

## Chapter 6 – Services and Utilities

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The Highlands is a rural, self-reliant community and, in order to retain that rural character, help sustain the community and to keep costs under control, services provided by the District and other agencies must address the needs of the residents and landowners while remaining at modest levels.

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) was adopted in August 2003. The RGS establishes an "Urban Containment Boundary and Service Policy Area" (RUCSPA). This has significance for development in the Highlands. Map 3 in the RGS shows the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area. The strategy proposes no extension of urban-standard sanitary sewerage and water services beyond the boundary of this policy area "except to address pressing public health and environmental issues, to provide fire suppression or to service agriculture". Map 2.1 shows Highlands Servicing Area, which is consistent with the RUCSPA. Only the industrial area of southeast Highlands falls inside the boundary.

The availability of fresh drinkable water is a critical element for Highlands' residents. The vast majority of land uses are dependent on surface water or groundwater supplied through individually drilled and maintained wells.

At the present time none of the southern area of the Highlands is connected into regional piped services. The area to the east of Millstream Road lies inside the CRD's "Urban Containment Boundary" while the area to the west of Millstream Road is not yet included.

There is a limited amount of information on the aquifers that supply groundwater to residents and businesses, although it is known that recharge is primarily through fractures and breaks in the bedrock, leading to outflow in wetlands and streams that eventually drain to the ocean. During the planning process there were concerns regarding the Highlands' aquifers. These included concerns related to the impacts of additional development, inappropriate land use practices, inadequate waste treatment, and improperly constructed or abandoned wells. There were also concerns related to the quantity of available water, the cumulative impact of exceptionally dry seasons, and the long term impacts of global warming and climate change.

### **Policy 6.2 (11):**

Map 2.1 shows Highlands' Servicing Area (or Boundary), which is consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy's Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area. The District of Highlands intends to pursue a Regional Growth Strategy amendment to make this boundary consistent with the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Policy Area as shown on Map 3 of the Regional Growth Strategy.