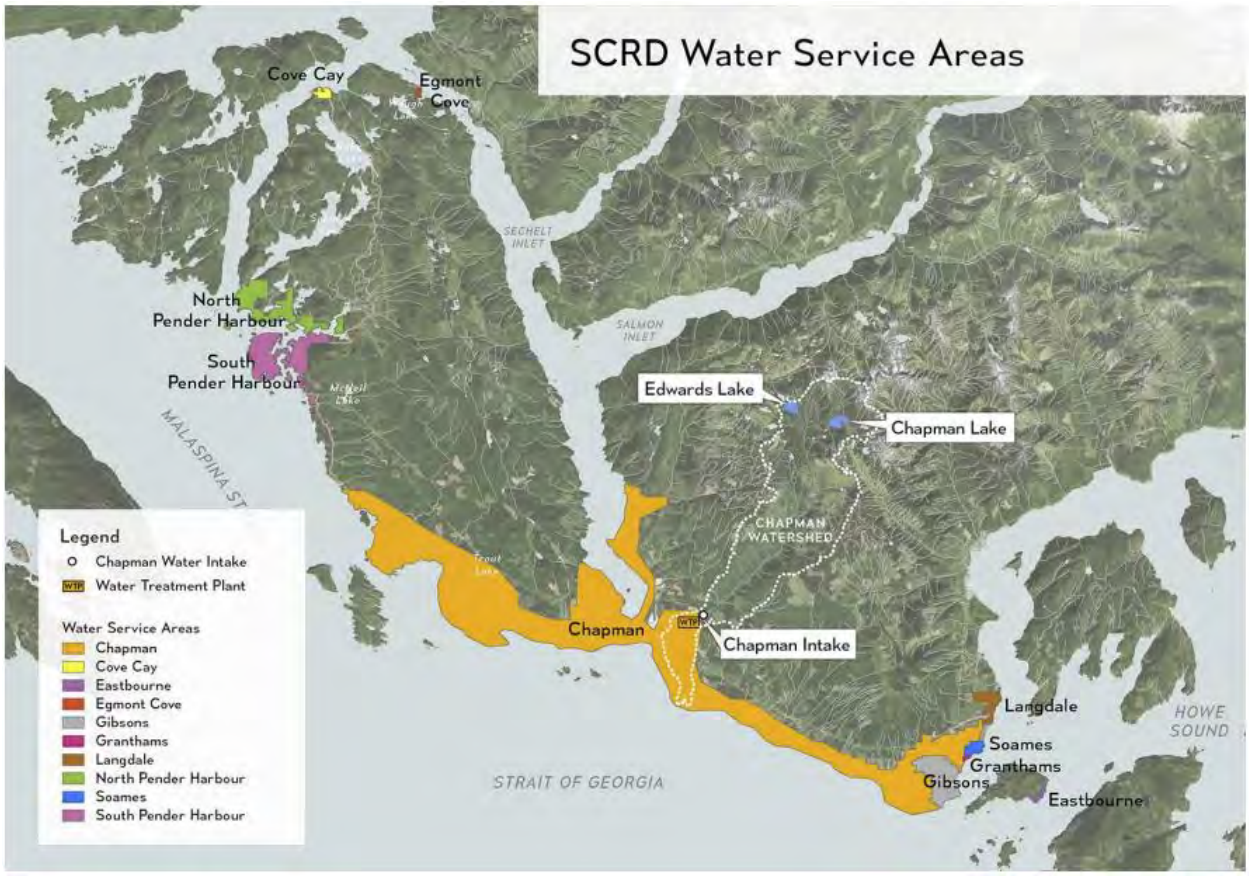
Area B is supplied from Chapman Creek Water System (25ML/d), which is a major source of water for several Electoral Areas. A subsection: *4.1.1 Chapman Creek Water Source* is provided below and other Electoral Areas and will refer to this subsection regarding water supply.

There are certain areas within Electoral Area A where water distribution is deficient in providing minimum municipal fire flows. Upgrades are identified for the Redroofs Area to provide required minimum Fire Flows. From Redroofs to Secret Cove there is limited watermain looping, which decreases the water quality at the farthest points.

4.1.1 Chapman Creek Water System

The CRWP in 2013 to provide a review of the Regional Water Service Area (RWSA) and provide direction on meeting sustainability goals for the Chapman Creek Water Source. The CRWP also provides guidance for water conservation, and system expansion / improvement measures to accommodate future growth.

The CRWP states that Chapman Creek provides water for 90% of Coast residents. The system supplies approximately 10,000 connections. This is supplied over Electoral Areas: B (Halfmoon Bay), D, E, and F as well as the District of Sechelt and select Town of Gibsons residents.



Extract from econics March 2022 Report to SCRD Infrastructure Services Committee

There are five (5) primary water sources in the RWSA and three (3) secondary sources:

Primary Water Sources	Secondary Sources
Chapman Creek	Gray Creek
Langdale Well	Chaster Well
Soames Point Well	Trout Lake
Granthams Landing Well	
Church Road Wells	

The CRWP provides the projected demands on the Chapman Water System Table 1-1 excerpted and provided as follows.

TABLE 1-1
CHAPMAN WATER SYSTEM
PROJECTED 2036 DEMANDS

Water Demand	EDM	IDM
Average Day (ML/d)	21.3	17.0
Maximum Day (ML/d)	44.4	33.3

The treatment uses screen, Chlorine, and UV. This supply is the main water source for the Coast and has been identified as having capacity issues for current maximum demand and

for future growth. The report highlights that the Chapman Creek water treatment plant is operating close to its design capacity of 25ML/d.

It is anticipated that SCRD will add an additional 15% capacity in 2022, to the Chapman system with the introduction of the Church Road Wellfield. SCRD recognizes that this well system will be relied upon for drought conditions, in the Chapman watershed, which will require infrastructure to feed water from the Church Road Wellfield, towards Sechelt.

4.2 Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal

The OCP for Halfmoon Bay notes reliance on private land based septic systems. New residential developments may require community liquid waste management systems and are guided by the SCRD Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP). The SCRD manages some pre-approved sewage effluent outfalls.

Area B is has four (4) small wastewater systems. No reports are publicly available for growth development for these systems. No studies or reports are publicly available on the impacts of climate change on these systems, or the sustainability of these systems. Each system was placed on an Asset Management Plan (AMP), to track the life of the infrastructure.

4.3 Access and Mobility

Transportation access is through Highway 101 to 4 main collector roads – Redroofs Road, Brooks Road, San Souci Road, and Mercer Road. Two (2) marinas are located in the Secret Cove neighborhood. Public transit extends from Sechelt to Halfmoon Bay, through Highway 99 and Redroofs Road on Route #4.

4.4 Sustainability, Conservation, and Climate Change

The OCP for Area B references the SCRD Our Coast, our Climate, the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP). The focus of this Climate Change Policy is to reduce Green House Gases. The OCP also focuses on watershed conservation for Chapman Creek. SCRD has implemented water metering in Area B.

4.5 Suitability for Future Population Growth

Future growth can be sustained with further expansion of the Chapman Creek Water System, to allow for sustainable supply. Additional study will be required into the expansion of the existing water treatment facilities to confirm serviceability for future population growth. Additional study into the requirement for a neighbourhood sewage treatment plant for Redroofs should be considered.

5.0 Electoral Area D – Roberts Creek

Roberts Creek is home to the Robers Creek Farmers Market, coastline, and golf courses. It is 143.4 sq. km. and has a population of 3,523 (2021 Census). It is located between the District of Sechelt and Elphinstone. Roberts creek has a vibrant community cultural input with its Roberts Creek Mandala, which is re-painted each year by residents and visitors. Roberts creek has commercial and tourist facilities, which provide economic input into the Sunshine Coast.

5.1 Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution

Water supply is from the Chapman Creek System (outlined in Area B) and local ground water sources. Area D has one (1) Pump Station, Geddes Reservoir (1.14ML), and three (3) PRV stations, that service between Highway 101 and the ocean front. Future development north of Highway 101 may benefit from a review of extending the existing water system to these areas. Under Intensive Demand Management there are fire flow issues on the west side of Roberts Creek. Recommendations in the CRWP suggests replacing 750m of watermain to 200mm on Lower Road, upgrading Roberts Creek pump, and constructing Geddes PRV station.

5.2 Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal

Sewerage is primarily handled through private land based septic systems. There is one (1) SCRD wastewater treatment system for Roberts Creek Co-Housing. For developments servicing more than one Parcel, a community sewage treatment system is to be used.

5.3 Access and Mobility

Access for Area D is from Highway 101 to collector road – Lower Road. North of Highway 101 there is individual access road that connect directly to the Highway. Development to the north is heavily reliant on Highway 101. In 2020 MoTI released a corridor study which shows areas of concern through Area D. Future consideration to a By-Pass Route is being given by MoTI, with no further information released. In addition, the OCP acknowledges that some roads are not to Provincial Standards, and there are significant areas that are accessed via road right of ways that are not maintained by the Province.

5.4 Sustainability, Conservation, and Climate Change

Roberts Creek OCP follows the SCRD Our Coast, our Climate, the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP). To reduce GHG emissions, the OCP Policy is to support energy efficient land use practices, reduce dependence on single occupant vehicles, enhance the green building sector, expand local renewable energy opportunities, and reduce and reuse solid waste as a resource.

SCRD has implemented metering in this Electoral Area as a focus of water conservation for Chapman Creek water system.

5.5 Suitability for Future Population Growth

Upgrades to the water system are identified for existing conditions and further upgrades are anticipated to be required to support further growth. Further study should be commenced to review suitability of community sewerage collection and treatment.

6.0 Electoral Area E – Elphinstone

Elphinstone strives to create a liveable community that respects diversified sustainable development. Located between Area D, Town of Gibsons, and Area F, it encompasses 21.6 sq. km. and a population of 3,883 (2021 Census). This Area has a comprehensive agricultural plateau, which early settlers developed.

6.1 Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution

Water supply is from the Chapman Creek System (outlined in Area B), Chaster Well, and local ground water sources. The transmission supply ends at Reed Road Reservoirs. There are four (4) above ground reservoirs, three (3) PRV's. There are areas of deadends on Gower Point, and on deadend roads surrounding that area.

6.2 Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal

Sewerage is primarily handled through private land based septic systems. There is two (2) SCRD wastewater treatment system for Sunnyside and Woodcreek Park. For developments servicing more than one Parcel, a community sewage treatment system is to be used.

6.3 Access and Mobility

Access for Area E is through Highway 101 to collector roads north and south of the highway. Primary access to the south is through Pratt Road and Gower Point Road, while access to the north is primarily through Henry and Reed Road. Access is partially reliant on the Town of Gibsons roads.

6.4 Sustainability, Conservation, and Climate Change

Area E OCP takes into consideration Stormwater Management to conserve and protect groundwater, aquatic life, and potable water supplies. Water metering is in effect in Elphinstone. While SCRD does have a Climate Change plan in place, the OCP does not have a direct connection to this for policy.

6.5 Suitability for Future Population Growth

Area E has potential to grow north of Highway 101. Water supply extension to this development would be beneficial but would require more upgrades to the Chapman Creek System or an alternative source of water supply. Development would be restricted by the Mount Elphinstone mountain group.

It is anticipated that enhancements along Highway 101 should lead to adaptation to future growth north of the Highway.

Further work would be needed to eliminate deadends in this Area.

7.0 Electoral Area F – West Howe Sound

West Howe Sound has some of the SCRD's highest concentration of untouched coastline. It is 381 sq. km. and has a population of 2,407 (2021 Census)

7.1 Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution

Water supply comes from Chapman Creek, Church Road Wellfield, Langdale Well (Chlorinated), Soames Point Well (chlorinated), Granthams Landing Well (Chlorinated), Eastbourne (Collector and Gordon Wells) on Keats Island (filter, UV, Chlorine), and local ground sources. The Langdale water system storage capacity is 0.46 ML, Soames Point and Grantham water systems storage capacity is 0.34 ML, the Eastbourne water system storage capacity is 0.05ML. The OCP does not allow for system expansion outside of the Residential Settlement Boundary.

7.2 Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal

The primary method of treatment shall be on-site individual standard type 1 to 3 septic treatment systems, and in cases where new developments are considered, the method of treatment may be a common ground disposal system. One (1) small wastewater treatment plant is owned by SCRD – Langdale Wastewater Treatment Plant. SCRD operates the YMCA Elphinstone system, which processes raw sewage from the Langdale system. Studies indicate that SCRD intends to amalgamate the two systems into the YMCA plant.

7.3 Access and Mobility

Access for Area F is through Highway 101, Town of Gibsons, Port Mellon Highway, and water taxi. SCRD owns multiple docks and ports in Area F: Keats Landing, Eastbourne, Hopkins Landing, Gambier Harbour, West Bay, Port Graves, and Halkett Bay. These provide water access to Islands in Howe Sound.

Public Transit is available to as far east as Langdale Ferry Terminal. No public transit is available to Port Mellon or Gambier and Keats.

7.4 Sustainability, Conservation, and Climate Change

The current Electoral Area F OCP is under review and comments on policy can't be added.

7.5 Suitability for Future Population Growth

Area F has potential for growth along Port Mellon Highway if within the Residential Settlement Boundary, and Gambier Island. Gambier Island could benefit from a developed water system to provide fire protection. The SCRD should review public boat access points for both Gambier and Keats Island.

Growth would require upgrade to road transportation infrastructure in this area. Most roads do not have Provincial standards.

8.0 Town of Gibsons

Home to Molly's Reach, Gibsons was taken onto the national stage through Beachcombers. The Town of Gibsons is 4.33 sq. km. and has a population of 4,605 (2016). Gibsons has a sizeable community that has ties to the Lower Mainland, with community members commuting by ferry. Most of the Town is considered urban and has a considerable commercial district that serves surrounding Areas.

8.1 Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution

Water supply comes from four (4) wells in the Town of Gibsons, and bulk supply from SCRD's Chapman Creek. Well water is fed to School Road Reservoir and Parkland Reservoir, in Zones 1 and 2 respectively. SCRD supplies bulk supply though Henry Road reservoir. The Town's Water Supply Strategy outlines $1.7 million of high priority upgrades needed for growth. A program of added dead-end blow-offs equaling $125,000 over 5 years.

It is understood that the further increase to extraction from the existing aquifer is to be avoided. Growth within the Town of Gibsons will see increase reliance on the Chapman Creek Water System.

8.2 Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal

The Town has approximately 36km of mains ranging from 50mm to 350mm in diameter, with a pump station and wastewater treatment plant, and outflow to the ocean on Gower Point Road. In the Towns Wastewater Collection Strategic Plan there is an identified 2.4km of gravity sewer and 1.18km of forcemain to be replaced to grow with their projected demands.

It is understood that the existing Waste Water Treatment Plan (WWTP) is currently at capacity and requires additional buffering tanks to handle inflows. Additional study on the existing capacity and expansion of the WWTP will be required.

8.3 Access and Mobility

The Town of Gibsons is accessed through Highway 101, Gower Point Road, and Marine Drive. Extensive studies have been conducted by MoTI to resolve flow and intersection issues through the Town. By-pass plans have been proposed but no direction has been given by the Province on this.

Public Transit exists between Langdale, Gibsons, and Sechelt through Routes #1 and #90.

8.4 Sustainability, Conservation, and Climate Change

The Town has taken climate change into their planning for their water systems and water conservation. Their OCP provides policy to protect the water supply aquifer through water conservation.

8.5 Suitability for Future Population Growth

Town of Gibsons has infrastructure capital works planning to support a densifying community. Water supply and waste water treatment upgrades will be required to support future growth.

9.0 District of Sechelt

The District of Sechelt is the hub of Sunshine Coast. It is 39.71 Sq. Km. and has a population of 10,847 (2021). This community services much of the Coast, and provides a lot of the recreational and consumer needs for the Coast.

9.1 Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution

SCRD provides water supply to the District of Sechelt through Chapman Creek supply (see *Section 4.1.1: Chapman Creek Water System*). There are two (2) reservoirs, two (2) intakes, two (2) pumps, and nine (9) PRV's. The CRWP indicates that required fire flows under the intensive demand management scheme are insufficient in Davis Bay, West Sechelt, East Porpoise Bay and Sandy Hook.

Extensive work is needed to provide future needs in the Sechelt area through 7.6km of watermain upgrades and the addition of a new reservoir in West Sechelt, along with two (2) new pump stations totaling and estimated $9.42 million.

9.2 Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal

The District uses two (2) waste water treatment plants to dispose of liquid waste – the Sechelt Water Resource Centre (SWRC) and Dusty Road plant. The Dusty Road facility provides pre-treatment only, and is sent to the SWRC for tertiary treatment.

While the SWRC is recently constructed, the current wastewater treatment plan is outdated and needs to be updated in context of applicable population growth expectations.

9.3 Access and Mobility

Access through Sechelt is provided Highway 101, which roads in the District being owned by the District. The District created their own Transportation Plan in 2009 to provide direction on growth. Recommendations were given on improving road safety and active transportation. Extensive improvements have been made to Cowrie Road, and Trail Avenue, with plans for Wharf Avenue, and Reef Road.

Trail Bay Mall is the hub for Public Transportation, serving the Coast. Public transit is accessible to Sechelt and West Sechelt. No public transit extends towards East Porpoise Bay.

Commuter airlines service Sechelt from Richmond and Nanaimo.

9.4 Sustainability, Conservation, and Climate Change

The District has implemented the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan to provide a framework to guide future decisions on environment, economy, culture, and community. Key points for infrastructure planning is the direction of reducing water consumption, using water meters, reducing light pollution, and carbon neutrality.

9.5 Suitability for Future Population Growth

Water supply and waste water treatment upgrades will be required to support future growth.

10.0 Shíshálh Nation

The swiya of the shíshálh people lies between Queens Reach in Jervis Inlet and Howe Sound on the south coast of British Columbia. Historically there were four main settlements at kalpilin (Pender Harbour), ts'unay (Deserted Bay), xenichen (Jervis Inlet) and tewankw near Porpoise Bay.

10.1 Water Supply, Treatment, Storage, and Distribution

SCRD provides water supply to Shíshálh Nation, mainly through Chapman Creek supply (see *Section 4.1.1: Chapman Creek Water System*). Additional water supply comes from Nouth Pender Harbour Water Service Area and South Pender Harbour Water Service Area

Extensive work is needed to provide future needs in the Sechelt area through 7.6km of watermain upgrades and the addition of a new reservoir in West Sechelt, along with two (2) new pump stations totaling and estimated $9.42 million.

10.2 Sewerage Collection, Treatment, and Disposal

The Nation uses two (2) waste water treatment plants to dispose of liquid waste – the Sechelt Water Resource Centre (SWRC) and Port Stalashen WWTP. Port Stalashen facility provides pre-treatment only, and is sent to the SWRC for tertiary treatment. Upgrades to the Port Stalashen WWTP are underway, which will serve IR#1 and Evolve (Haley) Development.

Outside of these collection areas the Nation relies on on-site individual standard type 1 to 3 septic treatment systems.

10.3 Access and Mobility

Access through Sechelt is provided Highway 101, which roads in Nation being owned by the Nation. Some implementation of active transportation has taken place with the District of Sechelt, and the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure.

Trail Bay Mall is the hub for Public Transportation, serving the Coast. Public transit is accessible to Sechelt and West Sechelt.

10.4 Sustainability, Conservation, and Climate Change

Shishalh Nation is a large advocate for sustainability, conservation, and climate change through cultural practices, and learned historical practices. SCRD and other governments consult with Shishalh Nation on many resource needs. In 2007 Shishalh Nation developed their Strategic Land Use Planning. The report outlines land use for a multitude of resource use, which pertains to infrastructure

10.5 Suitability for Future Population Growth

Suitability for future population growth is trending in a good direction with the upgrades to the SWRC and Port Stalashen WWTP. The Nation relies on Chapman Creek, which does have capacity issues, already expanded on. The Nation needs to finish establishing their OCP's for future infrastructure development and development policy

11.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

The Sunshine Coast is full of vibrant and sustainable communities. As Covid-19 pushed people out of city centres, communities along the Sunshine Coast have become home to many. To keep robust infrastructure operating along the Coast, the SCRD has taken the right steps in reviewing regional growth. To sustain this growth the following recommendations are made:

1) Further capacity development for South Pender Harbour Water Service Area;
2) Further corridor study from Redroofs Road to Madeira Park;
3) Transit capacity review to Madeira Park;
4) Further development and protection of the Chapman Water Supply;
5) Updated Water Transmission Lines throughout Chapman Water Distribution System;
6) Updated wastewater collection strategy for the District of Sechelt; and,
7) Climate Change updates to OCP plans;

12.0 Referenced Documents

Electoral Area A – Egmont/Pender Habour

- Egmont/Pender Harbour Official Community Plan (2018)
- Wastewater Service Review and Asset Management Plans (2019)
- Area A Water Master Plan (2007)
- Comprehensive Regional Water Plan (2013)
- Water Demand Analysis (2018)
- Pender Harbour Water Treatment Feasibility Study

Electoral Area B – Halfmoon Bay

- Halfmoon Bay Official Community Plan (2014)
- Wastewater Service Review and Asset Management Plans (2019)
- Halfmoon Bay Liquid Waste Management Plan (2006)
- Comprehensive Regional Water Plan (2013)
- Water Demand Analysis (2018)
- Highway 101 Gibsons to Sechelt Corridor Study (2020)
- SCRD Integrated Transportation Study (2011)

Electoral Area D – Roberts Creek

- Roberts Creek Official Community Plan (2012)
- Wastewater Service Review and Asset Management Plans (2019)
- Comprehensive Regional Water Plan (2013)
- Water Demand Analysis (2018)
- Highway 101 Gibsons to Sechelt Corridor Study (2020)
- SCRD Integrated Transportation Study (2011)

Electoral Area E – Elphinstone

- Elphinstone Official Community Plan (2018)
- Wastewater Service Review and Asset Management Plans (2019)
- Comprehensive Regional Water Plan (2013)
- Water Demand Analysis (2018)
- Highway 101 Gibsons to Sechelt Corridor Study (2020)
- SCRD Integrated Transportation Study (2011)

Electoral Area F – West Howe Sound

- West Howe Sound Official Community Plan (2011) – New plan under development
- Wastewater Service Review and Asset Management Plans (2019)
- Comprehensive Regional Water Plan (2013)
- Water Demand Analysis (2018)
- Highway 101 Gibsons to Sechelt Corridor Study (2020)
- SCRD Integrated Transportation Study (2011)

Town of Gibsons

- Smart Plan – Gibsons Official Community Plan (2015)
- Wastewater Collection Strategic Plan (2008)
- Comprehensive Regional Water Plan (2013)
- Town of Gibsons Water Supply Strategy Update (2017)
- Water Demand Analysis (2018)

- Highway 101 Gibsons to Sechelt Corridor Study (2020)
- SCRD Integrated Transportation Study (2011)

District of Sechelt

- District of Sechelt Official Community Plan (2010)
- Transportation Master Plan (2009)
- Wastewater Strategy Report (2005)
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (2018)
- Comprehensive Regional Water Plan (2013)
- Water Demand Analysis (2018)
- Highway 101 Gibsons to Sechelt Corridor Study (2020)
- SCRD Integrated Transportation Study (2011)

Shíshálh Nation

- In-person interview with Nation staff
- Port Stalashen Wastewater Treatment Upgrade (2022)
- lil xemit tems swiya nelh mes stutula *"A Strategic Land Use Plan for the shíshálh Nation"*

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned with any questions.

Sincerely,

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Sunshine Coast Regional District

Regional Growth Framework

Phase 3 Report
Data Synthesis and Strategy Recommendations

January 11, 2023

prepared by

Licker Geospatial Consulting

MODUS

The Sunshine Coast Regional District is located within the traditional and unceded territories of the shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh nations, whose people have inhabited these lands for time immemorial.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Sunshine Coast is a picturesque region defined by its mountainous, coastal landscapes and attractive towns and villages that dot the shores of the Salish Sea. These lands have been home to the shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh First Nations for time immemorial and the stunning natural setting has been sought after by many other peoples for generations. Residents and tourists alike have much to enjoy and celebrate in this location.

Nonetheless, water supply, infrastructure, natural asset management, housing affordability, the climate crisis, equity, and other issues are all top of mind as residents, elected officials, and local governments within the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) contemplate how to accommodate growth.

Consisting of three member municipalities (Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, and shíshálh Nation Government District) and five rural electoral areas (Egmont/Pender Harbour, Halfmoon Bay, Roberts Creek, Elphinstone, and West Howe Sound), the SCRD has a strong interest in collaborating and coordination its efforts in managing the pressures of growth.

At the same time, the global COVID-19 pandemic has wrought tremendous uncertainty to the future of communities, both big and small, urban and rural. Anecdotally, the new found ability to work from home and away from major provincial employment centres like Vancouver and Victoria is placing immense pressure on smaller towns, villages, and rural communities of the Sunshine Coast.

In 2011, the Sunshine Coast Regional District adopted a new Sustainability Plan titled "We Envision". It is a call to action for an economy that supports a high quality of life, social and cultural development, and personal fulfillment, while recognizing nature is not infinite in its resources.

The document sets out a vision for regional land use which calls for "complete, compact, low environmental impact communities based on energy-efficient settlement patterns, in harmony with the natural environment in which they are set." Paired with the vision are two key actions:

- Adopt a set of sustainable land-use principles to guide future development decisions
- Create a Land-Use Classification System and Map

This Baseline Research Report is the culmination of work completed to set the foundation for future research on regional growth. It consolidates a significant amount of data and information across all four participating local governments and has identified principles and recommendations to consider in the creation of an RGS.

1| Process

To develop the Regional Growth Framework - Baseline Research, a three phase process is being followed.

In **Phase 1** we collected and confirmed input data for translation into a series of studies that were used to support regional growth planning. The Present & Future Data report represents the summary of the input data being used for this project.

In **Phase 2** we facilitated staff interviews and reviewed relevant policy documents across local governments. The results of the staff interviews and policy review led to a Policy Review Report in which we identified key principles and policy direction that can shape the recommendations in Phase 3.

In **Phase 3** we mapped the constraints and opportunities to growth based on the findings in our prior work. This work is summarized in this final report which represents a strong, defensible, data-driven foundation for regional planning efforts.

2 | Goals & Outcomes

The creation of a Regional Growth Framework is an exciting opportunity to build upon a strong collaborative spirit among the SCRD's local and First Nation governments.

With this report in hand, the SCRD and its partners have a baseline of information resources with which to convene informed and meaningful dialogue with local government staff about regional planning opportunities. This information is supported by a set of maps synthesizing the data inputs into constraints and opportunities, and a set of strategic recommendations for future planning efforts.

3 | Jurisdiction

Regional Districts & Incorporated Municipalities

Regional District and incorporated municipality powers come primarily from the provincial Local Government Act and Community Charter.

Regional Districts provide services, including land use planning and regulation, emergency management, planning for solid waste management, and governance for electoral areas. Regional Districts have no role in roads and policing, as these services are municipal or provincial responsibilities. That said, Regional Districts can and do choose to provide a broader range of services, but can only do so by way of support from the electors or taxpayers.

Regional Districts are able to regulate land use and development in electoral areas using generally the same planning and land use management processes and tools available to incorporated municipalities, including zoning and official community plans. Regional Districts differ from incorporated municipalities insofar as they do not have a direct role in approving the subdivision of land (a provincial responsibility in non-municipal areas).

Incorporated municipalities like the District of Sechelt & the Town of Gibsons have more powers delegated to them than Regional Districts. Some of these powers — such as those related to transportation infrastructure, subdivision approvals, and business license requirements — are especially pertinent to planning for future growth and development. They provide greater influence on how growth and development takes shape.

First Nations & the shíshálh Nation Government District

The shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh nations represent the two First Nations whose lands overlap with the study area of this report. Both nations have territories extending beyond the study area and over which they have broad decision making authority, for example, authority as acknowledged in the BC-shíshálh Foundation Agreement (2018).

The Skwxwú7mesh nation holds reserve sites that are bound to the Federal Government's Indian Act, which is the predominant legislation governing matters pertaining to on reserve activities.

The shishalh Nation is a self-governing Nation under the federal 1986 Self-Government Act. Under the Act, the shishalh Nation Government District (sNGD) was created to manage shishalh-owned lands within their swiya ("Territory"), similar to a municipality. The sNGD is responsible for enacting bylaws, levying property taxes, and purchasing services such as fire protection, road maintenance, sewer management, and garbage collection and recycling services. shishalh Nation governs their whole swiya via the Stewardship and Territorial Land Management Division and the BC-shishalh Foundation Agreement (2018). Both of these Divisions are led by shishalh's elected Chief and Council, who participate in the Sunshine Coast Regional Government by appointing a Council member to the SCRD Board.

Beyond reserves and sNGD lands, both nations hold rights and title to their territories. Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act recognizes and affirms Aboriginal Rights and Title by the Canadian government. These Constitutional rights drive court decisions, land claims agreements, provincial government duty to consult responsibilities and modern treaty settlements. In the case of the shíshálh nation, these traditional territories are called the ***swiya***.

Context

1 | KEY STATISTICS*

The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) is a growing region with a land area of 3767.43km² and a population density of 8.5 people per square kilometre in 2021. In particular, the population of the SCRD has grown from 29,970 in 2016 to 32, 170 in 2021, representing a 7.3% population increase between 2016 and 2021.

The median age of the SCRD in 2021 is 56.0 years old. This indicates that half of the population in the SCRD is over 56.0 years old. This represents an increase from the SCRD's median age of 54.9 in 2016 and it is much higher than the 2021 provincial median age of 42.8. If these trends continue, the SCRD can expect to see a growing and ageing population in the future. In 2021, there were 14,935 private dwellings occupied by usual residents out of a total of 17,982 private dwellings and an average household size of 2.1. Average household sizes for Electoral Areas, Gibsons and Sechelt are expected to decrease between 2020 and 2025. A majority of households (79.8%) in the SCRD live in single-detached homes.

Projected population growth is not expected to be evenly distributed throughout the SCRD. Electoral areas are expected to experience slow and steady population growth between 2020 and 2025. In particular, Electoral areas are projected to see an additional 106 new people between 2020 and 2025 or a population increase of 0.73% or 0.15%, per year. All SCRD Electoral Areas are projected to see a 1.2% increase in the number of households between 2020 and 2025 or a 0.24% increase per year. Since projected household growth for the Electoral areas is expected to be relatively higher compared to projected population growth, new households in the Electoral areas may be smaller than in the past, which may be indicative of the SCRD's ageing population.

On the other hand, both Gibsons and Sechelt are projected to experience slow and steady increases in their population between 2020 and 2025. Specifically, Gibsons is expected to see an additional 254 people between 2020 and 2025, which is a 5.24% increase in population (or a 1.05% increase per year), while Sechelt is expected to see an additional 340 people in the same time period, resulting in a 3.2% increase in population (or a 0.64% increase per year). Gibsons is projected to see and 8.2% increase in new households (a 1.64% increase per year), with 197 new households between 2020 and 2025. Sechelt is projected to see a 4.3% increase in new households (a 0.86% increase, per year), with 223 new households in the same time period. Similar to the Electoral Areas, both Gibsons and Sechelt, have projected household growth that is relatively higher than projected population growth, which may be indicative of the SCRD's ageing population and smaller household sizes.

KEY STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

Land Area in km²
3767.43

Population Density per km2
8.5

Population in 2021
32, 170

% Population Change 2016-2021
7.3%
(1.46% per year)

SCRD Median Age in 2021
56.0

BC Median Age in 2021
42.8

Occupied Private Dwellings
14,935

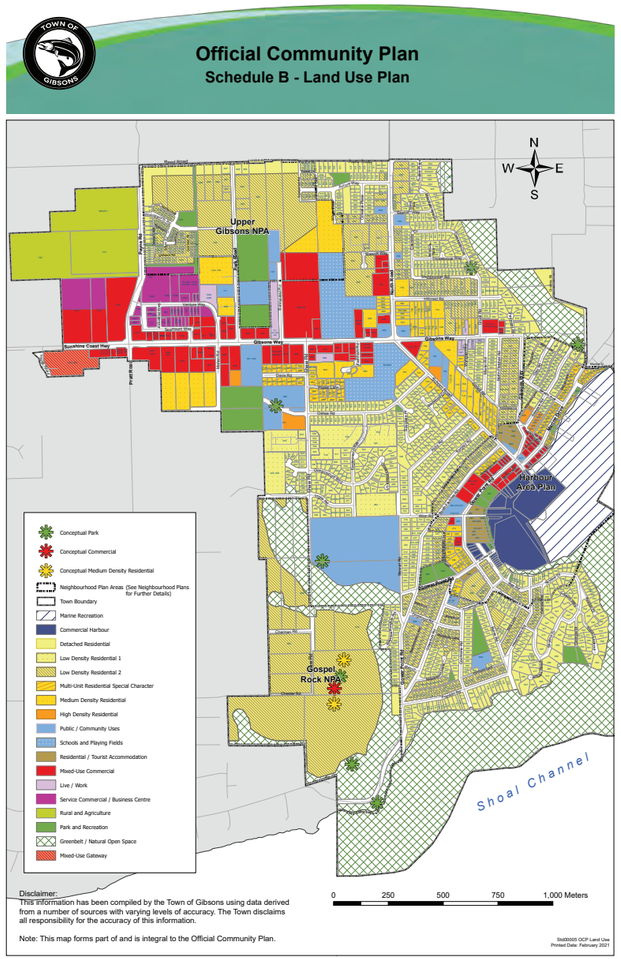
Average Household Size
2.1

**Projections on this page were sourced from the SCRD's 2020 Housing Needs Assessment, founded on data from the 2016 Census. Other key statistics were sourced from the 2021 Census. All statistics include the extent of the Sunshine Coast Regional District Census Division as determined by Statistics Canada.*

2 | Policy Review

Vision and goal statements found in policy documents are articulations of each community's aspirations and intent as it relates to growth. Understanding where member jurisdictions' align, or not, is instructive for shaping the SCRD's policy direction for the Regional Growth Framework Documents relating to growth management, such as Official Community Plans, housing strategies and other land-use related plans, from the following member jurisdictions have been reviewed and are summarized in the subsequent sections.

- **Town of Gibsons**
  - Key findings from the document review demonstrate that the Town of Gibsons values protecting its natural environment, and supports growth patterns that align with Smart Growth principles, ie. compact and complete communities.
- **District of Sechelt**
  - Key findings from the review of relevant District of Sechelt documents indicate that new growth is to be focused within the Urban Containment Boundary. In particular, growth is to be targeted for higher density residential developments close to Downtown. Environmentally sensitive areas, hazardous areas, and agricultural lands are not intended for urban development.
- **shíshálh Nation Government District**
  - Key findings from a review of relevant shíshálh Nation documents show that development is to be prohibited or restricted in areas identified as cultural resources and sites, wildlife habitats, important hunting and gathering grounds, water sources and watersheds, and lands that contribute to overall biodiversity. Important types of habitat to be protected include wetlands, riparian forests, ungulate winter range, calving areas and security habitats.
  - Some areas are permitted to have industrial or commercial activities but must do so in a way that protects cultural and ecological values.
- **Electoral Areas (Egmont/Pender Harbour, Elphinstone, Roberts Creek, Halfmoon Bay, West Howe Sound)**
  - Key findings from the review of OCPs for each of the SCRD's Electoral Areas highlight the importance of protecting rural character and the natural environment. Commercial and community-oriented uses, and denser forms of housing to be located in village centre/ areas identified as community hubs. Certain electoral areas, such as Egmont/Pender Harbour, are open to more economic and industrial land uses.



3 | Growth Management Principles

The following proposed 11 principles build upon the goals of the SCRD's 'We Envision' Sustainability Plan and translate initial staff input into a set of priorities. The principles were developed through a set of interviews with staff across all participating local governments. Then, a workshop was held and staff helped refine the initial draft into its final form. These principles form the basis for recommended strategies and actions and help inform the constraints and opportunities mapping.

Growth and development should...

- *be coordinated across jurisdictions and supported by investments from other levels of government.*
- *respect and protect Indigenous rights and heritage.*
- *be focused in existing developed areas, reduce environmental impacts, and fit with surrounding natural settings.*
- *complement natural asset restoration at a watershed scale and protect biodiversity.*
- *enhance water conservation measures while maintaining aquifer health.*
- *ensure settlements are resilient to climate impacts and emergency events.*
- *reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.*
- *be shaped by climate-informed land use and infrastructure plans.*
- *diversify housing types and tenures to meet the needs of current and future residents.*
- *foster healthy communities, social connectivity and wellbeing.*
- *be managed through inclusive and accessible planning processes.*

CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

1 | Environment

The natural environment is both a constraint and an opportunity in relation to future growth. Sensitive ecosystems, species at risk, groundwater, old growth forests and other key ecological assets require protection measures and should be categorized as constraints. Additionally, access to nature attracts people to the Sunshine Coast (i.e. is a driver of population growth), benefits our physical and mental health, and helps residents gain awareness and appreciation for the natural environment. To this end, proximity to natural spaces, trails, and parks are important to foster a high quality of life.

Nonetheless, conflict can arise if too much human presence — whether through tourism, residential, or economic activities — begins to encroach on these natural spaces. For example, shíshálh fear that hunting and other activities may be compromised with increased growth on and near their swiya.

The Environment map shown on the next page consolidates several layers of environmental information from across the Sunshine Coast to illustrate a complex system of overlapping natural assets, including:

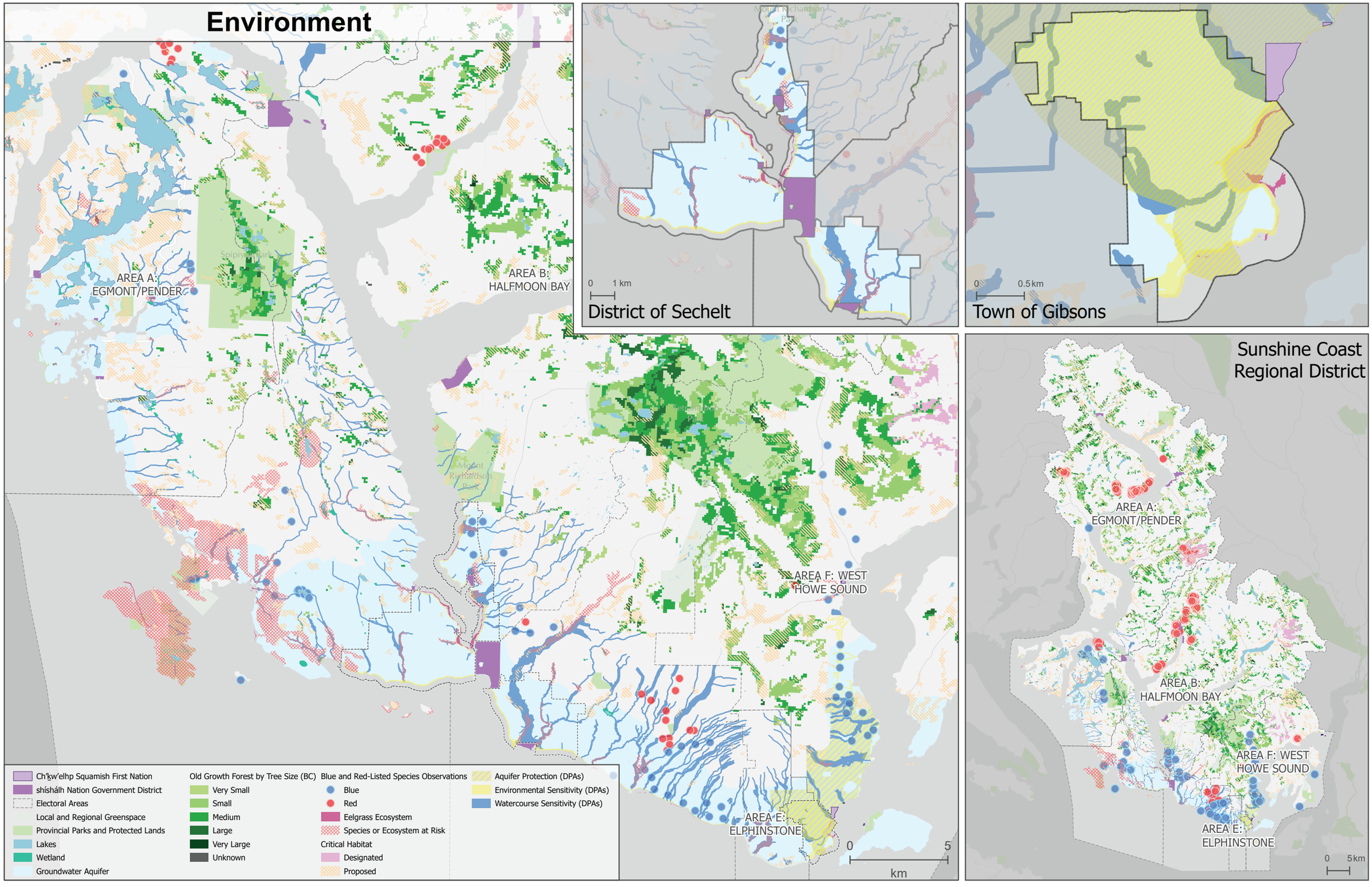
- Critical Habitat (Province of BC, BC Conservation Data Centre, downloaded October 2022) – excludes Marine habitat
- Old Growth Forest (Province of BC 2021, received from SCRD Sept 2022)
- Blue and Red-listed species observations (Province of BC, BC Conservation Data Centre, downloaded October 2022)
- Wetlands (Province of BC, downloaded 2022)
- Species or Ecosystems at Risk (Province of BC, downloaded 2022)
- Groundwater Aquifer (Province of BC, downloaded 2022) – this dataset has information on substrate type, vulnerability (low, moderate, high), productivity, demand, water use (domestic, multiple), and quality concern (local, isolated, regional, none)
- Eelgrass Ecosystem (provided by SCRD, received October 2021)

It also includes three types of Development Permit Areas where specific conditions and requirements must be met to accommodate new development. These include:

- Aquifer Protection – DPA 9 from Gibsons, DPA 5 from SCRD Area F (provided by SCRD, received October 2021)
- Environmental Sensitivity – DPA 2 from Gibsons, DPA 3 from District of Sechelt, DPA 1,5 and 6 from SCRD (provided by SCRD, received October 2021)
- Watercourse Sensitivity – DPA 2 (Riparian Area) from Gibsons, DPA 2 (Watercourse Habitat/ Hazard) from District of Sechelt, DPA 2B, 2A, 4, GAA 4, from SCRD (provided by SCRD, received October 2021)

*shíshálh nation government lands and Skwxwú7mesh reserve lands are not under the purview of the SCRD and are excluded from this study

Environment



2 | Hazards

In contrast to natural assets, natural hazards present a serious threat to human life and activities. The climate crisis is only enhancing the potential for and intensity of hazards, especially those related to flooding and wildfires. This means growth should be avoided in areas where natural hazards are known to be present.

Several different hazards are identified in the Hazards map. They include:

- Coastal Flood Hazard (8m, based on SCRD's geotechnical hazard report) produced from contours using 2018 lidar data from the Province of BC
- Hazardous Slopes – DPAs 4 and 5 from District of Sechelt, and DPAs 1B and 3 from SCRD (received October 2021)
- Flood Hazard – DPA 1A, 2C, 2D, and GAAs 1.2 and 3 all from SCRD
- DPA 1 from Gibsons (Low and High Geotechnical Hazard and Adverse Fill Areas), DPA 4R (Rockfall Hazards) from District of Sechelt, and GAA 3 and 4 from SCRD
- Contaminated Sites (Province of BC)
- Fire Threat Rating (from Province of BC, Provincial Safety Threat Analysis, 2021)
- Inland flooding data is not available. An 8m buffer can be produced from inland waterways, but was not produced for this mapping as it was difficult to see at these scales.

In the case of wildfire threats, three different ratings are depicted based on the severity of the threat:

- Extreme
- High
- Moderate

Hazards data is not available in areas governed by the Island Trust.

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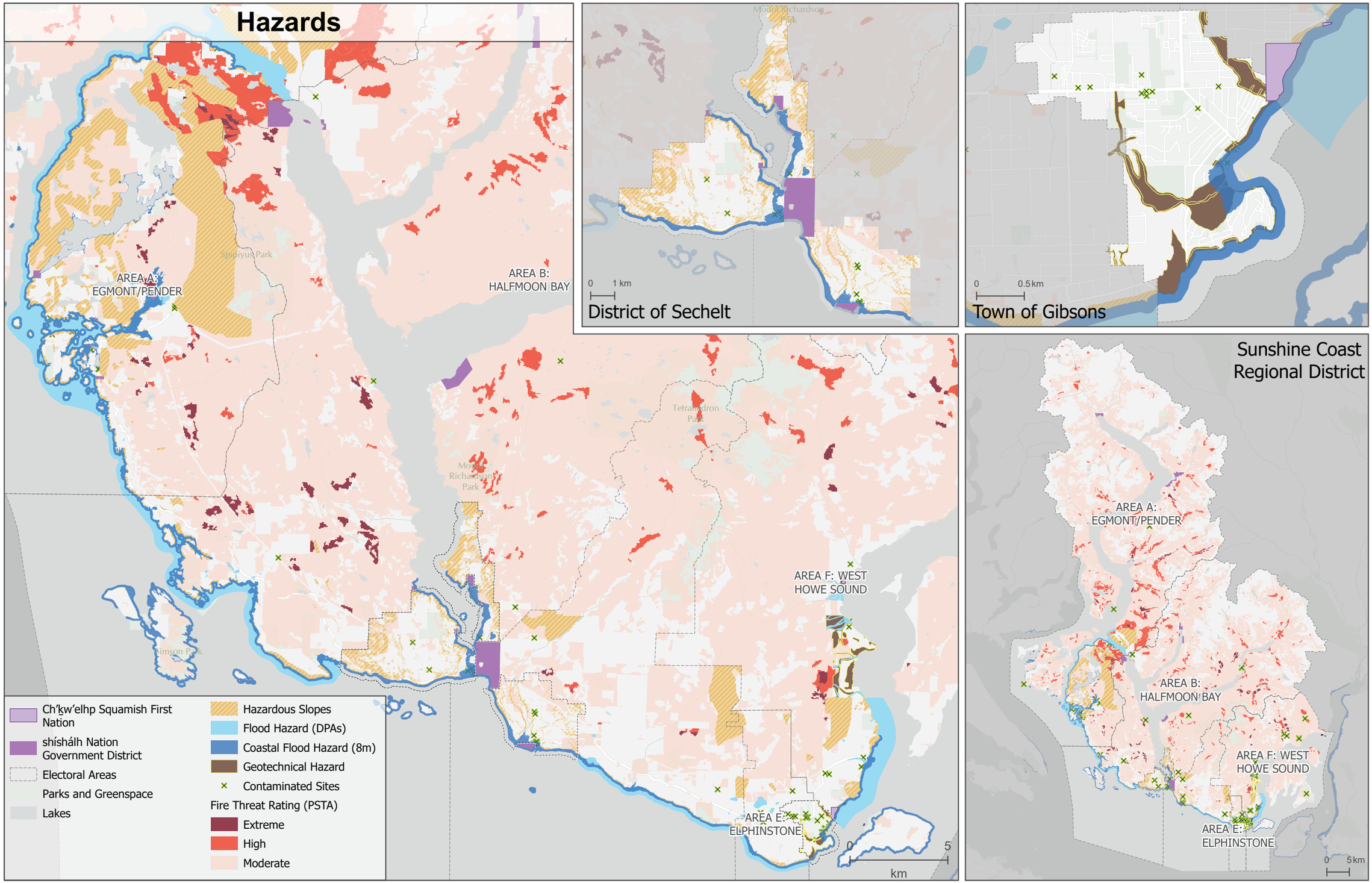
Hazards



3 | Land Use

Across the Sunshine Coast, each municipality and electoral area has a set of land use designations in their Official Community Plans. These depict the communities' desires for how land should be used in the future and at what densities buildings can be built. Paired with the current density of a property (based on BC Assessment data) we can determine the "density gap" between what exists on a property today and what the community envisions for the future. It is a potent indicator of potential growth.

Additionally, the land use designations were determined through Official Community Plan update processes that would have engaged the local community, studied servicing and infrastructure, and understood constraints and opportunities related to many different factors. As such, areas that are already slated for specific types of land uses, notably residential, commercial and industrial ones are more likely to be well-suited for future growth.

Focusing future growth in areas that have already been developed has the added benefit of preventing further erosion of natural, rural, and agricultural environments while creating more compact and climate-friendly neighbourhoods. Though redevelopment comes with its own set of challenges — notably neighbourhood opposition to change — it is a more economical and sustainable approach to accommodating growth.

shishalh Nation's Strategic Land Use Plan has overlaying land use areas such as"Conservation Areas" and "Cultural Emphasis Areas" that can inform land use strategies of other jurisdictions.

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Generalized Land Use

AREA A: EGMONT/PENDER

AREA B: HALFMOON BAY

AREA F: WEST HOWE SOUND

AREA E: ELPHINSTONE

0 5 km

0 1 km

District of Sechelt

0 0.5 km

Town of Gibsons

Sunshine Coast Regional District

AREA A: EGMONT/PENDER

AREA B: HALFMOON BAY

AREA F: WEST HOWE SOUND

AREA E: ELPHINSTONE

0 5 km

- Tourism
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Neighbourhood Hub
- Residential
- Residential - Multi-Family
- Rural Residential
- Rural
- Agricultural
- Resource
- Park
- Conservation Areas
- Recreation or Public Use
- Future Recreation
- Crown Forest Land
- Green Infrastructure
- Private Forest or Recreation
- Light Industrial
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Marine Industrial
- Marine General
- Marine Recreational Facilities
- Marine Transportation
- Public Use and Utilities
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Sunshine Coast Highway
- Roads
- Ch'kw'elhp Squamish First Nation
- shíshálh Nation Government District

4| Population Density

Closely linked to land use is population density. Land use designations will engender certain types of housing forms which in turn impact the amount of people who live within a certain geographic area (ie. population density).

As is expected, the Sunshine Coast's highest population densities can be found in its two incorporated municipalities of Sechelt and Gibsons. Only a few areas reach a population density of approximately 15-21 people per hectare:

- West Sechelt
- Downtown Sechelt
- Field Road/ts'ukw'um Creek
- Upper Gibsons
- Lower Gibsons

These are all areas that are well serviced with urban infrastructure and amenities that support higher populations.

Using Environics data projections, which looks at past trends and forecasts Canadian census data out to 2031, we can see how density is expected to shift over a ten year period. Though the differences are subtle, the data illustrates population density increases in West Sechelt and in parts of Roberts Creek.

It's important to note that this is not a fixed outcome. With potential further research on regional growth and subsequent updates to Official Community Plans, density, people, and growth can be directed elsewhere.

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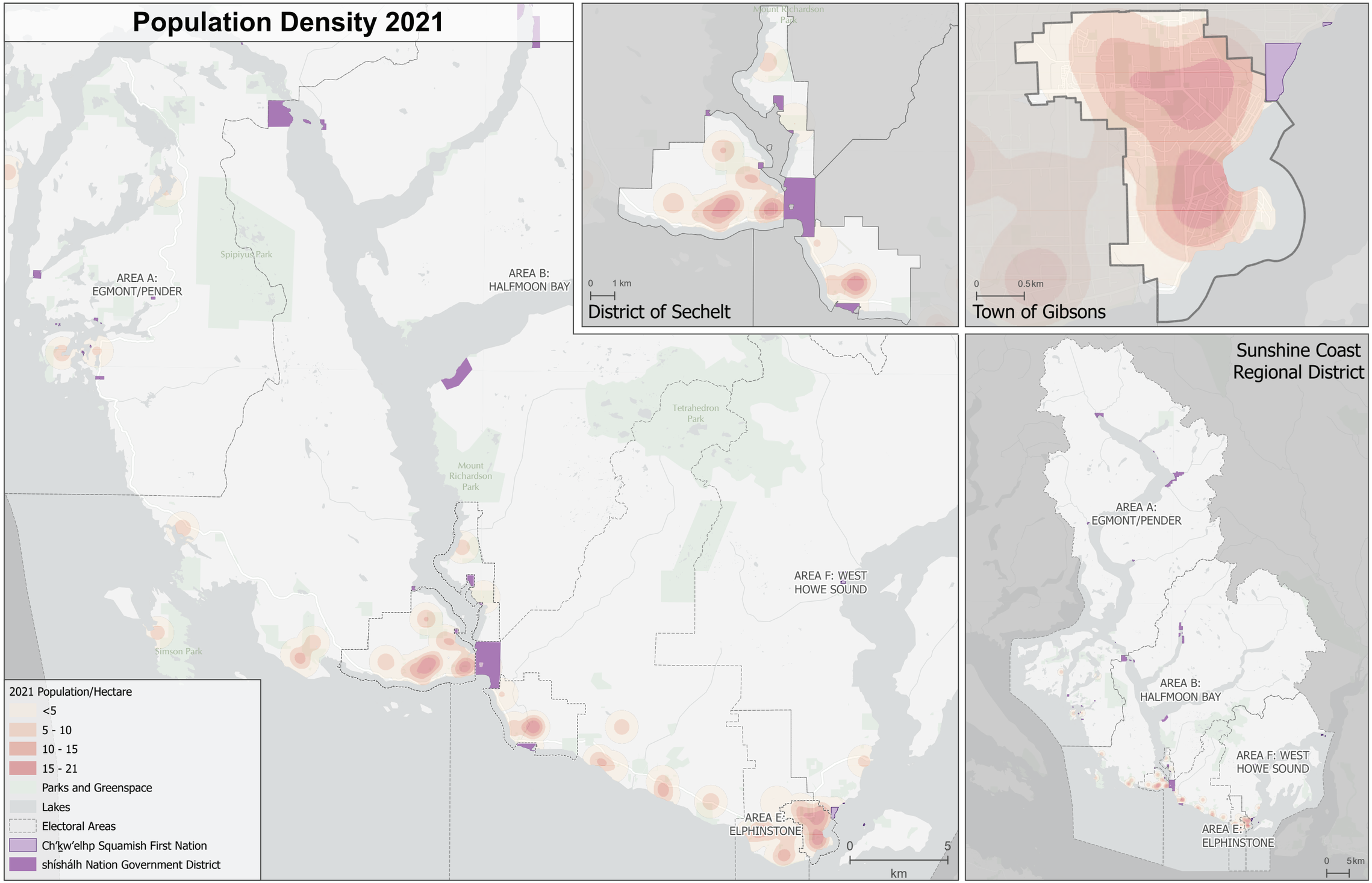
Population Density 2021



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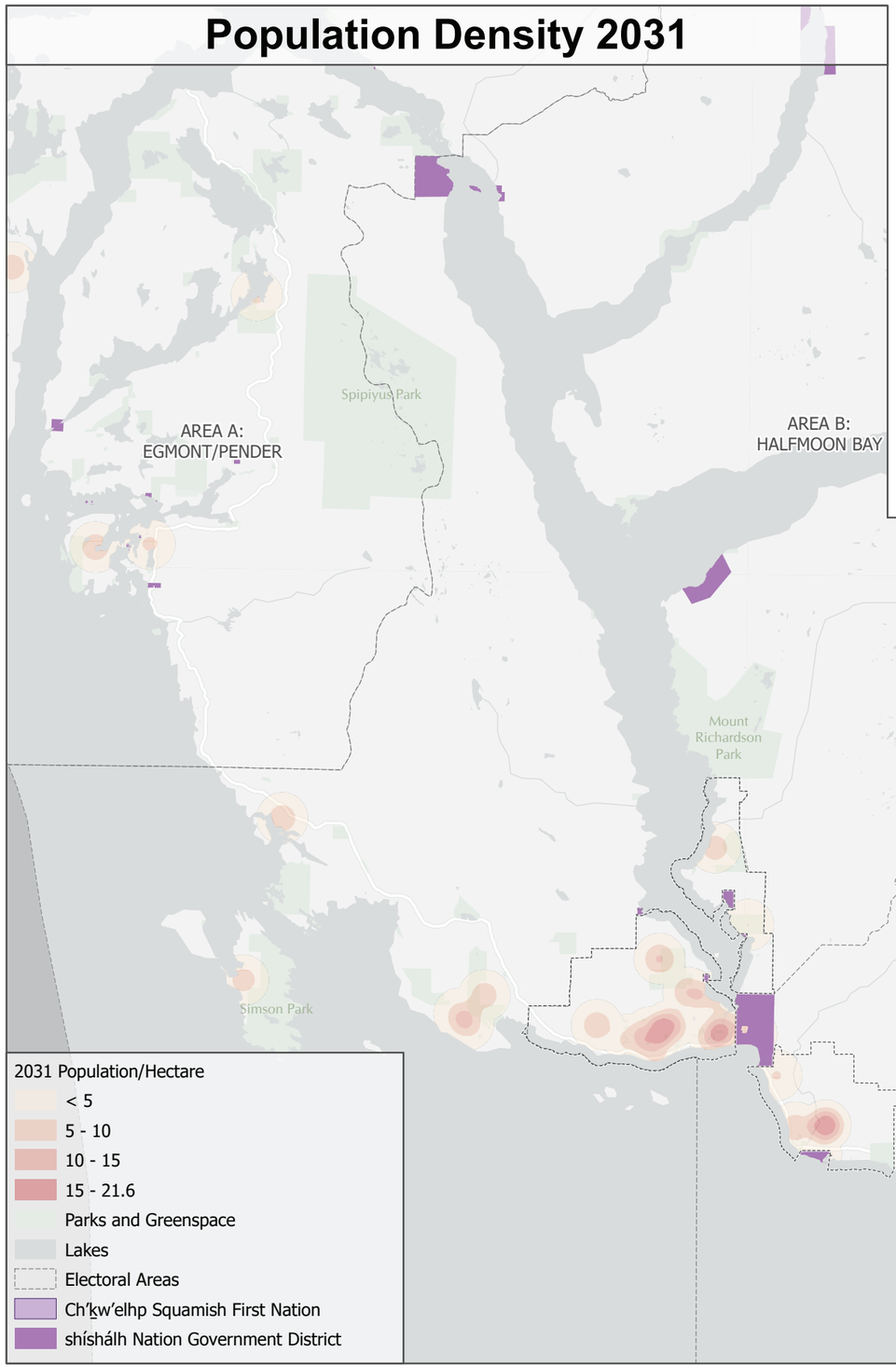
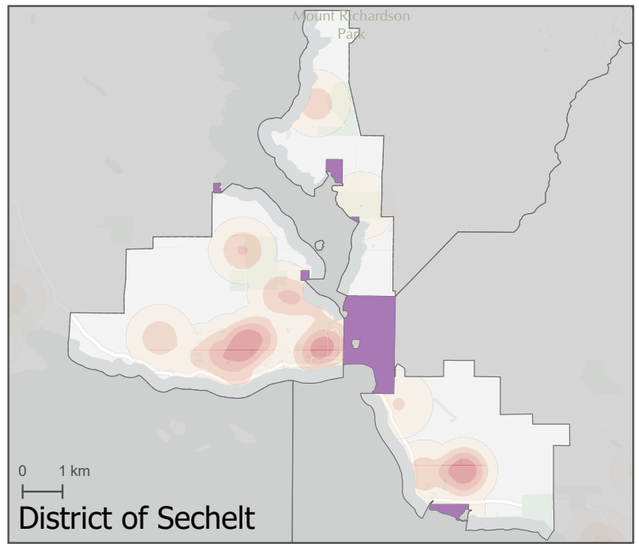
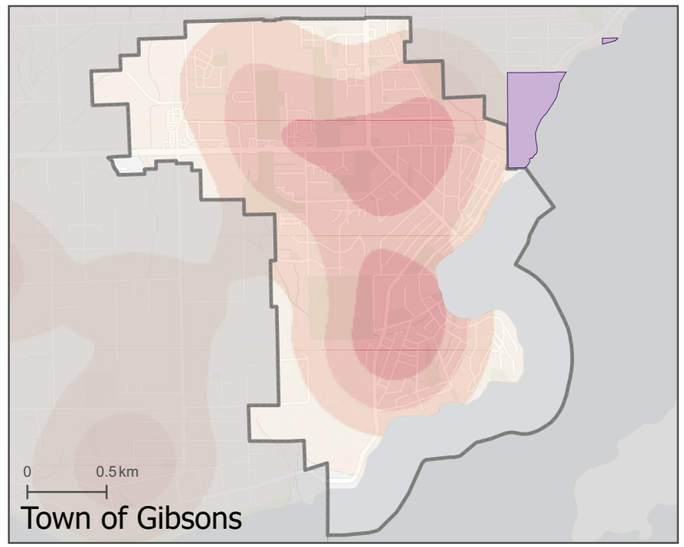
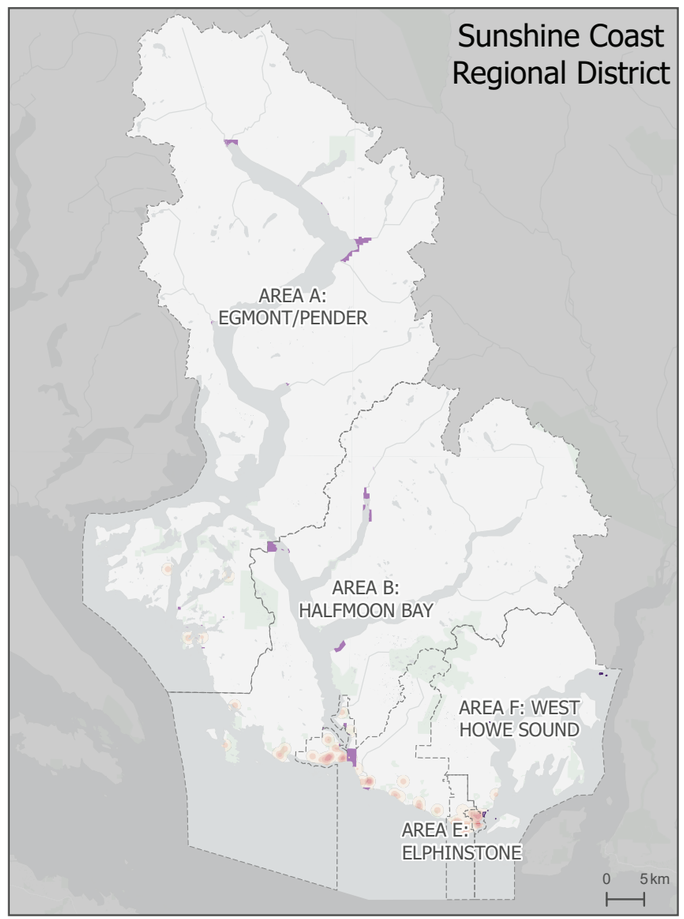
Population Density 2031



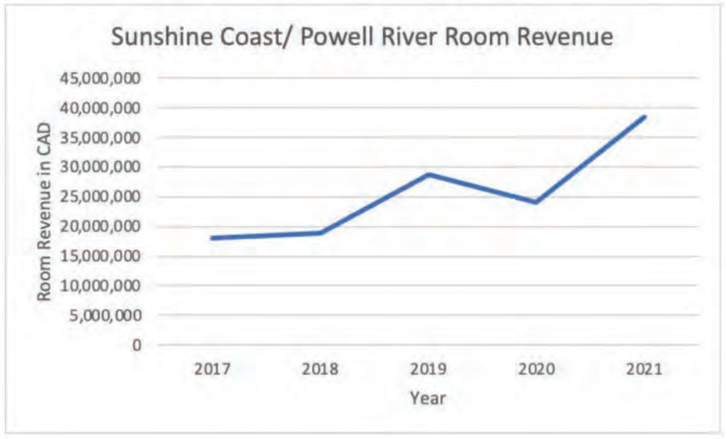




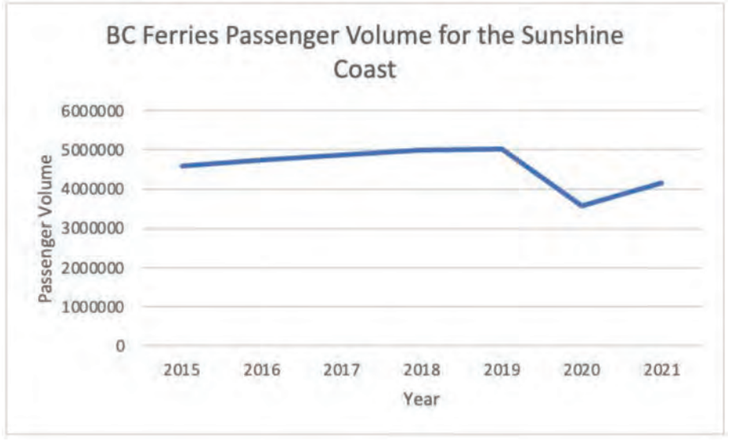


Seasonal Fluctuations in Population

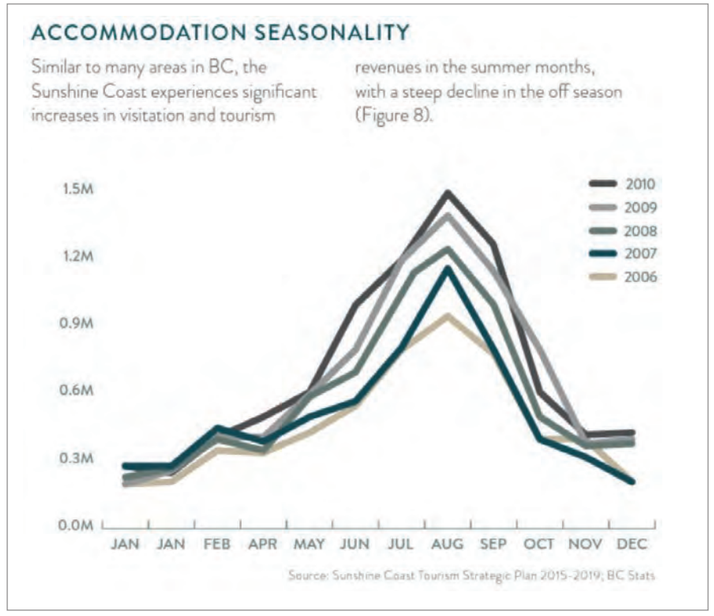
Tourism is an important component of the Sunshine Coast Regional District's local economy, as visitors are attracted by its unique coastal communities, inlets and waterways, trails, art galleries and cultural festivals. As of 2021, the Sunshine Coast Regional District had a population of 32,1701 residents. However, the District also experiences a seasonal influx of tourists that have important implications for infrastructure, housing, transportation and the local economy. One indicator of tourism flows into the District are room revenues. As seen in the chart below, the combined Sunshine Coast/Powell River room revenue has been increasing since 2017, with a noticeable dip in 2020, and a corresponding increase in 2021.



Another indicator of tourism flows is BC Ferries passenger volumes for the Sunshine Coast. An important note is that the data does not separate visitors from resident passengers. However, the data should reflect significant changes to visitor volumes. A majority of visitors to the District arrive through the Horseshoe Bay Ferry Terminal. As seen in the next chart, BC Ferries passenger volumes have been steadily increasing between 2015 and 2019, with a decrease in 2020 and a recovery in 2021.



As mentioned previously, the District experiences seasonal fluctuations in tourism-related visits. In particular, the District experiences peak visitation in the summer months, and a steep decline in the off season, as seen in the monthly room revenue chart below.



SOURCES

Statistics Canada. 2022. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released September 21, 2022. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed October 14, 2022).

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Sunshine Coast Tourism Strategic Business Plan 2015-2019. Sunshine Coast Tourism. (n.d.). Retrieved October 14, 2022, from https://sunshinecoastcanada.com/app/uploads/2017/07/SCT-Strategic-Business-Plan-2015-2019.pdf

5 | Transportation

Transportation is a key component of how growth is planned. Any new development needs access to the local transportation network. Even better is when growth is located near public transportation, bike lanes, and sidewalks or trails to encourage active transportation as opposed to car dependency.

The Sunshine Coast Highway is the main road that connects most communities in the area. It follows the coastline and extends from the Langdale ferry terminal to Earls Cove ferry terminal. As the only road that connects the major population centres of Gibsons and Sechelt, it is a crucial piece of transportation infrastructure that is increasingly popular with tourists and commuters alike. However, very few options exist to increase the capacity of the highway and accommodate more vehicles. Nor is this a particularly sustainable approach to transportation if the intent is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Instead, convenient and frequent public transit could be key to solving challenges related to growth and traffic congestion. Five bus routes operated by BC Transit service the Sunshine Coast:

- 1 - Langdale Ferry/Sechelt
- 2 - West Sechelt
- 3 - Sechelt Arena
- 4 - Halfmoon Bay
- 90 - Langdale Ferry/Sechelt Express

Locating future growth near these existing transit routes and potential future routes, while investing in more transit amenities and frequent service has the potential to shift residents' preferred mode of transportation.

Data used on the following map include:

- Airstrip – registered aerodrome within the SCRD (Province of BC, 2022)
- Ports (provided by SCRD September, 2022)
- Ferry Terminal (BC Ferries, downloaded 2022)
- BC Ferries Routes (BC Ferries, downloaded 2019)
- Bus routes (BC Transit, downloaded 2022)
- Trails (provided by SCRD, received October 2021)
- Roads (provided by SCRD, received October 2021)
- Sunshine Coast Highway (provided by SCRD, received October 2021)

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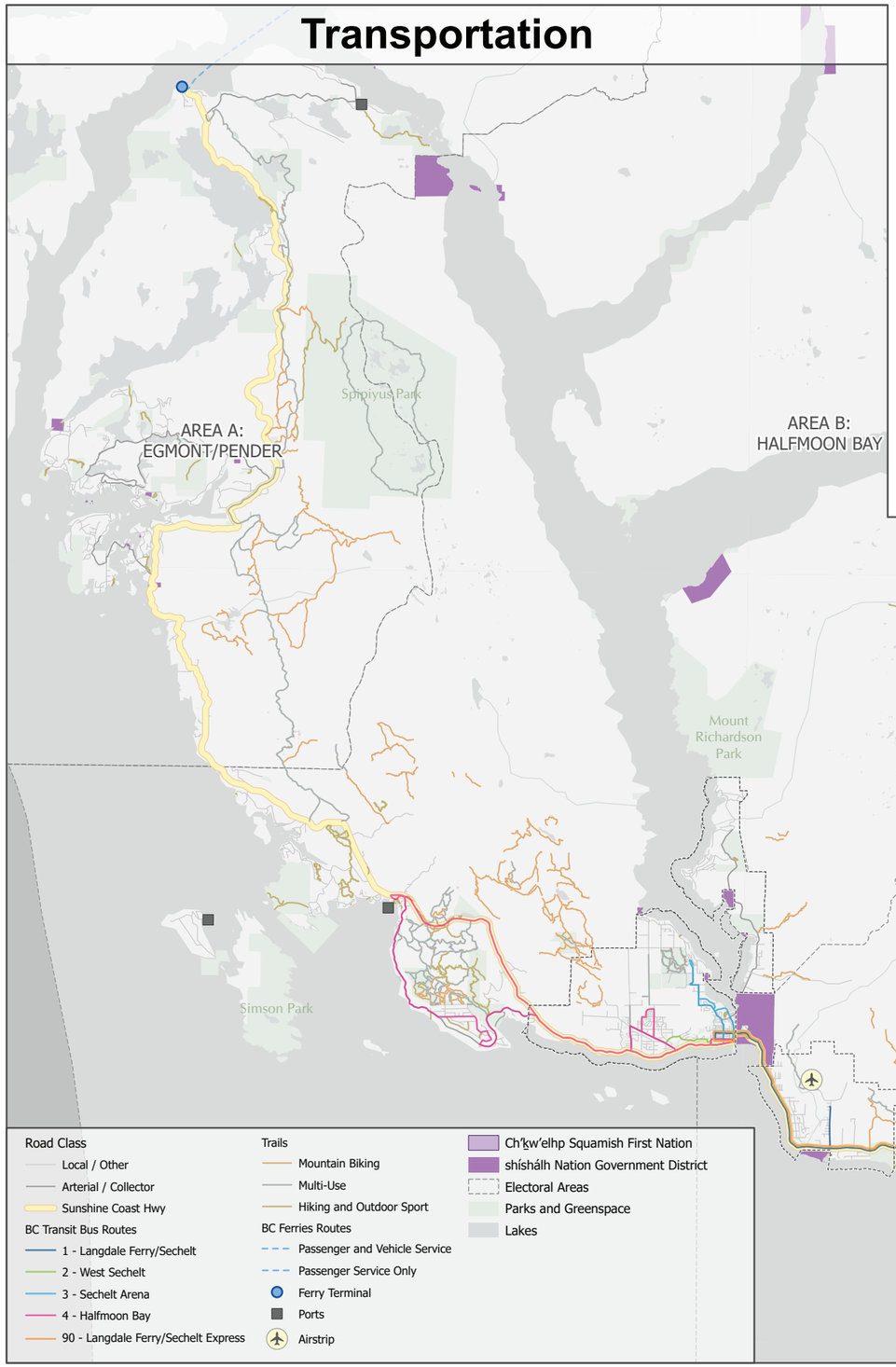
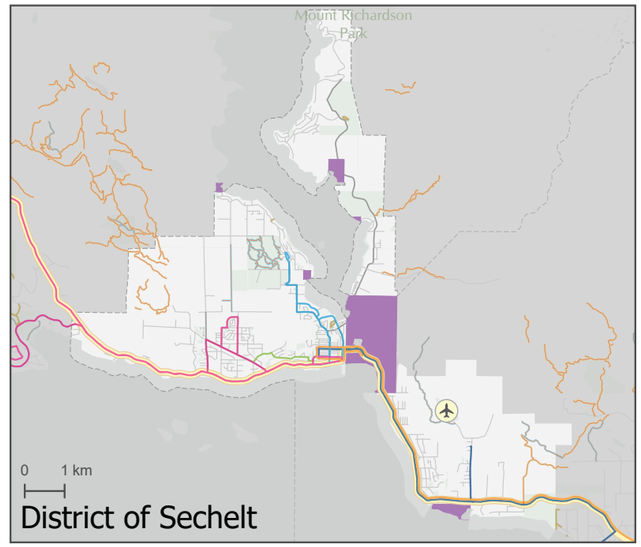
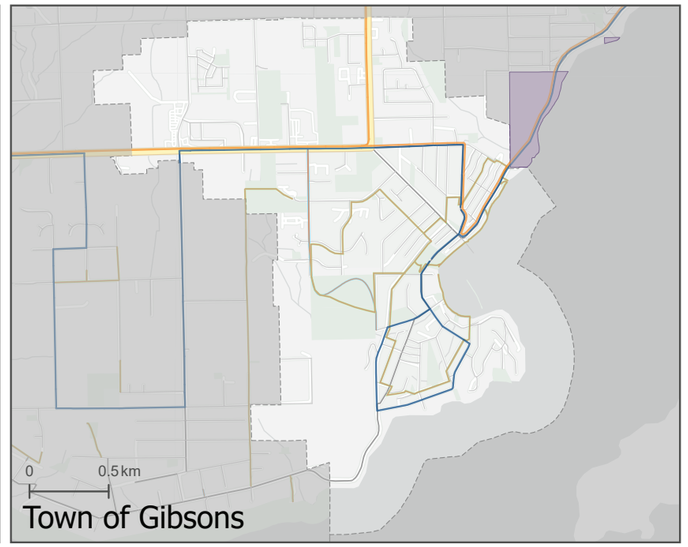
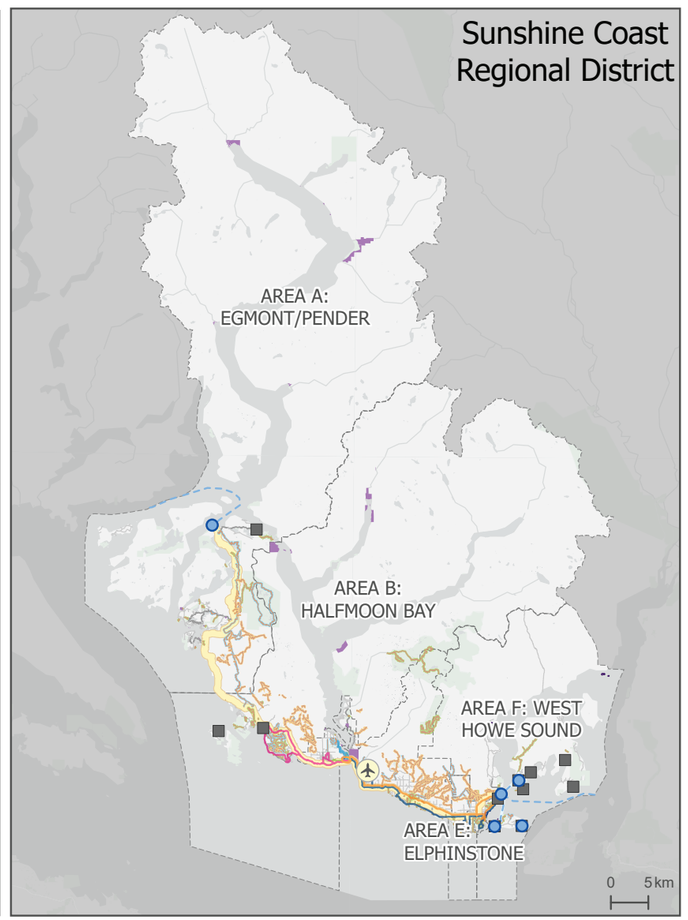
Transportation









6| Community Services

Much like transportation, any future growth should also be connected to a range of community services. Ensuring new development is located within current refuse collection and fire protection areas, and connecting it to existing sewer and water mains makes more efficient use of these services. Otherwise, service areas need to expand which often requires greater operating and maintenance costs and higher taxes.

Taking advantage of the infrastructure that exists is a more economical and sustainable approach to growth. The following map shows where these services overlap and thus, where future growth may be the most opportune in relation to these important community services.

The services mapped include:

- Schools (Province of British Columbia, 2022)
- Community Facilities (SCRD website list of recreation facilities, 2022)
- Power Infrastructure (BC Hydro via SCRD, received October 2021)
- Water Servicing Infrastructure (provided by District of Sechelt. Gibsons and SCRD, received October 2021)
- Sewer Servicing Infrastructure (provided by District of Sechelt. Gibsons and SCRD, received October 2021)
- Refuse Collection Service Area (provided by SCRD, received October 2021)
- Fire Protection Areas (provided by SCRD, received May 2022)
- Parks proximity buffer 800m, produced from parks base layers

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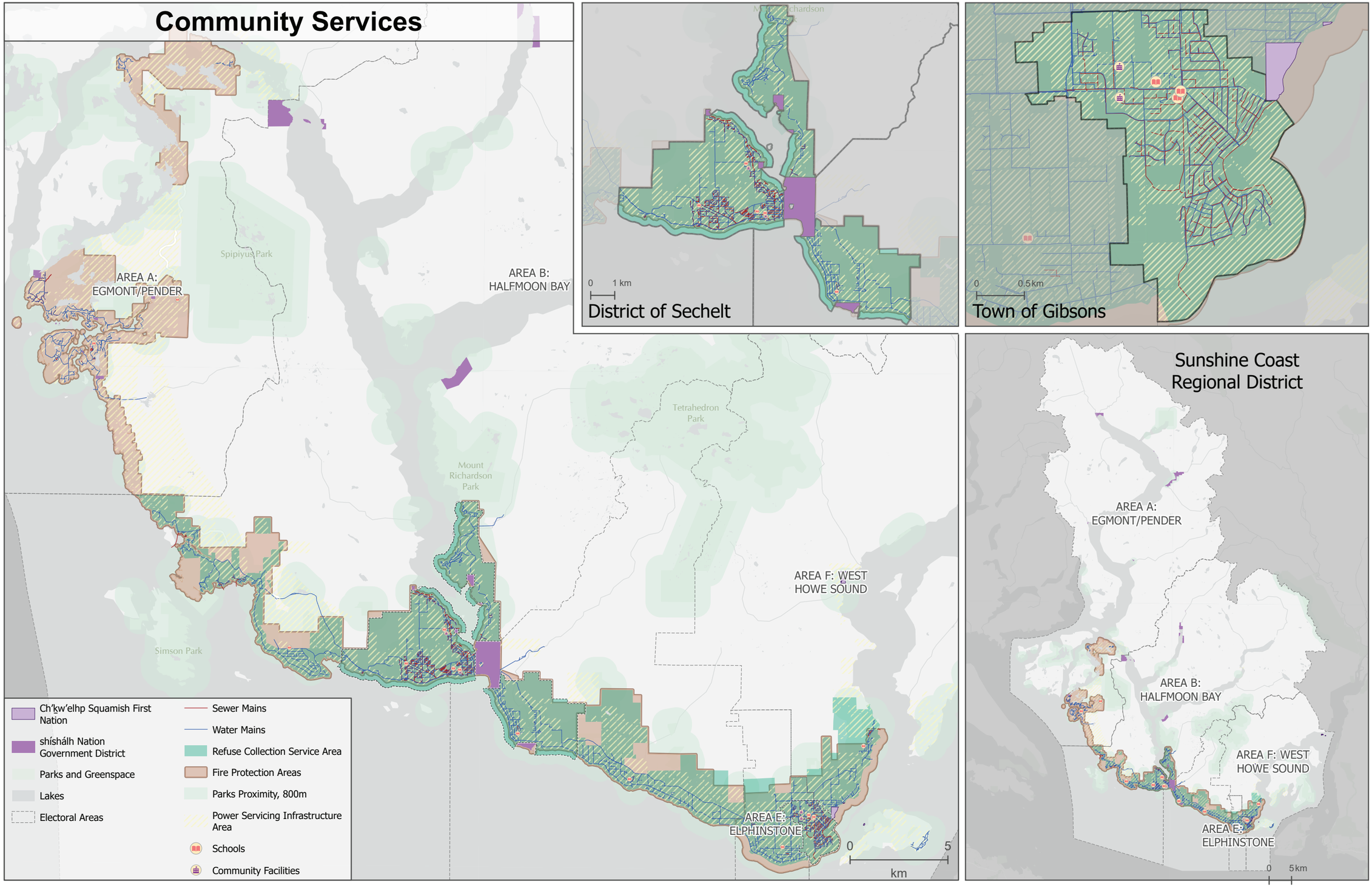
Community Services



7 | Potential for Growth

When reviewed together, the opportunities for and constraints to growth can be assigned a score factor and mapped. This helps us understand the potential for growth at the parcel scale. Once tabulated, the scores for each parcel are associated with a colour ranging from red (little to no opportunity for growth) to dark green (high opportunity for growth).

Features that are considered **opportunities** are given a positive score. These include:

- Community Services
    - Proximity to transit (within 800m)
    - Proximity to commercial uses (within 1200m)
    - Proximity to community facilities (within 1200m)
    - Proximity to ferry terminals (within 1000m)
    - Proximity to parks (800m)
    - Proximity to schools (1200m)
    - Proximity to roads
    - Fire protection areas
    - Refuse collection service areas
    - Sewer servicing infrastructure
    - Water servicing infrastructure
- Land Use
    - Gap between current density (BC Assessment) and envisioned density (OCP)
    - Residential designated land

The map illustrates some of the greatest opportunities for growth are located within:

- most of downtown and western Sechelt;
- the Davis Bay and ts'ukw'um Creek areas;
- most of the Town of Gibsons; and,
- to a lesser degree, the Roberts Creek village area.

Features that are considered **constraints** are given a negative score. These include:

- Environmental Assets
    - Environmental sensitivity (DPA)
    - Riparian areas (DPA)
    - Groundwater aquifer
- Hazards
    - Geotechnical hazard (DPA)
    - Slopes hazard (DPA)
    - Flood hazard (DPA and Coastal 8m vertical)
    - BC fire threat rating (moderate and higher)

Certain features preclude parcels from consideration. These include:

- shíshálh Nation Government District lands
- Skwxwú7mesh First Nation reserves
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Critical habitat
- Old growth forest
- Parks
- Red and blue listed species observations
- Species and ecosystems at risk, including Coastal Douglas Fir and Arbutus tree habitats

*shíshálh nation government lands and Skwxwú7mesh reserve lands are not under the purview of the SCRD and are excluded from this study

Opportunities for Growth

Score
- < -2
- -2 - 0
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 6
- 7 - 8
- 9 - 11
- 12 - 14
- 15 - 16
- 17 - 19
- 20 - 22
- 23 - 24
- ≥ 25

*light grey space indicates no parcel

Ch'kw'elhp Squamish First Nation

shíshálh Nation Government District

Road

Sunshine Coast Highway

AREA A: EGMONT/PENDER

AREA B: HALFMOON BAY

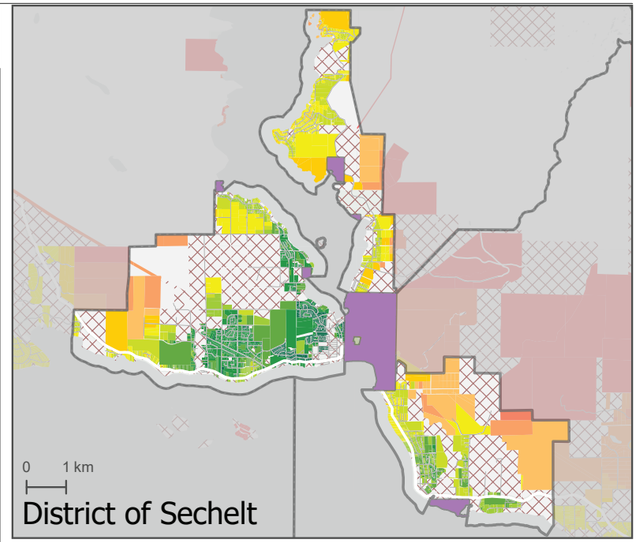
AREA E: ELPHINSTONE

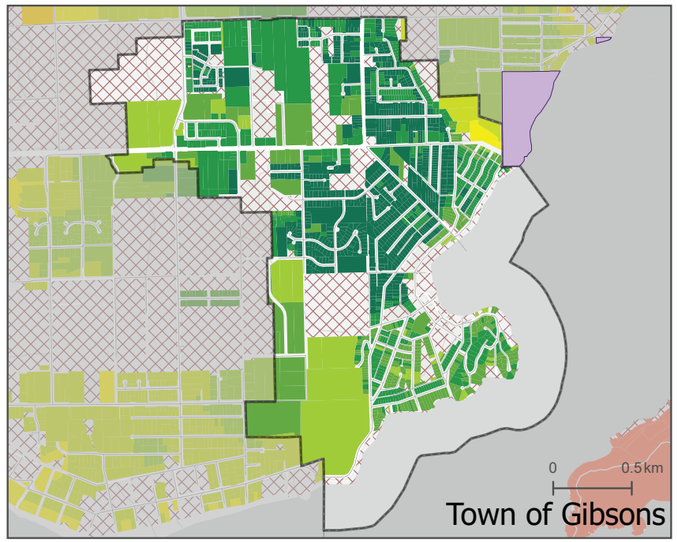
AREA F: WEST HOWE SOUND

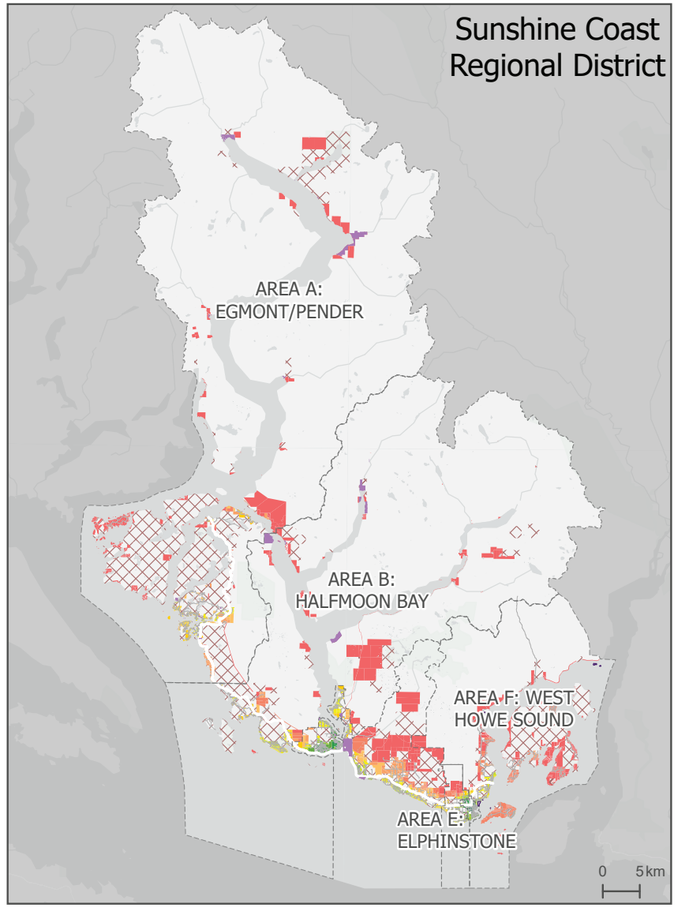
0 5 km

These maps show the results of an indicative scoring of opportunities for development growth in the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) at the parcel scale. The opportunity for growth score considers multiple datasets relating to the SCRD and ranks them according to (1) their likelihood or preference to facilitate local development and (2) their respective proportion of the parcel area (i.e. the more overlap between a parcel and a criterion, the higher the influence to the score).

Table 1 (see text) summarizes datasets that influence the opportunity for growth scoring. A higher score factor means a greater potential impact on the score. Table 1 does not included additional variables that disqualify any scored potential for growth.







RECOMMENDATIONS

future research on regional growth should consider...

1 | Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration

Growth should be coordinated across jurisdictions and supported by investments from other levels of government.

First Nations

- Co-create engagement protocols, reconciliation agreements, and/or memorandums-of-understanding (MOUs) to foster greater collaboration with the shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh nations

Federal Government

- Work with the federal government on matters such as:
  - Protecting watercourses and establishing modernized policies for marine and foreshore environments with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; and,
  - Protecting species at risk and enhancing natural assets by building on and expanding the federal SARA safety net with the Ministry of Environment.

Provincial Government

- Work with the provincial government on matters such as:
  - Reducing car dependency and providing safe and sustainable transportation options with the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MoTI);
  - Building more affordable, non-market housing options with BC Housing;
  - Ensuring a sustainable supply of potable water that meets the needs of SCRD residents into the future; and,
  - Following sustainable forestry practices that protect watersheds and local water supplies with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations (MFLNRO);

Electoral Areas & Incorporated Municipalities

- Support the continued collaboration between Electoral Areas and Incorporated Municipalities in ensuring regional alignment, especially on issues that cross boundaries:
  - ecological integrity and watershed management
  - aquifer health
  - affordable housing
  - infrastructure services
  - transportation
  - and more...

2 | Indigenous Rights & Heritage

Growth should respect and protect Indigenous rights and heritage.

UNDRIP & TRC

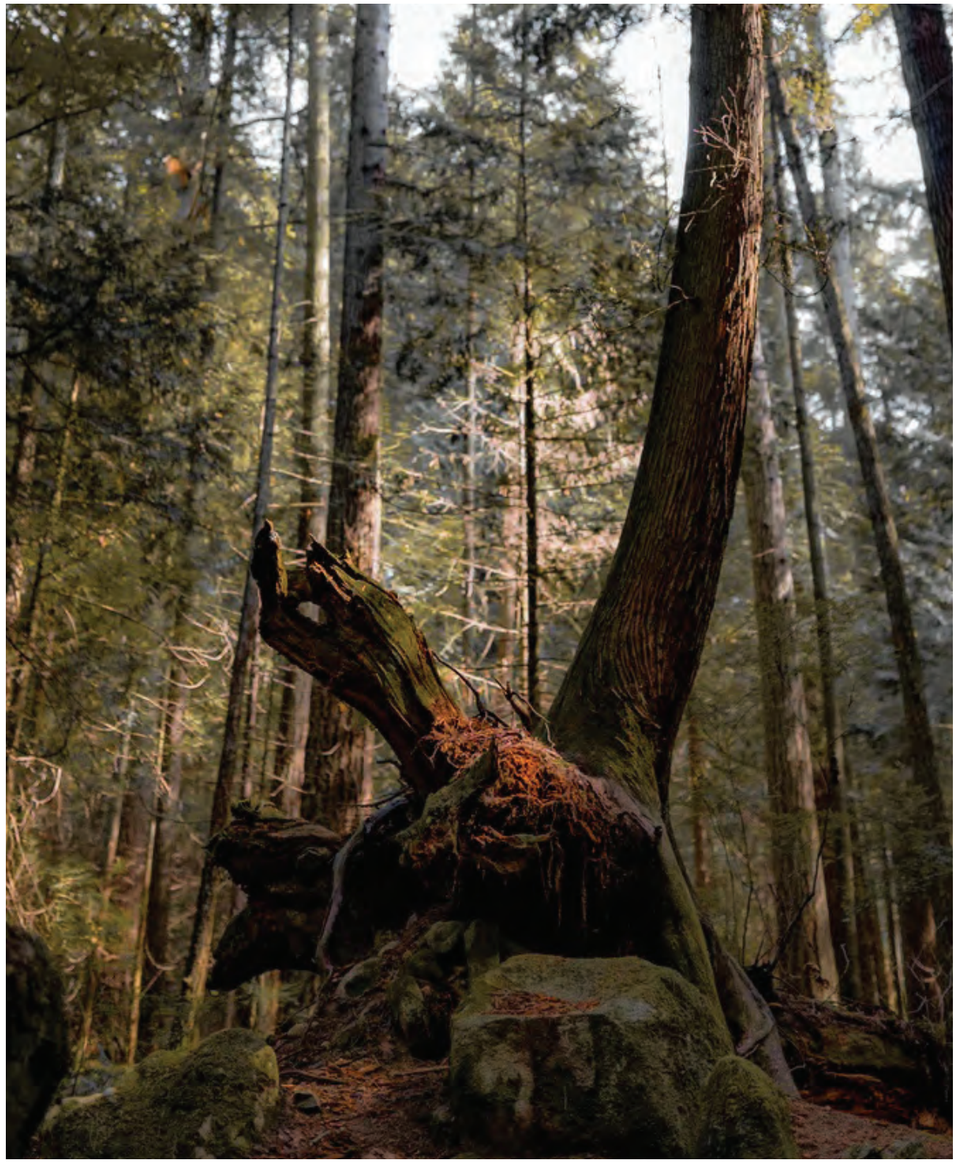
- Integrate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada Calls to Action.
- Implement BC's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) goals, which could include greater First Nation participation in regional district governance, reviewing the principles and processes that guide place naming and evolving practices to foster reconciliation in local processes.

Environment

- Prevent growth and tourism on lands where Indigenous communities practice culturally significant activities (e.g. hunting, collecting cedar bark)
- Encourage and support the revitalization of plant species that are culturally important to shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh nations
- Explore legal "personhood" for natural assets important to shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh nations

Archaeology

- Work collaboratively with First Nations to protect significant shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh cultural and archaeological sites
- Advocate for the province to update its archaeological database in a timely manner



3 | Focussed & Fitted Development

Growth should be focussed in existing developed areas, fit with natural settings and reduce environmental impacts.

Incorporated Municipalities

- Absorb the majority of the SCRD's future growth within the incorporated municipalities of the District of Sechelt and the Town of Gibsons, where elected Councils have the tools to shape growth in more sustainable ways and where opportunities for growth have the potential to more effectively achieve broader regional objectives.
- Encourage infill of low density, single use, car dependent areas to improve community vitality and resilience, and lessen the impacts of sprawl and deterioration of rural and natural environments

Electoral Areas

- Focus development in close proximity to established centres or hubs, where commercial services and infrastructure servicing already exist
- Reduce development footprint and ecological impact by clustering buildings closely together

4 | Natural Asset Restoration

Growth should complement natural asset restoration at a watershed scale and protect biodiversity.

Natural Asset Management

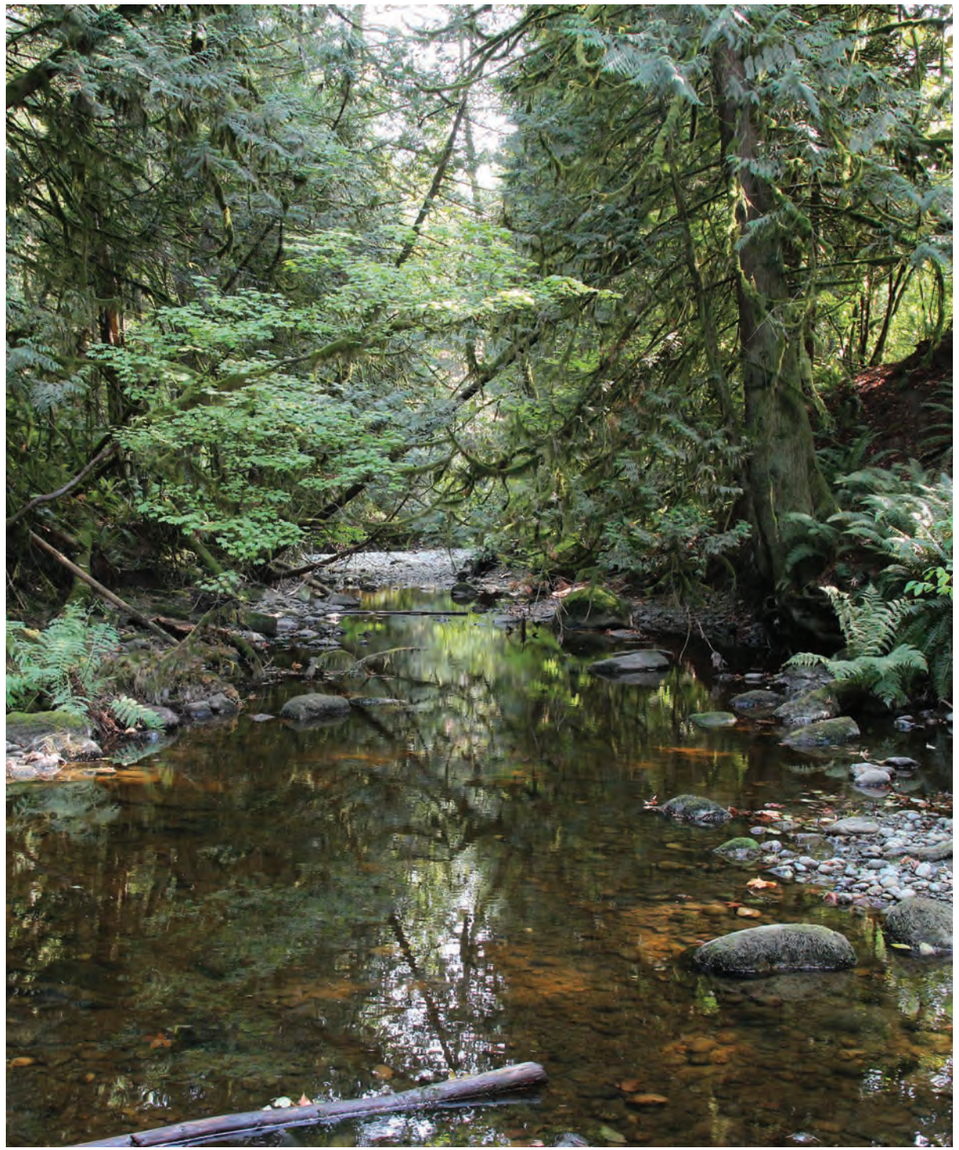
- Develop a natural asset management strategy at a regional scale that builds off of the Town of Gibsons' program and Indigenous communities' knowledge and policies. Specifically, the shíshálh Strategic Land Use Plan and Lands and Resources Decision-Making Policy provide direct guidance for this subject.
- Carry-out ecological restoration strategies at the watershed scale in collaboration with First Nations
- Strengthen environmental impact studies, especially as they relate to groundwater sources

Coastal & Riparian Environments

- Protect and restore coastal and riparian environments to enhance biodiversity and mitigate the impacts of sea level rise and flooding hazards
- Explore marine use policies that protect the integrity of the coastline

Forests & Tree Canopies

- Protect Coastal Douglas-fir and Arbutus tree habitats throughout the region
- Develop invasive plant strategies to defend the ecological integrity of terrestrial environments in collaboration with First Nations



5 | Water Conservation & Aquifer Health

Growth should enhance water conservation measures while maintaining aquifer health.

Water Conservation

- Investigate innovative ways to conserve water, including the re-use of grey water and rainwater harvesting
- Invest in new or expanded potable water sources to support long-term, sustainable growth, and prevent future emergency restrictions related to water use

Aquifer Health

- Apply a consistent approach to aquifer protection, such as Development Permit Areas, across local government boundaries to prevent contamination of drinking water sources
- Require detention tanks in new development over sensitive aquifers to safeguard aquifer health

Water Rights

- Collaborate with the shíshálh and Sḵwx̱wú7mesh nation on joint water projects to ensure long-term supply of potable water for all communities

6| Climate Resilience

Growth should ensure settlements are resilient to climate impacts and emergency events.

Sea Level Rise & Flooding

- Conduct a flood and foreshore risk assessment to better understand the impacts of the climate crisis at a regional scale
- Consider impacts from more severe atmospheric river events on creak health

Wildfire Threat

- Prevent growth in wildfire interface areas and in areas that are outside of the SCRD's fire emergency response capacity
- Explore the creation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans in at-risk areas

Emergency Preparedness

- Use the Climate Risk Assessment Tool in land use and planning decision-making
- Coordinate and integrate partner emergency plans to address priority risks, with an expectation of joint decision-making, unified communications and resource sharing

7 | Climate Mitigation

Growth should reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

GHG Emissions

- Establish regional greenhouse gas emission targets within a climate crisis mitigation strategy that models the impacts of actions and charts a path to achieving the targets

Building Emissions

- Support the retrofitting of older buildings and green construction of new buildings to achieve energy efficiency and a reduction in GHG emissions
- Aim to reduce the use and distribution of wood stoves and natural gas as a heat source and support more robust electrical grids and renewable energy alternatives

Transportation Emissions

- Work with MoTI to reduce car dependency and encourage sustainable modes of transportation like walking, biking, and transit
- Expand the regions' network of electric vehicle charging stations

Waste Management

- Develop waste management strategies that reduce and divert waste from landfills
- Explore locations for a new landfill and avoid shipping waste outside of the region

Carbon Sinks

- Protect mature tree stands, eelgrass beds, wetlands, and other ecological assets that serve to retain carbon

8 | Land Use & Infrastructure

Growth should be shaped by equitable and climate-informed land use and infrastructure plans.

Equitable and Sustainable Land Use

- Develop an equity and climate lens through which to review land use and infrastructure policy

Density and Mix of Uses

- Ensure minimum densities in Official Community Plans support the sustainable provision of servicing (e.g. water, sewer, transportation)
- Seek to increase the mix of uses within communities to encourage active transportation and support neighbourhood completeness

Green and Connected Infrastructure

- Wherever possible utilize green infrastructure solutions to mitigate impacts from development while supporting natural assets (e.g. rainwater gardens, green roofs, permeable pavement, detention ponds, etc.)
- Connect infrastructure across jurisdictional boundaries and avoid gaps in systems such as cycling networks

9 | Diverse Housing

Growth should diversify housing types and tenures to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Housing Needs

- Use financial, density, and process incentives to support the development of housing types that are most needed according to the SCRD's latest Housing Needs Report

Single Detached Zoning

- End single detached zoning and allow residential infill throughout established neighbourhoods (e.g. guest cottages, cluster housing, du- and triplexes)

Diverse Tenures

- Encourage a greater mix of housing tenures throughout the region, including purpose built rental, co-op housing, and co-housing

10| Healthy & Social Communities

Growth should foster healthy communities, social connectivity and wellbeing.

Civic Health

- Support and enhance public spaces where people can connect and engage with public leaders, navigate divides and build trust, and attend events that bring people in the community together to interact and celebrate
- Explore innovative community program and service delivery that can be facilitated outdoors or in schools and community halls through shared use agreements

Access to Parks & Recreation

- Increase access to nature and recreation opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds

Active Transportation

- Develop a region wide active transportation strategy in collaboration with MoTI
- Expand trail systems and bike routes to connect neighbourhoods and communities both locally and regionally
- Efforts to expand existing trials should include close engagement with shíshálh nation respecting appropriate permitting.

Mixed Income Neighbourhoods

- Support mixed income neighbourhoods where people of diverse backgrounds and means have access to housing, jobs, services education, nature and more

11 | Inclusive & Accessible Planning

Growth should be managed through inclusive and accessible planning processes.

Cultural Sensitivity

- Adopt First Nation-led cultural sensitivity training for staff as it relates to engaging with Indigenous communities

Community Engagement

- Develop inclusive engagement practices that reach seldom-heard audiences and allow for safe and respectful dialogue, including at public hearings
- Seek to remove barriers for engagement activities in terms of language, location, physical/virtual design of space, and other factors that may prevent individuals from participating

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This final report — along with earlier Phase 1 and 2 reports — have pulled together significant data and information across various jurisdictions to present a baseline of conditions related to various key components that will help shape a future **research on regional growth**.

The recommendations can be viewed as important, high level considerations to ensure **future research on regional growth** is grounded in evidence from GIS analysis, staff interviews, key strategies and master plans, and planning best practices.

Some data gaps exist, particularly in relation to sensitive environmental features (e.g. marine habitat, aquifer vulnerability and productivity) and infrastructure and servicing (e.g. active transportation routes). These require further research.

It should also be noted that while the 2007 Strategic Land Use Plan is still in effect, the shíshálh nation is finalizing a new land use plan for the swiya (lands and waters that shíshálh Nation has occupied and utilized since time immemorial) which will provide direction on biodiversity, watershed integrity, cultural resources, and economic development. Once complete, it can serve as a crucial foundational document to supplement this report's findings.