

FAQs
COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY
- August 28, 2008 -

Q. What is this MOU all about?

A. The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), the Town of Comox, the City of Courtenay and the Village of Cumberland have entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will provide interim management of planning and development initiatives until the four local governments have adopted the Comox Valley regional growth strategy.

Q. What period of time does the MOU cover?

A. It is effective from July 29, 2008 – the date the CVRD board adopted it, following the endorsement by the three municipalities – until adoption of the regional growth strategy at the end of 2010.

Q. Does it apply to every area in the CVRD?

A. No. It applies to all areas of the CVRD except Denman and Hornby Islands (Area ‘K’) as their land use planning is governed by Islands Trust.

Q. What kinds of things does the MOU cover?

A. It covers significant development and planning matters that have an impact on neighbouring jurisdictions, amendments to official community plan, zoning bylaws, substantial development permits and applications for exclusion from the agricultural land reserve.

Q. Why is this step needed? Why not just get on with putting together the regional growth strategy?

A. Preparing the regional growth strategy (RGS) will take up to two years. In the meantime, development and planning will continue in the Comox Valley. All four jurisdictions have accepted the principles of sustainability, so it was important to ensure those principles would be applied equally across the entire area. It is important that proposed development applications are given regional consideration during the regional growth management planning process in order to begin now to implement some of the foundation principles to be considered in the regional growth strategy. Principles such as sustainability, accessibility, conservation and other essential elements of a regional growth strategy to address impacts on communities such as housing, transportation, servicing, parks and natural areas, economic development, public health and safety.

Q. What are the principles of sustainability?

A. They are generally accepted to focus on the following areas known as the “eight pillars”:

1. Complete, compact, livable neighbourhood centres
2. Efficient, innovative transportation
3. Advancing green buildings & site design
4. Open space and local food systems
5. Efficient, integrated infrastructure
6. Building a strong, healthy community
7. Sustainable economic development
8. Progressive and integrated management

Q. Will this step delay consideration of development applications?

A. Fairly simple applications should not be affected. Larger applications may see a delay in that the enhanced regional review process will be considering and reviewing application’s with a ‘regional lens’ that includes consideration of the principles of sustainability, accessibility, conservation and other essential elements of a regional growth strategy.

Q. So for example, what kinds of criteria would be applied to large-scale development proposals?

A. The participants in the MOU generally endorse the pillars of sustainability for the preparation of the regional growth strategy, and for guidance in decision-making for other local planning and land use matters. Sustainability principles and the desire for compact communities with accessible public spaces and complete services should be the basis for land use planning. The overall goal being sought is to maintain a tight compact form of urban development so as to increase the efficiency of servicing, reduce green house gas emissions and to maintain the rural integrity of the surrounding areas.