RDOS

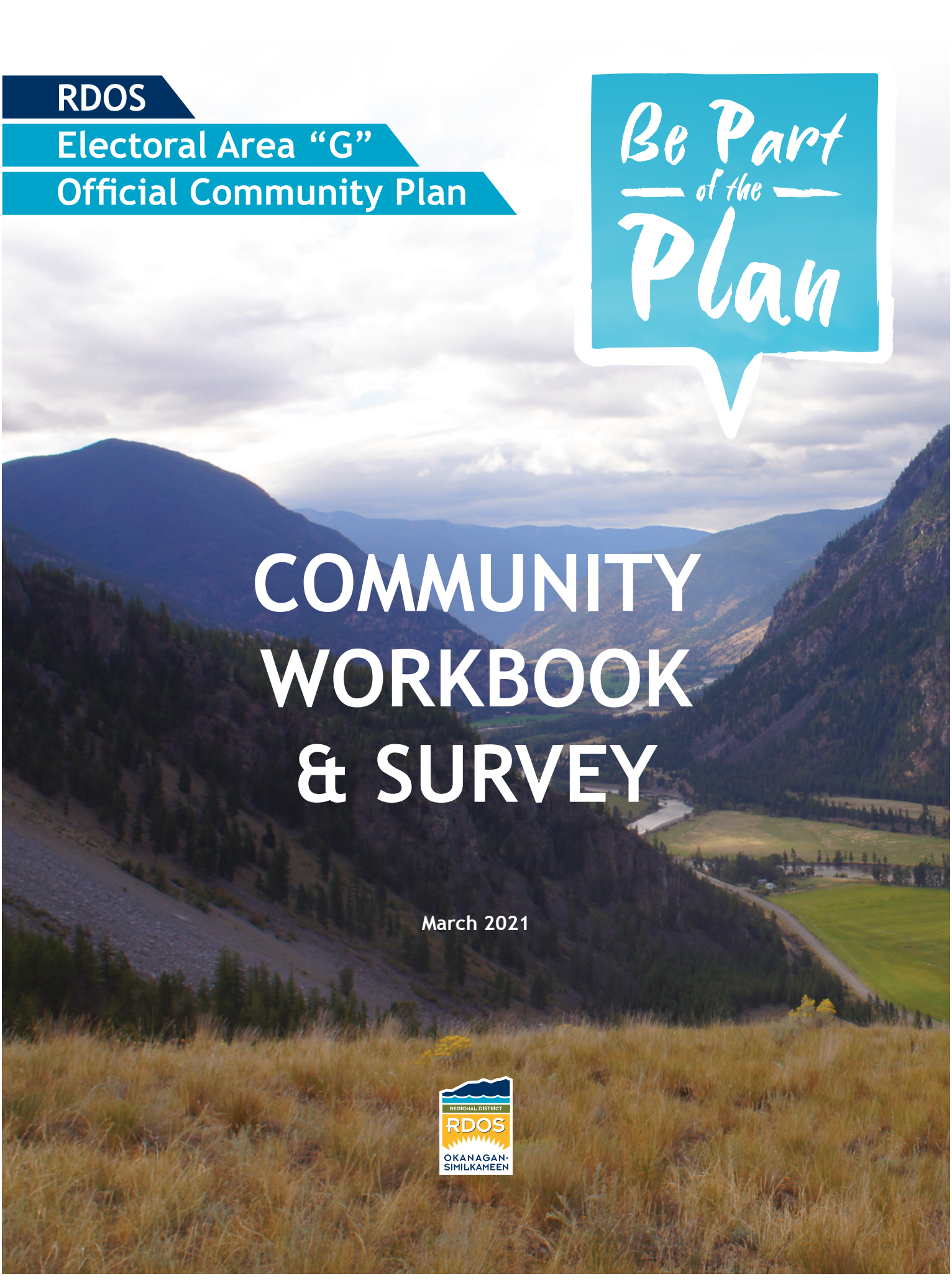
Electoral Area "G"

Official Community Plan

Be Part of the Plan

COMMUNITY WORKBOOK & SURVEY

March 2021



BE PART OF THE PLAN.

What's happening?

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) has initiated planning and preparation of the first Official Community Plan (OCP) for Electoral Area "G".

This Community Workbook provides some preliminary information on the project and includes a **survey** for Electoral Area "G" residents to complete. Survey results will help shape a vision and draft directions for land use and development in Electoral Area "G".

What's the process?

Creating an OCP is a community-driven process, **so we are looking for you to get involved!** We are working to engage residents, property owners and other stakeholders. A volunteer Citizens Committee, composed of area residents, was set up to help review materials, provide input, and reach out to their communities.

We will be offering many ways to collaborate and help keep you informed throughout the process.

This includes:

- Surveys, like this one
- Self-guided exercises, online and paper
- Interactive webpage at RDOS Regional Connections (quick polls, Q&A, mapping exercise)
- Open houses in each community (electronic meetings)
- Opportunities to ask questions & provide comments (phone or email or letter)

We will also help you stay informed during the project by:

- Updates to the RDOS Regional Connections webpage
- Direct mail for specific activities or updates
- Notices to the RDOS Facebook page and through CivicReady
- Display posters in your community

To stay informed, we recommend you sign up for update emails through the RDOS Regional Connections or CivicReady. See links below.

- ***rdosregionalconnections.ca/area-g-ocp***
- ***rdos.bc.ca/newsandevents/civic-ready***



WHAT'S AN OCP?

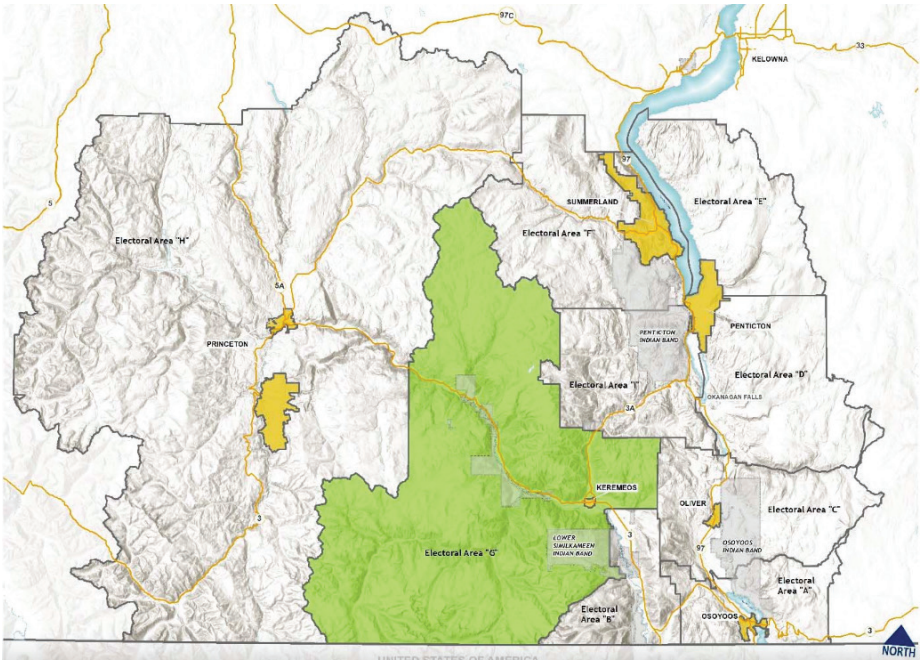
An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a planning document that provides policies on a broad range of topics including land-use, agriculture, housing, parks and infrastructure. They are developed through public consultation and the objectives and policy statements within them reflect the collective desires of the people within the planning area.

OCPs help provide a blueprint and map for a community's future. They are created to guide decisions on planning and land use management by establishing a long-term vision, supporting goals and objectives, and policies to achieve them.

Where is Area "G"?

Electoral Area "G" comprises a land area of approximately 2,157 km2 and is the second largest Electoral Area within the RDOS, comprising 20.4% of its total area. This area includes the Village of Keremeos, Upper Similkameen Indian Band (USIB) lands, Lower Similkameen Indian Band (LSIB) lands, and the unincorporated communities of Hedley and Olalla.

The Plan Area is bounded by the international border with the United States of America to the south, and abuts the rural areas of Electoral Area "H" to the west and north, Electoral Area "F" to the northeast, and Electoral Area "I", "C" and "B" to the east.



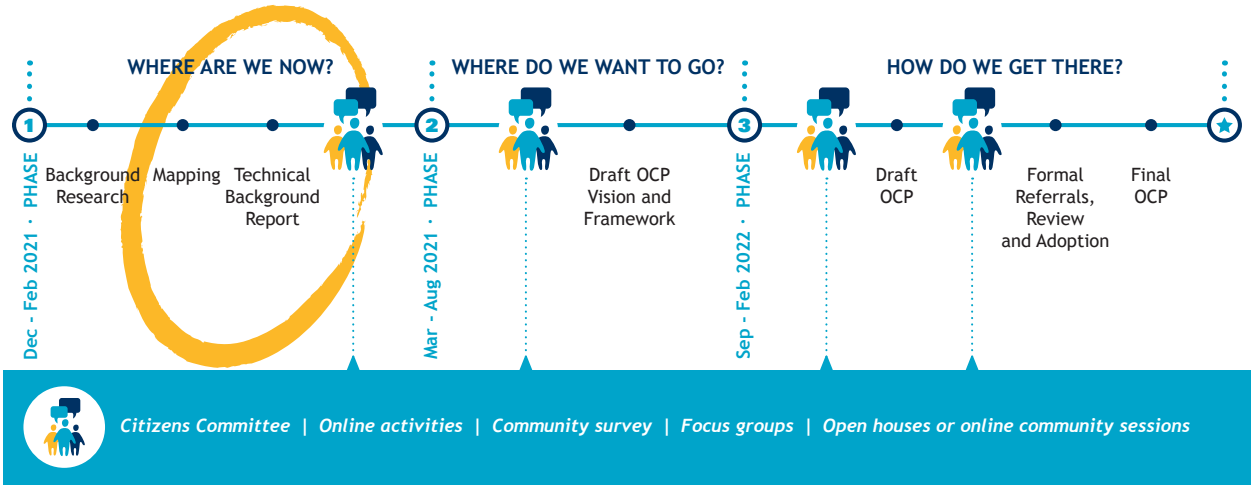
Map of Area "G"

Why are we doing it?

In 2019, the Electoral Area "G" Director expressed an interest in the communities' opinion on future land use and development over the next 20-25 years.

In October 2019, the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen reached out to the community to get their opinion on developing an Official Community Plan (OCP) for Electoral Area "G" in a campaign called, "Let's Talk Land Use". The results of that campaign showed that residents were in favour of having a say in future land use in their communities through exploring the concept of developing an OCP. In response, the RDOS initiated an Official Community Plan process to obtain more input and understand the interests of the community.

Work started on the project in December 2020 and we expect to **complete it by spring 2022**. The timeline outlines major project components and expected timing.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As part of the project, a technical background report was completed to provide a 'snapshot' of Area "G" today. The report helps to identify trends and potential issues that should be considered as part of the OCP update. Here are some key findings from the report.

Area "G" includes traditional territory of the Syilx speaking people

Indigenous peoples have lived in the RDOS area for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans. The original people of the Okanagan are known as the Syilx speaking people – the "Okanagans" – and their traditional territory extends throughout and beyond Area "G". Reserve lands of the Upper Similkameen and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands are located adjacent to, and within Area "G".

Hedley, Olalla and Keremeos started as mining and agricultural communities

Non-indigenous settlement in what is now Hedley, Olalla, and the agricultural community surrounding the Village of Keremeos began in the late 19th century, largely spurred by mineral claims and agriculture. Much of this history is evident throughout the area, with key historic sites (including a Provincial Heritage site) located primarily in and around Hedley.

Most people in Area "G" live in Rural Keremeos

Residents in Area "G" are concentrated within the communities of Hedley, Olalla and Rural Keremeos, which boasts the highest number of residents.

The population decreased, but long-term trends are not clear

Between 2011 and 2016, the population shrank by about 3.4%. However, longer-term population figures for 2001 – 2016 suggest a possible gradual increase in population by 2026.

Many residents are reaching retirement age

People over the age of 65 make up nearly 40% of the population. This is high when compared to the entire Province (17% of BC residents are over the age of 65). Over the next 5 years, the age cohort 65+ is expected to experience the most growth in Electoral Area "G".

There is a demand for affordable, age-friendly housing

As our population continues to age, there may be a greater demand for smaller, one-bedroom homes that are barrier-free and wheelchair accessible, allow residents to stay in our community as they age. As a large proportion of our population is retired and living on a fixed income, this may increase the demand for more affordable and age-friendly housing.

Hedley has more children per household

Larger family homes of more than two-bedrooms are in high demand in the Hedley area because many families have larger numbers of children than in Electoral Area "G" overall.

Most of the housing in Area "G" is single family

Most of the housing in Electoral Area "G" consists of single-detached homes. This comprises 60% of all housing, with the remaining housing being in the form of mobile homes (34%) and duplex/semi-detached housing (6%).

Most of the workforce commutes for work

The majority of people are employed in the resource sector (agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining) or retail trade. Over 75% of our workforce commutes (up to 30mins) to another community for work, which has increased by around 30% over the past 10 years. Now, the majority of our land is used for grazing or rangelands, forestry, natural resource extraction, recreation, watersheds and environmental conservation.

The "school-aged" (ages 5-19) population is commuting for school

Our "school-aged" population is shrinking. Following the closure of the Hedley Elementary School in 2008, our school-aged population commutes to Cawston Primary School (kindergarten to grade 4) and the Similkameen Elementary/Secondary School (grades 5 to 12) in Keremeos.

A car is need to access services

The need to access services in larger centres is growing. However, alternatives to driving are limited in Area "G", affecting our oldest and youngest residents most (those that can't drive themselves).

The natural environment is rare and valuable

Electoral Area "G" is composed of rare and ecologically significant ecosystems. Mild climates and diverse landscapes support a high level of biodiversity, including the greatest diversity of birds in the interior of BC and a significant number of breeding species. Some of these plants and animal species are endangered or threatened due to human settlement areas and land use.

There is an increased wildfire risk

With changing weather patterns, the area is seeing increased periods of hot and dry summers. This has led to an increasing risk of drought and wildfires.

Flood risk is increasing within communities in Area "G"

The Similkameen River flows through Electoral Area "G" and the communities of Hedley, Keremeos, Cawston and the Lower Similkameen Indian Band's (LSIB) and Upper Similkameen Indian Band's (USIB) lands. In recent years, flooding and land erosion in these areas have highlighted the increasing flood risk to these communities.

Water and sanitary systems are variable and community dependent

The RDOS currently administers the water system in the community of Olalla. Residences in other rural settlement areas get their water from private wells or water systems. All properties are serviced with on-site septic or within a shared septic storage system.

MORE INFORMATION?

Visit the project page at ***rdosregionalconnections.ca/area-g-ocp***

It has all the project information, including the Background Report, the survey, and other online engagement activities.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

This survey can be completed online or on paper. Please review the Area "G" background information located in the front end of this booklet or on the RDOS Regional Connections site prior to completing the survey.

Online

Please visit ***rdosregionalconnections.ca/area-g-ocp***

On paper

There are pick-up and return options for your completed survey.

- ✔ **Mail**

  RDOS, c/o Area "G" OCP
  101 Martin Street,
  Penticton, BC V2A 5J9

- ✔ **Drop-off and pick ups**

  RDOS office
  101 Martin Street, Penticton

  Town of Keremeos Office
  702 4th Street, Keremeos

  Hedley General Store
  897 Scott Ave, Hedley

  Olalla Community Boards
  Next to the mailboxes in Olalla

- ✔ **In-person**

  Give your completed survey to any member of the project's Citizens Committee or Director Roberts.

AREA "G" OCP PROJECT COMMUNITY SURVEY #1

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your input is very important and will help identify key priorities for the OCP.

Survey results will be shared with the community when the survey closes on **April 30th**. We will be conducting another two rounds of surveys based on the input we receive from this survey and future surveys, with each round getting into more details about what the OCP needs to include.

Tell us about you.

1. ***Where do you live in Area "G"?***

- ❑ **a)** Hedley
- ❑ **b)** Olalla
- ❑ **c)** Rural Keremeos
- ❑ **d)** Village of Keremeos
- ❑ **e)** Another part of Area "G" (please specify): .....
- ❑ **f)** I don't live in Area "G" (please specify): .....

2. ***Do you live in Area "G" for part or all of the year?***

- ❑ **a)** I'm a permanent, year-round resident
- ❑ **b)** I'm a seasonal, part-time resident
- ❑ **c)** I don't live in Area "G"
- ❑ **d)** Other (please specify): .....

3. ***How did you hear about the Area "G" OCP project?***

- ❑ **a)** Post card
- ❑ **b)** Website
- ❑ **c)** Social media
- ❑ **d)** Civic Ready email alerts
- ❑ **e)** A Citizens Committee member
- ❑ **f)** Electoral Area "G" Director's notifications
- ❑ **g)** Other (please specify): .....

4. ***What is your age group?***

- ❑ **a)** 0-19 years
- ❑ **b)** 20-39 years
- ❑ **c)** 40-59 years
- ❑ **d)** 60-79 years
- ❑ **e)** 80+ years

Tell us about your community.

5. ***Area "G" has three distinct communities where people live (Olalla, Hedley and rural Keremeos). We would like to understand what makes each of these communities special.***

What do you not like about your community?

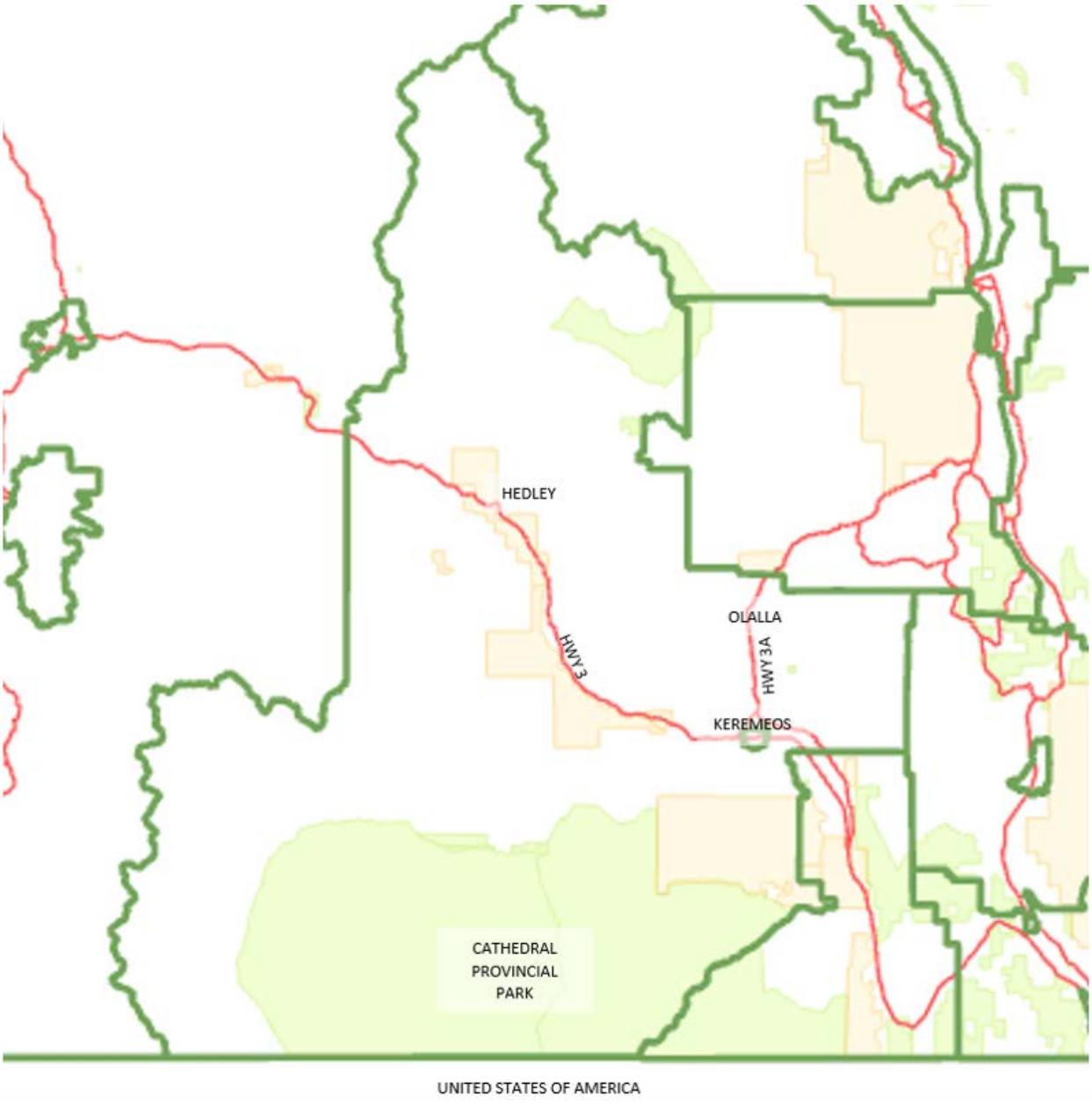
What is needed to fix what you don't like?

What changes have you noticed in your community over the past ten (10) years (for example, people moving away, more wildfires, more expensive housing)?

What do you like about your community now? What kinds of things make it special? (for example, historic sites, a close-knit community, local business, lifestyle, etc.). Please list here.

What is needed to keep these kinds of things around for the next 20 years?

Where possible, please identify specific locations of valued features on the map below.



Tell us what you think about some issues previously identified by others

6. ***In 2019, the RDOS conducted a campaign called "Let's Talk Land Use". This campaign asked residents if they wanted a say in future land use decisions within their area. As part of this campaign, we heard the following key areas needed attention in Area "G".***

How do you evaluate the importance of incorporating these issues into the Area "G" OCP?

HOW IMPORTANT IS...	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Less Important	Not important
Defining and planning areas for future growth					
Maintaining ALR land primarily for farming and food production only					
Ensuring new development is outside hazard areas like floodplains, geotechnical hazardous areas, or high fire risk areas					
Protecting heritage and important archaeological sites					
Protecting sensitive ecosystems like grasslands, riparian areas, forests, and rock outcrops					
Protecting community watersheds for water quality and quantity					
Improving access and transportation corridors					

Are there other issues which the OCP should address?

Tell us about your future vision.

7. ***The Area "G" OCP will include a community vision for the area. A "vision" describes what we want the area will be like in 2040 (20 years from now). We need your help writing it.***

What does your ideal community look like 20 years from now?

Ideally, what does the whole area (Similkameen Valley) look like 20 years from now?

We will be sending a second survey out in early summer and a final survey in the fall/winter. The next survey will build on the information we receive from this survey, so your ongoing engagement is critical.

Please stay involved and add your name to the Area "G" OCP email list either below or at ***rdosregionalconnections.ca/area-g-ocp***

Name:

Email: